

**CRAFT AND FOLK ART MUSEUM
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

INTERVIEW OF TOMI KUWAYAMA

by Joan M. Benedetti



**Tomi Kuwayama at Home
January 18, 2008**

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

Tomi Kuwayama served on the Craft and Folk Art Museum (CAFAM) board from November 1976 – 1981; then from 1991 - 1997; and again from 2003 - 2008. She planned many of the CAFAM Associates trips from 1986 – 1995. She was a co-founder of the CAFAM Folk Art Council (FAC) in 1979 and has served mostly on its executive board. In 2005, she co-curated with Lyn Avins a CAFAM folk art exhibition from FAC member collections. She is active with the L.A. County Museum of Art East Asian Art Council, serving as its Chair in 2006-08. She is also a long-time member of the various L.A. textile groups.

Kuwayama was born in New York City, on August 20, 1919. Her parents, who had emigrated from Japan, became naturalized citizens after World War II; prior to that, Asians could not apply for citizenship. During the 1920s they started a famous Japanese restaurant, Miyako, and a successful import-export business.

Kuwayama has one sister, Aya, an artist, who managed the restaurant into the seventies; and two brothers: Yeichi, who served in Europe in Company E of the Japanese American unit—the 442nd, then got his MBA at Harvard and worked for the Dep't of Commerce and the SEC; and George, who served with the 82nd Airborne paratrooper division, then became an art historian; in 1997, after 37 years, retired as Senior Curator Emeritus of Asian Art, from the L.A. County Museum of Art.

Kuwayama attended New York public schools, including Julia Richman High School, and received her B.A. in Nutrition from Skidmore College. She was doing her internship at Bellevue Hospital in Manhattan when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Kuwayama obtained her master's degree in Public Health from Columbia U. and went to work for the Brooklyn Visiting Nurse Association as a public health nutritionist. Later, after she married, she worked for the Boston Visiting Nurses—as a public health nutritionist. After that she worked at the Forsythe Dental Infirmary [in Boston], which is a research institute for dentistry; she set up their nutrition program.

In 1952, Kuwayama came to Los Angeles with her husband, Howard Hibbett, a scholar of Japanese literature and culture, who was hired by UCLA's new Asian Studies department. They have two daughters, Mariko and Reiko. After divorcing Hibbett, Tomi got her teaching credential at UCLA and taught home economics and biology at Belmont High School. She married Robert Haas, head, Arts and Humanities extension program at UCLA. She left Belmont and taught evening classes in Japanese literature and Asian cooking in the extension program. In 1968, she went back to work in public health nutrition in a federal Maternity and Infant Care program in the Watts South District headquarters. Later, she became Head, West District Nutrition Program, Department of Health Services, L.A. County, closer to her home. She retired in 1984. She and Haas divorced in 1977. In 1988 she married architect, Lorenzo Tedesco, and began again to use her family surname, Kuwayama. Tedesco passed away in 2000. Tomi Kuwayama passed away February 13, 2018; she was 98.

INTERVIEW HISTORY

Interviewer: Joan M. Benedetti. B.A., Theater; M.A., Library Science, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Related Experience: Milwaukee Public Library Decorative Arts Librarian, 1967 – 1968; CAFAM Museum Librarian 1976 – 1997. From 1998 – 2012, Benedetti worked to process the CAFAM Records, 1965 – 1997, which are now part of Special Collections at the UCLA Young Research Library. From 2008 – 2010 she conducted oral history interviews with seventeen former CAFAM staff and trustees; almost 60 hours were recorded and transcribed. She is the author of several articles on folk art terminology and small art museum libraries and the editor of *Art Museum Libraries and Librarianship*, Lanham, MD: ARLIS/NA and Scarecrow Press, 2007.

Time and Setting of Interview

Place: Kuwayama's home in Los Angeles.

Dates: January 18, 25; February 1, 2008.

Dates, time, length of sessions, and total number of hours recorded: Three interviews took place in the afternoon. The first session lasted about an hour and twenty minutes, and the second and third sessions were each almost two hours long. A total of five hours and fifteen minutes of conversation were recorded.

Persons present during interview: Benedetti and Kuwayama.

Conduct and Content of Interview: To prepare for the Kuwayama interview, Benedetti reviewed the relevant documents in the CAFAM Records, particularly those of the Board of Trustees, the Folk Art Council, and the Associates support group. She also studied some of the history of Japanese Americans, especially during World War II. The interview follows a roughly chronological outline.

The first session is devoted almost entirely to Kuwayama's life in NYC from 1919 – 1952. The second session focuses on the beginnings of Kuwayama's friendship with Edith Wyle and her involvements with CAFAM. In the third session Kuwayama talks some more about CAFAM, the Wyles, and Patrick Ela; travels to Japan with Edith Wyle; other travels with the Associates; various plans and physical changes to CAFAM; various staff changes; the closing and re-opening of the museum; Edith Wyle's final illness; Tomi's tenure on the board with Peter Tokovsky as director; her co-curatorship with Lyn Avins of a folk art exhibition; the current staff; and her personal and professional history from 1952 to the present.

Editing: The transcript was edited by Benedetti and Kuwayama for spelling of names and Joan added full names and opening dates of CAFAM exhibitions where appropriate. Both Tomi and Joan also added further information in brackets for clarification and deleted with ellipses some back-and-forth comments that did not add to the reader's understanding of the narrative. Time stamps have been added to both the table of contents and the transcript at five-minute intervals; the time stamps make it easier to locate the topics in the transcript that are mentioned in the table of contents.

Table of Contents

Session 1 (January 18, 2008): Tomi's birth and family; siblings. The family's Miyako Restaurant in Manhattan. [05:00]; Miyako's neighborhood. Her father starts an import-export business; the family lives over the store. Artists in neighborhood; Japanese language at home; English outside. [10:00] Mothers and Japanese mission church encourage learning of Japanese language and culture. Public grade school and high school. Mostly Italians, no Japanese in neighborhood. Importance of Japanese church for newcomers. [15:00] Father encourages assimilation; "a completely Caucasian, Christian, English schooling." High school was Julia Richman High School for Girls. Comparison to west coast Nisei; more aware of racism in high school, related to dating. [20:00] Japanese American students and students from Japan; latter had annual conference, where she could "meet young male students . . . without commitment." Even before war, relations between U.S. and Japan were strained. Older brother Yeiichi, drafted into army; after Pearl Harbor, sent to Ft. Ethan Allan in Vermont, a place for "misfits." Transferred to Japanese American unit, the 442nd. [25:00] Through Yeiichi, Tomi's family met Danny Inouye, who later was U.S. Senator from Hawaii 1963 – 2012.

Japanese students she befriended shipped back after Pearl Harbor. [35:00] Sons of wealthy Japanese families in U.S., e.g., Hiroshi Mitsui. At work as intern at Bellevue Hospital on morning of Pearl Harbor. All Japanese nationals (or anyone who looked Japanese) had to stay in their homes. [40:00] Her sister worked for Mitsubishi; knew many Japanese nationals rounded up and sent back to Japan. Tomi hired by City of New York Department of Hospitals; when she told fellow workers Japanese Americans on west coast were being put into camps, they didn't believe her. [45:00] Tomi's job as a public health nutritionist. She took visual art and performing arts courses in college; went to a lot of dance concerts growing up. [50:00] Tomi saved all her programs from NYC concerts; gave them to the UCLA performing arts library.

The import-export business was lost, but Miyako stayed open; many soldiers went there during the war. [55:00] She talks about the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, almost entirely American soldiers of Japanese ancestry, mostly from Hawaii. Miyako closed at end of seventies. [1:00:00] Not many eligible young men to date. At end of war a young Caucasian man, Howard Hibbett, a scholar of Japanese culture, came looking for her father; they married in 1946. He was a student at Harvard; they go to live in Cambridge. [1:05:00] Tomi works as nutritionist in Boston. When Howard graduated he got a Junior Fellowship to go to Japan in 1950; Japan was still in bad shape but Tomi's relatives helped. [1:10:00] Tomi got important job in Japan working with the Korean relief program after Korean War broke out. [1:15:00] Tomi's father, who visited the 442nd and Japan after the war. They knew the Sumitomos and could "penetrate parts of Japanese society." [1:20:00] In 1952, at end of Hibbett's Junior Fellowship he got a job at UCLA. [1:20:44]

Session 2 (January 25, 2008): First awareness of The Egg and The Eye gallery, first contact with Edith Wyle. Tomi divorces Hibbett, remarries Robert Haas, head, UCLA Extension Arts & Humanities. Life in West Los Angeles. Milt Zolotow. [5:00] Edith Wyle drawn to Tomi's Japanese heritage. Learning about Japanese "folk craft." Openings at gallery and museum. Edith asks her to form Folk Art Council. Tomi, Jane Ullman, and Joyce Hundal start FAC. [10:00] First CAFAM exhibitions. [15:00] Folk Art Market becomes annual event. [20:00] Tomi was an officer, still on FAC board. [25:00] CAFAM administration and FAC. Tomi on CAFAM board. [30:00] Ullman and Kester also on board; Mort Winston board chair. Comparing CAFAM board to FAC board.

Tomi and Associates, started by Judith Stark. [35:00] First Associates trip to Seattle; Associates activities. Edith asks Tomi to coordinate Associates trips. Philadelphia trip and Wyles' daughter, Diana Munk. 1984 PEMEX explosion in Mexico City. [40:00] Associates less active after Edith's 1984 retirement. Anna Bing Arnold one of early enthusiastic Associates. [45:00] Las Primaveras—Tomi not involved. More experiences on CAFAM board; Tomi not sure she has same personal assets. [50:00] Mort Winston and wife, Julia. Tomi resigns from board; comes back in 2003 after 1997 closure and 1999 reopening; works on programming. Co-curates folk art

exhibition, Eclectic Collecting, in 2004 with Lyn Avins.

Plans for Museum Tower **[55:00]** CAFAM's permanent collection; caring for collection. **[1:00:00]** Issue of CAFAM's scope. Dora De Larios and Contemporary Craft Council. CCC did not last as long as FAC. After Edith's retirement museum had more interest in contemporary craft and design; competition. Reasons for weakness of CCC—too many specialized groups in L.A. **[1:05:00]** Staff aware of need to balance folk art and contemporary craft/design exhibitions. What defines folk art? Tomi supports inclusion of contemporary craft and design. Museum's name. **[1:10:00]** Comparing Egg and The Eye gallery and CAFAM. Education always important to Edith. Karen Copeland. **[1:15:00]** Willow Young, Shan Emanuelli. Shan first Festival of Masks coordinator; then Willow. Tomi always attended; very exciting: food, performances, the Parade, the Maskerade Ball. **[1:20:00]** More about Parade, Danny Selznick. "Those were the days."

The Egg and The Eye restaurant. **[1:25:00]** How restaurant evolved, Restaurant closure. Edith discusses future restaurant with Tomi. **[1:30:00]** Restaurant-goers sometimes unaware of museum. Importance of food service; board talking about it. **[1:35:00]** CAFAM shop—why so special. CAFAM library is missed: **[1:40:00]** People's queries referred to librarian as CAFAM seldom has staff curator. CAFAM library collection now part of LACMA library. CSAC (Center for the Study of Art and Culture), adjunct library program. **1:50:00** Part of CSAC mission to look at museums from viewpoint of diversity and inclusion. Tomi says CAFAM board aware of those issues—might be reason she was on board. Tomi says CAFAM currently has "very nice diversified staff, young, hardworking women." Joan comments that Edith hired lots of young, hardworking women. **[1:53:50]**

Session 3 (February 1, 2008): Tomi's roles at CAFAM. **[5:00]** Patrick Ela. Lisi Rona, other administrative assistants. Frank Wyle. **[10:00]**. Friendship with Edith Wyle. Trips to Japan with CAFAM and Edith. **[15:00]**.

Hodgetts + Fung hired 1992 to renovate, merge 5814 and 5800 Wilshire. **[20:00]** Prior period focused on Museum Tower capital campaign. Museum Tower campaign fails due to global recession. **[25:00]** CAFAM in May Co 1989 - 1992. Talks begin with owner of 5800 Wilshire. **[30:00]** Hodgetts + Fung plan relies on ownership 5800 Wilshire; never purchased. 5800 lost: museum loses most offices, all parking. **[35:00]** CAFAM re-opens in May 1995—gala "Homecoming." **[40:00]** Re-opening exhibitions. Events following re-opening. 1998 auction of permanent collection. **[45:00]** Gift of Romanian costume to CAFAM; sold at auction. Tomi didn't attend auction—too sad. Tomi resigns from board late 1997—just before CAFAM's 14-month closure: Bud Knapp, board chair. Paul Kusserow, Martha Lynn. Effort to buy 5800 Wilshire collapses. Edith's illness, 80th birthday party, April 1998. Frank's 80th birthday party, June 1999, at ranch. Edith dies, October 1999. **[50:00]** Intervention by Patrick Ela, L.A. Dep't of Cultural Affairs allows CAFAM to re-open February 1999—before Edith dies. Joan de Bruin, Director. **[55:00]**,

FAC disturbed about CAFAM, but keeps up membership, produces annual Folk Art Market. Joan de Bruin resigns April 2002. Folklorist Peter Tokovsky hired January 2003; resigns December 2003. Tomi says he is charming; staff morale not good. **[1:00:00]** Goodwin and wife Susheila. **[1:05:00]** Goodwin leaves January 2005 after one year. When Tokovsky left, some board members resigned. After Maryna hired March 2005, board coalesces. **[1:10:00]** Tomi says Maryna's staff excellent. Shop now making money to support museum. Seven staff, less than half staff before 1997 closure. **[1:15:00]** Other museums now have similar scope. **[1:20:00]**

Tomi's personal history continued: Daughters, Mariko and Reiko, are born after arriving in Los Angeles. Hibbett goes to Harvard; Tomi stays in L.A. after divorce. Tomi gets teaching credential; begins teaching home economics at Belmont High School, downtown L.A. **[1:25:00]** Belmont's student body multi-cultural, mostly Hispanic. Tomi makes ethnic food cultures part of curriculum. She marries Bob Haas. **[1:30:00]** Tomi teaches Asian cooking in UCLA Extension. She works as dietician again part-time in maternity and infant care program in Watts. Challenges of working as a public health nutritionist in all-black community. **[1:35:00]** After a couple of years, she transfers

to west district in Santa Monica, closer to home. Her experience in Watts very important.

By 1976 she is involved with CAFAM, [1:40:00] various L.A. textile groups. [1:45:00] She and Bob Haas divorce. Marries Lorenzo Tedesco, architect and neighbor in Beverly Glen. [1:50:00] He designs Wyle's teahouse and daughter Diana's house at Wyle ranch. His father the composer, Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Tomi says Lorenzo started her music education. Still on CAFAM board and Chair of LACMA East Asian Arts Council. [1:55:33].

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Session 1 (1:20:44), Friday, January 18, 2008. Interviewed by Joan M. Benedetti.

JB: This is Friday, January 18, 2008, and I'm here in Los Angeles in Tomi Kuwayama's home, and we're going to talk about the Craft and Folk Art Museum and her involvement with it, and also some personal background, and my name is Joan Benedetti.

So, Tomi, let's just start with the basics first. Tell us where and when you were born.

TK: I was born in Manhattan, New York City, and I was born in 1919, on August 20th. And I was the third child of my parents.

JB: Who were the other people—the other kids—in your family?

TK: My older sister [Aya], she's the eldest in the family; then my brother [Yeichi], who is in Washington [D.C.]; and my younger brother is the one who is in California, in Los Angeles.

JB: George.

TK: George Kuwayama.

JB: Yes. And so that makes five—no, four, four!

TK: Actually, there were five. Although--the first born, uh, died before I was born, so I don't count it too much.

JB: The very first born.

TK: Uh-huh.

JB: So George is the youngest.

TK: George is the youngest.

JB: OK. And can you tell me just a little bit about your childhood and growing up in Manhattan? That must have been an exciting time to be there.

TK: Well, I think it was. Actually, my father was quite forward-looking. He was sort of an entrepreneur, and he started a restaurant called the Miyako Restaurant [located at 20 West 56th St.]. And that was in the 1920s. But feeling that restaurants are not very secure as a business and to have a restaurant, he decided he would be the provider and so he started an import-export business, much of the food stuffs, but *objets d'art* as well, and he had his closest friend [Tsukada-san] manage the restaurant and become his partner in the enterprise. So that we grew up on--at 114 East 59th Street. [This is where the store was located and the Kuwayama family lived over the store until the 1930s.]

JB: (laughing) That's an excellent address!

TB: It is—really in the center. Right next door was 112 East 59th Street, which was the home of Denishawn. That area was--

JB: Oh, the dancer [Denishawn was the dance studio run by Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn].

TK: --was considered rather artistic, so that when my father's store—as I remember it—was on the first floor of 114 and in the front of the store he had a man who was a bachelor and, more or less, a pseudo-uncle to us, [Kuni-san] ran the front part of the store. And they had kimonos and wood-block prints and all kinds of carved amethysts, little *kannons*, you know, and also, in ivory. They also had things like Mexican jumping beans and Japanese gardens, you know, in those pots, which a friend of my family raised and was the first one to develop a Japanese garden in a pot with their greenhouses in Long Island and so we sold those. We also sold—and what I loved—was to put one of those paper flowers in a cup of water and see them bloom. And I would always go downstairs and stand around with Kuni-san in order to see who was coming into the shop and play around with anything new that happened to come in. They would have those wooden puzzles. And so, [along] with the fine *objets d'art*—more or less fine *objets d'art*—there are all these other kinds of things. So I think--for Los Angeles audiences--they probably--they would think of the shop on Sawtelle, on the corner—

JB: Yes—

TK: With all the—you know—

JB: Yes, [it was] beautiful— [This was Yamaguchi's, a small Japanese department store that has now gone out of business in the Japanese American neighborhood of Sawtelle Blvd.]

TK: --porcelains and dishes and everything from toys to semi-precious objects. So that's the way the front of our store was. The back of the store was different. The back of the store had a long counter and shelves with things like canned bamboo shoots and *shitake* mushrooms and all kinds of goodies, and my father would go down to the ships, and I went with him—I remember—going down with him to these big ships and get these huge barrels of soy sauce, of *miso*—which are now familiar, but not then--

JB: Yes, not at that time— **[05:00]**

TK: --and Japanese pickles and things of that kind, which he would then check and then have shipped to the store and in the back of the store he had it set up so that he and his employees would open those barrels and re-can them into household sizes, into jars and into packages, which he sold to the then-growing Japanese community.

JB: Well, I was just going to ask you if there was a Japanese community in that particular area?

TK: No.

JB: So there never was?

TK: No, there never was, not on 59th Street.

JB: Interesting.

TK: On one corner of 114 [East 59th St.] --on one corner was Park Avenue and Parke-Benet [the art auction house]; the other corner was Bloomingdale's [Department Store] on Lexington and 59th Street.

JB: How fortunate he was to get that property.

TK: Well, that's where we were. And it was a very good place to grow up because around the corner was the library, on 58th Street. And they would have Saturday morning s storytelling, and we just went to the library all the time and I loved the library. You know, books, to me, uh, to walk into a library or a bookstore was a big thrill because you don't know what you're going to find and that's the way books always felt for me. It was exciting, it was excitement to see a whole row of books and so consequently, that's where we grew up with a library. The vicinity was very friendly (as far as we knew—we were children). And we were asked by the neighborhood artists to pose. So often, either my sister or my brother or my sister and I, we remember posing for different artists.

JB: It would be interesting to see some of those now.

TK: I don't know what happened to them. I remember going to a studio of a woman who was doing my brother's head in clay and she would have us sit down—because we all three went together—George was too young—but my older sister and my older brother and myself—and she was doing Yeiichi, so Yeiichi would be sitting; he couldn't do anything, he had to sit, because she was doing his head and my sister and I, we would just play with the clay and when he was given rest time, he would come over and play with the clay. We had a little table with clay to play with.

JB: How wonderful.

TK: So that was our growing up.

JB: And I was just thinking—I was going to ask you if you had art collections in your family when you were growing up or if you were exposed to art and, of course, you were near some pretty important museums too. But you had all of that in the store and, I would assume, some of it at home too.

TK: Well, I would say that my father was more or less a typical businessman, in a sense. And his taste was, I don't think, that developed. My mother was much more cultivated. And she

would read to us and tell us Japanese fairy tales and stories and mythology. My older sister would get the—because all the magazines—Japanese magazines—came to the store. And we would get some of them and take them upstairs, and she [my sister] would mark the places, and my mother would read them to us as bedtime stories--in Japanese, of course, at that time.

JB: When did you begin to be exposed to English? Oh, well, you were obviously born here [in the U.S.], or in Manhattan, but your family, did they speak both English and--?

TK: We spoke Japanese at home and English outside and among ourselves. Since I was younger, my brothers and sisters brought English home and we spoke English. Probably my eldest sister, when she first started school, she may have had a difficult time. She never said. But she would have gone from a Japanese household into an American school, public school, which was on 59th Street. [P.S. 59 on 57th Street] [10:00]

JB: But your parents—

TK: 57th Street, I mean.

JB: Your parents encouraged you to learn English, I suppose.

TK: Well, it was just—I don't know if we were encouraged, it just so happened.

JB: The reason I mention it is because my husband, from an Italian [immigrant] family, was told by his father that he was encouraged NOT to learn Italian. He [my husband] was brought up by his grandmother and she spoke Italian at home, but he was not supposed to speak Italian because they wanted him to be, you know, quote/unquote “a good American.” So, I know how difficult it can be.

TK: Actually, we were encouraged to speak Japanese because my mother could see that we were becoming—our language facility in Japanese was going downhill, while our language facility in English was going uphill. And so she encouraged us. And so we were—by the time we were in grade school and in the beginning, she started—she got a tutor to come and teach us one afternoon a week and then there was a school—

JB: In Japanese?

TK: Yes, in Japanese. To learn Japanese. And then the mothers got together. Now, I said that there were no Japanese where we lived; however, there were [Japanese] in the area and there was a Japanese church, which was called the mission because the minister was a Japanese man and his wife (they were brought up in Japan--through the missionaries), who were converted into Christianity. And he became a minister and she was a Christian leader, so to speak. And they ran the mission, and she was very cultivated, and so she thought that it would be a good idea for the few families—and there were only four of us,

four families—to get together and they would hire the seminary students at General or Union Theological Seminary, who would then come every Saturday afternoon to teach us Japanese.

JB: Well, I think your parents were very forward-looking. So, then you went into high school—I should say, were you in public schools?

TK: Yes, we went to P.S. 59 (that's why I got mixed up), which is on 57th Street. It no longer exists on 57th Street. Instead, I think they made it into the Center [for] the Board of Ed[ucation] building. And now I think even that has disappeared. Now 57th Street is too important a street to have that kind of thing on it anymore—from river to river [East River to Hudson River]. Our school was close to 2nd Avenue on 57th Street at the time. The neighborhood was made up of mainly immigrants--from Italy—a lot of them—and the green groceries at that time were Italian.

JB: Interesting.

TK: You know, in New York at that time.

JB: Now this was in the--

TK: In the twenties.

JB: In the twenties.

TK: And so that's where we went. And the Shimizu family—Mr. Shimizu was the Rev. Shimizu of the mission—and the mission was on 57th Street between 1st and 2nd [Avenues]; our school from 2nd and 3rd [Avenues].

JB: That was very close.

TK: Very close. And it was, again, really very well located because it's a wonderful section, you know, that area. So that what the mission did was to provide access to newcomers, new Japanese coming into the city. Many of them were single men and they would board them and feed them and let them start their lives, so that that was one of the things that the mission did. The other thing was to be, just as any church is, to help the neighborhood develop religiously and spiritually and so, during that process, though my parents were Buddhists when they came, they became Christians. **[15:00]**

JB: Oh, my goodness. Were you aware of any of that at the time—any transition at the time?

TK: No because you see—

JB: You were too young.

TK: My parents—and my father in particular—always felt that if he came to a new country he had to develop and let us be whatever that country was. So that we went—and because we

were influenced by this Christian Japanese family—the Rev. Shimuzu family—we went to Christ Church on Park Avenue and 60th Street, and Sunday school there. So, we had a completely Caucasian, Christian—

JB: English—

TK: --schooling. And also, a completely Japanese Christian schooling, with the mission. So we spent the whole weekend at church.

JB: Oh my.

TK: Saturday church at the mission and Sunday church at the regular Caucasian church.

JB: How interesting. So—when you were in public school, it sounds as if there were not very many Japanese children—Japanese American children—with you. They were—

TK: None.

JB: Oh, there were none—not even these other--

TK: They were—but, see, we were a different age group, so within our classes, we were the only ones—

JB: Oh, I see, I see, OK. Was that difficult for you?

TK: No, because we were so different, that instead of being ostracized, we were made examples of, you know. Just the opposite, at least that's been my experience.

JB: You were the good kid, or the—

TK: Yeah, right, because, you know, Japanese children tend to be— [tend to] obey, and be acquiescent—and I guess we weren't dumb either! [Laughing].

JB: I think not [laughing].

TK: So that we— we did well in school, and so that my older sister, in particular, was sort of the teacher's pet and she was promoted so fast that she graduated high school [and she] entered college when she was fifteen.

JB: Oh, yes, that is precocious.

TK: Yeah.

JB: So, was the high school nearby also?

TK: I went to Julia Richman High School. That's on 1st and 2nd [Avenues] isn't it? 1st and York Avenue, I think [at] 68th Street.

JB: Say the name of the school again.

TK: Julia Richman—

JB: Oh, Julia Richman.

TK: High School. It's a— if you were a New Yorker, you'd know it. There's Hunter High School and Julia Richman High School for Girls.

JB: Hunter, I know. I didn't know [Julia Richman].

TK: And Lauren Bacall, for example, went to Julia Richman, and quite a few others like that, if they came out of New York.

JB: Hmm, wonderful. Well, it sounds like you had a really rich childhood and must have been fairly self-confident, growing up.

TK: Yeah, we didn't have that experience that the Japanese Nisei on the west coast had. We were much [more] positive. It was only when we got through—[we] began in high school to be more conscious of racism--that that became something to contend with.

JB: Something of an issue.

TK: However, as young children, it was not an issue.

JB: Was it related to dating at that time, since you were a teenager at that time. Was that part of it, or--?

TK: Oh, definitely. **[The next three paragraphs were rewritten by Tomi. They are not the same as the recording.]** At the Japanese Mission Church, we formed our own teenage group. There were only about eight of us involved (three families), but we then welcomed young people who came from other states seeking jobs or education. They were mainly from the west coast and formed their own young people's association, called the Tozai Club. These people were all American citizens born in the United States and many were members of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), a more politically-oriented group, generally older, already working, and more serious.

[There were also students who were from Japan (not American citizens) who had been sent here, often by missionary organizations, the Japanese government or corporations, or by very wealthy parents, to attend the better-known American universities and they were members of the Japanese Student Christian Association (JSCA). This latter group sponsored a student conference at the International House each Thanksgiving weekend. **[20:00]** Beginning in my later high school years, I started attending this conference. This is where we met students from Japan, mostly male. I always looked forward to this conference, as it was the only time I was able to meet young male students in a general way and, without commitment, discover which college they were attending.

[Even before the war started, relations between the United States and Japan were strained and there was a noticeable drop in the native Japanese population as they returned to Japan and no new students were sent. At the same time, the young, educated Japanese Americans (Nisei) found that jobs were increasingly unavailable to them--that they were discriminated against. The social club Tozai served to bring them together for solace and networking. This is where racism was clearly evident.]

JB: So, are you saying that it was more economic, then, or was—it was because there was competition for those jobs?

TK: Well, let me tell you my brother's history. I didn't face much of this kind of stuff.

JB: Is this your older brother?

TK: My older brother [Yeiichi]. He graduated Princeton in 1940. He couldn't find anything, and then he was drafted into the American army. The first draft was in January 1940--

JB: And this was before Pearl Harbor.

TK: Right. When he was ready to be let go—because he did his year of service—at that time this was the beginning of the citizen army that they were developing, that Roosevelt was developing because he could anticipate the war.

JB: Yes.

TK: And so he was ready to be discharged, but Pearl Harbor occurred [December 7, 1941], so he was retained. And his unit was sent to defend the New Jersey coast. So he went with his unit and the general came to inspect the troops and when they called role and Yeiichi stepped out, he said, "Well, what is he doing here?" Next day he was shipped out.

JB: Oh boy. Shipped out to--

TK: Shipped out to Ft. Ethan Allen in Vermont. Ft. Ethan Allan in Vermont was a place where they put all those they felt [were] sort of misfits until they knew what to do with them.

JB: Oh, for heaven's sake.

TK: There were people, young men who had fought in the Lincoln Brigade. Of course, a lot of them were communists [or had] communist leanings because of the Lincoln Brigade. There were refugees from Europe and until they knew exactly who they were and on what side they were and what their sentiments were, they were in Ft. Ethan Allen. It was a fascinating place!

JB: Yes, I was just thinking that, except, well, what did your brother think of it?

TK: Well, he was there and he met some very interesting people. One he brought home, his name was Franz. Franz was from Germany and he was a charming young man. When

they decided Franz was fine, he was shipped to Europe and he was parachuted into Germany and he never returned. We also met people who were also sort of conscientious objectors, and so there were really—most of them were thinkers, people who were really, you know, not the run-of-the-mill conscript.

JB: Yes.

TK: So Yeiichi was given--as a suspect kind of person--the job of being a medical person. And so he didn't want to stay there [at Ft. Ethan Allen] and when the Japanese American unit—the 442nd—was formed, he volunteered and asked to be transferred into the 442nd. And that's where he stayed with them and was the company aide man and went through all of the European war with the 442nd.

JB: So that was the Japanese American unit?

TK: Yes, part of the American army, and they distinguished themselves very well. He was wounded with them. He earned the bronze star, the Silver Star, and the Purple Heart because he was wounded. And he—when the war in Europe ended—he was sent home because he'd already been in the Army now over four years—practically five years--because he had [been in the Army since] the year before the war--

JB: Before the war started, uh-huh. **[25:00]**

TK: And because in Princeton he was in the School of Public and International Affairs. His major was in economics, and he did for his senior thesis--remember, this is early 1940, he graduated in June--he did his thesis on the cotton trade, so he was in and out of the Japanese consulate to find out—to get the statistics and the information and material on the cotton trade between the United States and Japan. And as a result, he was thought of [as] being a Japanese spy!

JB: Oh, my goodness!!

TK: Or something--that's why he was never given—a Princeton graduate! —never given any—he never got promoted beyond being a sergeant in the medical corps. And he was wounded, because as the company aide man, he only wore the Red Cross; he was never given any guns or anything, so when he goes out into [no man's land]—to bring the men in, and to administer first aide--he's a target.

JB: Of course.

TK: So that's why he was wounded

JB: Did he, uh—well, of course, you probably didn't see him for long periods of time during the war--but, was he able to tell you about what he was experiencing at the time, or did you find all this out later?

TK: Later actually. And, as the war stories came out, [it turned out that] he was company aide man for Company E. [Senator] Danny Inouye was in Company E. So he rescued Danny Inouye.

JB: Oh my goodness!

TK: In '45 when [Danny] was recuperating, just at the end of the war, he stayed with us a couple of times, when he came up from Washington. And we got to know him quite well.

JB: Did he have political ambitions at that time?

TK: No, at that time he was only a 22—23-year old, and he hadn't finished—I don't think he'd been to college.

JB: Was he from Hawaii?

TK: He was from Hawaii.

JB: But he ended up in New York.

TK: No, well, this was—he ended up in Washington because he was in the army—he was still in the army and he was in the recuperation program. Because—the rehabilitation program—he had to learn how to use a prosthetic arm--

JB: Yes, of course.

TK: And all that sort of stuff, and so—and we knew he was going to get the GI grant [the GI Bill], you know, which was a wonderful thing--that they did at the end of the war. They should do it for all the services [veterans].

JB: Oh, they should. It was amazing.

TK: And so he wanted to know what schools he should go to and, of course, we, being easterners, always thought in terms of all those wonderful eastern colleges. He ended up by—I forget—did he—he went to one eastern college, but I don't know whether he got his law degree from the University of Hawaii or whether he got it on the east coast. But he got his law degree and went into politics. I think at one point he did. He finished up, he [had] some schooling in Hawaii.

JB: And then he stayed there.

TK: And then he stayed there and became [eventually a U.S. Senator], because that's his political future.

JB: Yes.

TK: Well, my brother, at the end of WWII, with his GI Bill, went to Harvard, and he went and got his M.B.A., Master in Business Administration. When he graduated Harvard—because

he was out so early—he was one of the early people—he couldn't get a position, any job that was—and he had a hard time. So he ended up by—my father still had, you know, some connections—so that he ended up working for the Japanese company, Nomura Securities, because they needed someone. They were traveling through to revive their business in New York and that's when we met them. And he, being fluent in English and American business practices--

JB: He was perfect. **[30:00]**

TK: It would be good for them when they met brokers and business people and securities people in the different companies like Merrill Lynch, etc. And so he was their interpreter/coordinator for their trip and stuff. And so he worked for them for quite a number of years and he decided that his Japanese—though we all spoke Japanese, I don't read Japanese; I never became a scholar in Japanese and having not lived in Japan, our Japanese was hesitant, you know, compared to a native Japanese--so he decided that was not as easy a barrier to cross, so he went to—he resigned. And by this time, the atmosphere had completely changed as far as the Asians were concerned and Japanese. So that he was able to work in Washington, D.C. with the Department of Commerce and then the Securities & Exchange Commission. But it was tough for the young men in those years [during the war and just after]. They just couldn't get jobs.

JB: It's just hard to imagine. What were you doing, Tomi, during all of this time, you and your mother and sister?

TK: My sister [Aya] is an artist. She went to [the Art Students League] on 57th Street for a number of years and she's the one that took me [to the] galleries and to the museums--

JB: Yes, tell me about that.

TK: Yes, you know, 57th Street is right there, and Miyako is--by this time Miyako was at 20 West 56th Street, and we usually had Sunday dinner at Miyako—not Miyako's fare, not for the customers—but, you know, *sukiyaki* takes the best of the beef—and so Tsukada-san, who managed Miyako, for the Sunday dinner for all the help--

JB: The "family meal."

TK: And the family [meal]—was roast beef, a wonderful roast beef dinner. And that's what we went to Miyako for—for Sunday lunch. And my father always said, "Sunday is your mother's rest day." So we would go to Miyako for lunch, after church—we'd go to Christ Church, walk over to Miyako, have dinner [the mid-day meal], sometimes walk back through the park or something like that. Because 59th Street, you know, it's all there. And then we would—that's when my sister [and I] would walk along 57th Street, you know, to the galleries. We'd look in the windows and we'd talk about the art. And then

we would—you know, [you could go to] the Metropolitan if you would go in the other direction. So that this was all exposed to me. And then my sister was really my conduit to all of that. And she also took me to foreign movies--

JB: How much older than you is she?

TK: She's four years older than I am.

JB: Four years older. OK. And you, obviously, you must have had awareness of the war. Did you always have--just tell me about what you were aware of in terms of what was happening on the west coast with the Japanese Americans [there].

TK: Oh, I was very conscious of that. I graduated [from Skidmore] in 1941, just before Pearl Harbor. I knew some Japanese students and they were shipped back.

JB: Japanese students who had been living in New York were shipped back?

TK: Right, right.

JB: Because we have the impression, I think, here that there wasn't much official discrimination on the east coast, but apparently there was some.

TK: Well, if you're a Japanese native, which these students were, Japanese citizens--

JB: Oh, I see--

TK: They're not Americans.

JB: Right, I see.

TK: We're Americans.

JB: Right.

TK: But these students, they were sent—for example—the Japanese that taught us at General Theological Seminary. They were missionary students coming from missionary schools in Japan, Japanese people, who were young people, who were then sent by the mission, whether it was a Presbyterian mission, the, you know, whatever, to America. Now General Theological is connected, I think, with New York University and it is a training ground for Protestant ministers.

JB: Yes. **[35:00]**

TK: And Union Theological the same way. And even at Christ Church, our Sunday school teachers often came from Union Theological Seminary—and it was a very liberal seminary. It was a liberal interpretation of the Bible--which we grew up with—a more liberal slant on the Bible and so, consequently, it was very good. And whether the student was American--he could be a student from India at Union Theological Seminary

[or] from Scandinavia, you know, all over the world, because they trained them from all over the world. So they trained some Japanese students and these were the ones we met. There weren't very many, about one or two each term.

JB: But they were sent back by the government or--?

TK: They were sent back by whatever group they were responsible toward. Even your family—supposing you were in the middle of Africa and a war started, your family would want you home.

JB: Of course. So, they went more or less willingly

TK: Oh, sure, sure. And there were people like Hiroshi Mitsui, who was at Cornell. You know Hiroshi was—[he] belonged to the Mitsui family. You know the Mitsui bank, Mitsui trading/shipping, Mitsui everything else. Well, they were young people like that. They were scions from these families, who were given a Western education, just like we used to send some of our students to France to the Sorbonne to get a little layer of European gloss. Well, that's what happened in the other direction.

JB: So—were you aware--? You were aware of what was going on, on the west coast?

TK: Oh yes, yes.

JB: Did you have friends or relatives who were put into the camps?

TK: No, not into camps, because our nucleus family was in New York, and the rest of the family were in Japan. And I didn't even know them [the relatives in Japan] because my father was among the youngest in his family, next to the youngest. He had a younger brother, Seiguro, who we knew because he was in America, but the other parts of the family we didn't know. My mother had a younger sister and her family--I'll tell you about them later because my father helped them out a lot. Since I graduated in '41 I was professionally a public health nutritionist. So, I graduated Skidmore College in '41 [and] took my dietetic internship at Bellevue Hospital. So, I was at Bellevue, working in the kitchen, when Pearl Harbor occurred. It was on Sunday, and as a student, I was—since most of the staff got their time off on Sunday—the person I was working with, underneath, was not there and I was supposed to be more or less in charge, which meant everything was done—the menus were made and everything else—but I held all the keys. And so I remember, one of the young men came over to the little office in the kitchen where I was, you know, doing whatever I was doing, and asked that the storeroom be opened so that he could get the staples out that he would need for the next meal, you know, cans of this and cans of that. So I went there [to the storeroom], and as I came out everybody was buzzing--because they had heard the news. And they all were looking at me and wondering what I was going to do.

JB: Uh-huh. But you hadn't heard yet.

TK: I wasn't quite sure what this was all about. And so I sort of looked at them and then, I think, one of the women serving girls came and told me and I went into the office, not knowing what to do, and just about at that point the person who was in charge of that division, that I was working in, came running in and said, "Tomi, are you all right?"

JB: Oh-h-h.

TK: And so, I said, "Yeah, I'm fine." And so, we got the details and she said, "Now you go right home." And I said, "No, I can stay, you know, I'll do my job." And so she said, "No, no. You go home to your family." And when I got home, my family were all sitting around the radio. Now this was *radio*, and Mayor LaGuardia said, "All Japanese nationals, stay in their homes," because, you know, he—they--didn't know what kind of reaction people would have of course. He said, "Stay in your homes for your own safety."

JB: Did that include all of your family? **[40:00]**

TK: Anybody. I mean, they said that--they meant when they said that--anyone looking Japanese, they should stay put. So, we did. And my sister was working for Mitsubishi. (This was, like Mitsui, another big company.) And she was working for the bank and the Mitsubishi bank, you know, there are so many Japanese companies that need the banking facilities and whatever needs to be done to make trade, to facilitate the trading—

JB: Sure.

TK: --and all that sort of stuff. So, she was working at Mitsubishi. And by January 1940 the trade treaties between Japan and the United States were stopped. They were abrogated.

JB: Were funds frozen in the banks?

TK: So that what happened was that all official trading then stopped. So, my father's import business was really at a standstill. And at the bank they let go just about everybody because they had the heads of departments in the bank—and it was a small bank because it was just doing the trading thing. It wasn't a bank that you go into [that serviced personal accounts] --

JB: Now this was—excuse me—but this was still before Pearl Harbor that we're talking about.

TK: Yes. All through 1939-40, they were beginning to coalesce and they had a lot of secretaries and all that were local hire—Caucasian--and they let just about everybody go. And then in 1940 all the Japanese except for the two—the chief of staff, I guess, whatever you call the head of the office there and two associates and my sister were the only ones left in the Mitsubishi Bank by [the time of] Pearl Harbor. And so when [Pearl Harbor] occurred, that was closed down and apparently during [that] night, every Japanese--real national or

Japanese national—not us—but Japanese nationals--were rounded up and taken to Ellis Island.

JB: Oh-h-h.

TK: And so, my--

JB: Did you know people who had that happen to them?

TK: Oh yes, because my sister knew everybody in that office. Of course, the next day we began hearing all kinds of stories. Our telephone was buzzing! And so, my father and my sister went to Ellis Island to bring these men, who were now incarcerated on Ellis Island—and they were taken “as is,” you know, in whatever clothing, you know, night clothes, whatever, pajamas, whatever.

JB: My goodness.

TK: So, to bring their clothing, to buy toothbrushes and toothpaste and all that and they [my father and sister] did that.

JB: Oh, what a terrible time.

TK: And I remember all of that, you know. And then, of course, when we began hearing about what was happening in California, and I would tell my friends--because here I was back working, you know, at Bellevue, and then after that I was hired by the New York City Department of Hospitals to be on staff—and I was the only Japanese there—

JB: So, you were hired before the war was over?

TK: --and I would tell them [my friends] what was happening, and they would say, “Oh, but they’re not American citizens.” And I would say, “Oh, no, they’re just like me. I’m an American citizen and they’re [being] taken into those camps.” They would say, “Oh, you’ve got it wrong.” That was the response I always got when I told people. And I think a lot of people felt that way. And they didn’t know the real truth of it. And then I went back to Columbia [University] and got my Master’s [degree] and got a position with the visiting nurses and this was really public health work for the first time. And I understand that before they hired me—and this was still during the war—they canvassed all their nurses and there was a lot of discussion before they decided to go ahead and hire me. So there was always that kind of thing that occurred. But no one always told me until after they got to know me well. Then they would say, you know, this is what happened. **[45:00]**

JB: Were you told that they were asking just whether or not you would fit in or whether—or were they actually concerned that you might have--

TK: Problems.

JB: [Or] be a spy or something like that?

TK: No, not a spy. I think they felt that if there was hostility and antagonism, I couldn't do my job. Because as a public health nutritionist--this was the Brooklyn Visiting Nurse Association. They had about ten substations. Maybe not quite that many, maybe eight, in different parts, like in Coney Island and in Green Point in Brooklyn, Red Hook, Brooklyn, they'll have an office and they'll have a staff of about ten in each of the offices, with a head nurse. Well, they brought all of the head nurses together and they said, "Do you think this would create a problem? And she's well-trained, apparently," or whatever they said about me, and that "She's an American citizen," you know. And they decided that they would go ahead with it, which was really very, very good of them, because there was so much hysteria about things, you know.

JB: Yes.

TK: And the nurses were very receptive, you know. There were only two public health nutritionists, my boss and myself. I was the assistant. And we covered—I guess there were eight [substations] because we each covered four substations, and we would go in, bringing in illustrative materials, any information, and we'd do in-service training and talk, and if they—and be consultants to them if they had problems with their clients. For example, they'd come to me with a mother-to-be, who was having such terrible problems in the first couple of months, like she didn't eat anything, and all that sort of stuff and what could a nurse do to help this patient, you know. And so they'd come to us about any kind of eating disorder, eating problems, nutritional problems, feeding problems, purchasing, buying things. So we did a lot of development of materials to be distributed on healthy diets, on purchasing and buying, label reading, all that kind of stuff.

JB: So, the visiting nurses themselves are the ones that would go into people's homes, but you were working--

TK: They would take me in [to the homes] if they thought I would be helpful to talk directly to the patient.

JB: Ah, so you were doing a lot of different things, then, and working with a lot of different people.

TK: Right.

JB: Did you ever have problems--

TK: No problems.

JB: No problems.

TK: No, I never had a real problem and if I did it would be filtered down to me. And, you know, just like—here I was working around, for at least, almost a year, before I heard that they

had all this discussion about me before they hired me.

JB: Oh, my goodness. So, your degrees were all in nutrition or public nursing—or public health--

TK: Health, not in nursing at all.

JB: Public health. Did you take any courses in art or art history while you were in school?

TK: Well, part of your home economics training is to take art classes too--

JB: Oh, well, yes, I remember that that used to be part of that [home economics course when I was in high school].

TK: And I took an elective on the social and intellectual history of Europe and I took an elective on, you know, art history.

JB: And it was always a part of your background.

TK: Yeah, not only the visual arts, but the performing arts. I loved the performing arts.

JB: As an audience member or did you act or dance or did you do--

TK: Oh, well at college I was always in the dance group.

JB: Ah, was it modern dance?

TK: Oh yeah.

JB: Well, living so close to St. Denis [of Denishawn], I guess--

TK: Yeah, also at Skidmore was the first time I was exposed to all of modern dances—you know, not really. In high school, there was a needle trades school [similar to today's high school of the performing arts] in New York, where they had dance concerts and we always—my sister started this—we always got a subscription each year. And this was when I was introduced to Martha Graham, to Humphrey-Weidman [the dance company formed by Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman], to Pearl Lang, to José Limon, you know, the whole gamut of modern dancers of that era. **[50:00]**

JB: And of course, later on, Edith Wyle had an interest in that too, didn't she?

TK: Uh-huh. Well, I think, when you come to Los Angeles, modern dance was practically unknown here, you know. The only person was José Greco, or somebody like that?

JB: Well, he did a lot of tours. I can remember going to a concert when I was in college in Indiana and José Greco came to Indiana.

TK: But you didn't get Humphrey-Weidman, you didn't get [Martha] Graham, you didn't get all those.

JB: No.

TK: Even in Boston, the Harvard students were not that familiar with modern dance. When you'd say you do modern dance, they'd think you were doing the tango—not the tango, but you know—the lindy hop.

JB: Popular, popular dance. Well, my, this is so interesting. I wonder now--I guess I'd like to find out what happened [at] that time--the end of the war—and what led up to your coming to California. And let's take a short break.

[Pause.]

JB: OK, we're back.

TK: All right. In New York [I had] such a rich exposure. And so that [when] I was in high school and the early years of college, my sister would subscribe to the New York trade school series, which was a modern dance series, and those programs were just long sheets of paper telling [who] the dancer [was], like if it was Humphrey-Weidman, then the dances, and who were in the companies. And the choreographers and all that. So I saved everything. I'm a terrible packrat. And so I just gave that sheaf to the library at UCLA.

JB: Ah, how wonderful!

TK: The performing arts [library].

JB: And so, how long did you work in public [health] then?

TK: Well, at the end of the year—and the war was over by now—this was '45. There was a man that came, a young man that came, looking for my father's store after it was closed because of the war. Miyako was closed down; the store was closed down, and then Miyako was reopened because my father had the foresight to put everything into the names of my older brother and sister.

JB: Yes, because some people, some Japanese Americans, lost their property during the war, didn't they?

TK: Yes, well the store was closed; that was the end of that. But Miyako was reopened and they put—my brother was in the army—it was reopened at the end of 1942.

JB: Before the end of the war then?

TK: Well, it was closed the night of Pearl Harbor. And so, during the year of '42, they used--their lawyer was William McWilliams. (And William McWilliams was Carey McWilliams' brother [Carey McWilliams was an American author and editor, best known for a strong commitment to progressive causes]—and he [William McWilliams] was a lawyer and they fortunately had this very nice lawyer and he fought for them to reopen Miyako because it was owned by American citizens--not foreign nationals—they were Americans, you see.

JB: Oh, right, right.

TK: And so they reopened Miyako and at first they thought no one was going to come if was a Japanese restaurant. So, they decided to make it—because the roast beef was so good—to make it a roast beef restaurant. Well, nobody came anyway. So, then a couple of the customers who came back, said, “Keep it Japanese.” So, they did. And so, in '43, it was turned back into a *sukiyaki* and *tempura* restaurant. And by this time, my older sister was teaching, at Yale, the Japanese language program for the army, and all those—they took in what they called “native speakers,” and the boys were not supposed to speak any English while they were in class or even in their living situations, they were supposed to be— **[55:00]**

JB: This was when Yale was still an all-men's school.

TK: Oh, yeah, but this wasn't part of Yale [proper].

JB: Oh, it was the army training--

TK: It was the army training program for the Japanese language. And then they moved that whole thing to Monterey and, then in Boulder now. I think—isn't it still in Boulder now?

JB: I think maybe it is.

TK: The army language program now of course is more Russian and now is whatever—it's probably now--

JB: Chinese, I would think!

TK: Chinese—well, Iraqi.

JB: Or Iraqi of course.

TK: Afghani.

JB: Afghani.

TK: Yeah, well, and so, she [my sister] was supposed to be a native speaker. And when Miyako reopened, the boys [in the training program] would come down to New York and they wanted to try out their Japanese on the waiters and order in Japanese and all that. So, they would come in to eat. And then by this time the 442nd— [or rather] the 100th Battalion—was formed, which was the precursor to the 442nd. And they were all boys from Hawaii. And they went first to Italy. And because they're from Hawaii, they did not let them go home to Hawaii before they were shipped out—too far away and too close to another enemy, so they were given leave before they were shipped out and they would come to New York and they would come to Miyako because they wanted Japanese food before they were shipped out, so now that Miyako was doing well, they gave every

Japanese GI--that is, every Nisei [first generation Japanese American] GI--a free meal before they shipped out. So, the restaurant was really doing well and as the uniforms came in, the other street people, you know, passers-by, would begin to try it out again, so we'd have some civilians coming in too—and Miyako grew. And Miyako was a big restaurant. Do you know Miyako at all? Were you ever there?

JB: You know, I've never been there, no. I'm sorry to say I've heard the name, but I really knew nothing about it until you started to tell me about it. I'm so glad you did.

TK: I have some pictures and things.

JB: I would love to know a little more

TK: [It was] in a very well-located area, 20 West 56th Street, because it's just up from Trump Towers and near Radio City.

JB: So, it's still going?

TK: Until the end of the seventies.

JB: Ah.

TK: Tsukada-san, who was the manager, died. Then my father and my sister ran it and then my father died and so my sister ran it. And by this time, by the seventies, you know what's happening, since we needed to get Japanese specialty chefs. So William McWilliams, the lawyer, helped us to contract chefs to come to America because we had to say that there was no other person in America trained to do this work. So they [the Japanese chefs] would come for two-year contracts. As soon as their contract was over, they opened their own restaurant. So there were restaurants up and down the street and around the corner and everywhere.

JB: That was really the start of the popularity of Japanese food--

TK: Restaurants. And, of course, you see, the occupation of Japan—all these people [that] went through Japan, they began to like it. And they began eating the food and they loved it. When my father was running his restaurant, he didn't dare serve *sushi*, because they would say, "Raw fish! Who's going to eat raw fish?" They turned up their noses. This is why we were *sukiyaki/tempura*. But we had *table d'hote*, which was native foods. You could order it special on a—cuisine for a special order--but, generally speaking, most of the people had *sukiyaki/tempura* or cooked foods.

JB: So—let's just get back to—just after or at the end of the war and just after the war--you were still living--

TK: At home.

JB: At home.

TK: And I was—I actually was doing my internship.

JB: And so—were you—were you dating at that time? **[1:00:00]**

TK: You know, at Skidmore, too, I only dated--because at that time—it was assumed that you just don't date outside of your race.

JB: And there weren't any Japanese or Japanese Americans--

TK: At the schools.

JB: Were you—did it matter to you? I mean, I certainly understand that that attitude would matter to you. But did it matter to you that there were no available men, eligible men?

TK: Well, sort of. Of course, it did! [Laughing]

JB: [laughing] Yeah, I would think! You had girlfriends, I'm sure, who were going out.

TK: So I did meet some Japanese men who were students. There was one at Amherst and there was Hiroshi Mitsui at Cornell—but he was a Mitsui, so my mother said, "Don't put your hopes up. A Mitsui is a Mitsui and that's—you know—that's that."

JB: Oh-h-h.

TK: And so, but—they're rare—only on occasion, but at the end of the war, when my father closed his shop, this young man came, looking for my father's shop, and the people in the next shop told him where we lived. So he came out to Queens and I came home from my job at the hospital at Bellevue--

JB: Your family had moved to Queens at this time?

TK: Yeah, ever since I was in high school. They moved out to Queens instead of staying in Manhattan. And so this man was walking around the house, looking into the garage, and I came in and my parents weren't home, and I said to him—asked him what he was doing there and he said, "Oh, I went to the store, and the store was closed, and I want some books on Saikaku." And he had—the store had some of these books on Saikaku [the 17th century Japanese poet, Ihara Saikaku] and this was Edo literature. So I looked at him, and he said he was a student at Harvard. He was studying Japanese literature, and he was now in the army. And here he was, you know, in this private home.

JB: Was this a Japanese American or was he Caucasian?

TK: He was Caucasian. This was how it was. And so, you know, who [what sort of person] would know these kinds of things, you know, on Japanese literature, if it wasn't true? It had to be someone who was knowledgeable. So I invited him in--

JB: You felt more comfortable--

TK: And I served him tea, to wait for my parents.

JB: Ah--

TK: So that was my first meeting with Howard Hibbett. The war was still on. I didn't see him again until--

JB: Was he in the army? No, he was a student, you said.

TK: He was a student at Harvard, but now [during the war] he was in the army.

JB: Ah--

TK: Then I didn't see him until the war was over. And the first weekend I saw this young lieutenant come up—[laughing]—and he asked me for a date. And he was now—he had been a part of the special unit that did a lot of code-breaking and translations in the Pentagon unit that was outside the Pentagon. It was supposed to be top secret. And that's why he [had] stayed away from me. He thought, you know, he would be suspect. He never spelled that out, but I'm sure that was it. And so, as soon as [the war] was over--

JB: And he obviously—excuse me for interrupting—but he obviously, at least spoke Japanese and was also--

TK: Oh, beautifully.

JB: --reading. Ah--

TK: He read and spoke Japanese. And he was a student of Reischauer [Edwin O. Reischauer, noted scholar of the history and culture of Japan]. So, of course, he was still in the army, but the war was over. And it was a whirlwind courtship.

JB: He must have been very handsome in his uniform--

TK: [laughing] He was very nice. And so, we got married. And we got married in '46. And my parents were very open, particularly my father.

JB: Really?

TK: My father said, "We're in America, and we don't give our children very much choice [i.e., they don't have many choices in marriage partners]. Where are the Japanese, you know? So, uh, he was very, very good about it. My parents were very, very good about it. And so we were married, and we went up to Cambridge because he had to finish up. He was still an undergraduate, because the war [had] interrupted [his education]. **[1:05:00]**

JB: And what about your work?

TK: And then I—since we had no money—just the GI Bill—I worked for the Boston Visiting Nurses—as a nutritionist—a public health nutritionist.

JB: And was your experience [in public health] there pretty much the same [as in Brooklyn]?

TK: I only worked for them really only a short time, and after that I went to the Forsythe Dental Infirmary [in Boston], which is a research institute for dentistry—at that time particularly. And they were doing the—the person who started it--and [the person who was] the current director—were very much interested in nutrition. They did the initial work on what happened to the human body when there is a Vitamin A and Vitamin C deficiency, particularly the C deficiency, you know, you get all the bleeding in the gums and all that sort of stuff. And the really—the—what happens to bone structure with the deficiencies in the different vitamins. So, they wanted to develop a nutrition clinic as part of the—and this is when I was hired.

JB: Wow, that must have been pretty exciting.

TK: It was. It was a terrific job. And I lectured to the dental interns and the Tufts students came over and there were a couple of people from Harvard who lectured, you know, in this setting, to the dental interns, and they came from all over--

JB: Were you organizing that [nutrition] program--

TK: Yeah.

JB: Ah! Pretty heady stuff!

TK: There was a nutrition person and I assisted her and then she left and I was the person, and before I left I hired another nutritionist, so there were two of us. And then I left because Howard finished. He was a Junior Fellow at Harvard. He finished and he wanted to go to Japan. And this was 1950.

JB: Ah. How did you feel about going to Japan?

TK: Oh, I was excited. I wanted to go, even though my job was really developing into something that was quite big because I was asked to do the nutrition part of a research paper and, you know, your name would be on it, and all that sort of stuff, but, you know--

JB: That would be a hard decision, even though you wanted to go.

TK: Oh, I wanted to go. And in 1950 things were still pretty bad in Japan and that was a very interesting year we spent in Japan—actually it was more than a year.

JB: And what did your husband do in Japan?

TK: Well, he was—do you know what a Junior Fellow is?

JB: Well, I think so—but tell me anyway.

TK: A Harvard Junior Fellow is patterned after the Cambridge Fellows [at Trinity College in the U.K.]. And this is where—there are only 12 at any time, I think that's the number—maybe they've changed. But they are selected. You don't apply. They are supposed to be the brightest minds, young minds, coming out of the colleges. And so it isn't only Harvard—they are referred from Harvard, but the men—this was all male at that time—came from all over, other schools as well. And so the requirement is--as a Junior Fellow--is that when you are assigned (you know, at Harvard they have houses)—you're given a study and, if you're a bachelor, a room in one of the houses, so that you are part of that house. Howard—we were married—so Howard had his office in Kirkland House, but he lived with me in an apartment.

And then, you were allowed to choose whatever you want to make your study, your research, whatever your interest is, to develop it. And so, for Howard, it was going to Japan and studying the language, literature, customs, etc. There was another man we knew, by the name of Levinson, and he was interested in developing the philosophy of science, and he worked—they'd give them a laboratory, whatever you need, to pursue your science. He became—he went to Berkeley and he developed that whole discipline. Now, the philosophy of science is something that is not [that new]—but before him, there was no philosophy of science. So, these are really brilliant young people, that they hoped to develop. And so if you needed a laboratory, if you needed to travel, it's all provided—but not for your wife. So, I took out my savings, and we went to Japan. In Japan, uh, since we were not part of the occupation, we didn't have any help from the army, we had to live by ourselves, with the black market and everything—and, of course, we had some relatives help us. [1:10:00]

JB: Yes, I was wondering--

TK: But, you know, they were impoverished with the war. And so we—I got a job and became “local hire” with the U.S. Army as public health nutritionist!

JB: Oh, good for you!

TK: And because they had a nutritionist and the Korean War had broken out--

JB: Oh, that's right—June 1950. I graduated from grade school [then] and remember that, yes.

TK: And so because of the Korean War and because this woman, who had been the nutritionist for the SCAP (Supreme Command Allied Powers) for the Occupation of Japan—she married a British major or something like that, and went off. They needed someone to finish up the program in Japan and to develop the program in Korea, particularly to analyze the foodstuffs going into Korea for the ROK (which was the Republic of Korea)

army, and for the Korean relief program. And so they hired me right away because I had the credentials and I was right there. They needed someone. And I was a GS 13. And I didn't know what GS 13 was. So you had to go into the army hospital and get your physical and—before you were definitely hired—and in the next cubicle were two women, and they [were saying], “Oh, we are doing great. We're GS 7. Isn't that wonderful?” And I said, “I'm GS 13. What does it mean, up or down?” Well, by the end of my time in Japan, I realized that the only thing higher is a 15, which is a full colonel. Above that you don't have GS. You're a general or whatever.

JB: Oh, my goodness!

TK: So, 13 is pretty high up—and I could have ordered out cars in order to take me back and forth--

JB: Yes, I was wondering--there must be perks and did your salary reflect that?

TK: It was a good salary, you know. In those days, when you quote those salaries, you don't think they were very much, but they bought a lot. And so that we—with my salary—and now I had Officers Club privileges. I could go to the Officers Club—so we had our meals a lot of times at the Officers Club. 45 cents bought you a tremendous meal and so—and drinks for 5 cents, or something. And so we had—we lived well, once we got all of those perks.

JB: Now, you didn't have to go into Korea, though. You were working entirely in--

TK: In Japan, everybody was working in Japan.

JB: Where in Japan were you?

TK: Tokyo. All the people in command, that were in command of the Japan program, the main officers that were in Tokyo, were now doing Korea.

JB: Ah, but you never had to go.

TK: No, but our general, who was the head of our department, which is the Health and Welfare, of course, would—they were concerned one time about—they felt that there might be germ warfare, so in the dead of night, General Sams [Brigadier General Sams, Director of Public Health and Welfare during the Allied occupation of Japan and during the Korean War] went with an interpreter and a couple of other people, you know, his associates and so forth, and they were dropped in a small boat to the shores so he could examine some of the hostages or prisoners and he came back and it turned out to be smallpox. So that they had everybody in Japan under the army--under this SCAP—be re-vaccinated if they hadn't been vaccinated. **[1:15:00]**

JB: My! So you were there for about a year all together?

TK: About a year and a half.

JB: And did you travel while you were there at all?

TK: In Japan, we went to Kyoto and other places, but not too much because once you got your job you were busy. But it was good getting to know--and since I was living with a Japanese family—they were the most wonderful family I lived with. It was husband and wife and--

JB: Were they relatives?

TK: No. My mother's sister-- What happened was that my father went to Japan, you know, in '45, right after the war. He was one of the first people to go [back] to Japan [after the war]. I don't know how my father does it! But he wangled—you know, as an enemy alien, he couldn't cross borders, so he could never go into New Jersey, for example, because he was [not allowed to] cross state lines. But he always got permission. He got permission to go down to New Orleans where all of the 442nd was in training to visit my brother. And when he got there the chaplain took him around in a Jeep to visit all the units because he said it was a morale-booster to have a parent come down, because-- they [the soldiers] hadn't seen [their] parents at all. So, he had a terrific time being—going all over the camp and being “the great man,” or someone treated like that, you know, treated so wonderfully well, and he ate with the boys and—he talked about “having mess with the boys,” with the tin plates and everything, and he enjoyed himself immensely.

JB: Your father must have been a charmer.

TK: Well, he certainly got himself into things, you know, and his—developing himself in America in the early years (he wrote an autobiography) and trying all kinds of, different kinds of jobs, in order to make some money, and he talks about all this [in his biography]. He was here working for more than ten years before he could bring my mother over.

JB: We didn't really talk about that. That's one of the things we'll follow up on--

TK: At any rate, in Japan, having this kind of relationship with the man and woman [Mr. and Mrs. Iba] we lived with—he was the main—what do you call it? —director or—he was the one that took care of the Sumitomos. And as that, his family, his grandfather and great-grandfather were always—they all had that position. They were [all] the major person who was in charge of taking care of that family.

JB: That was your family name—Sumitomo?

TK: No, the Sumitomos—Sumitomo Bank!

JB: Oh! I—[laughing]

TK: [laughing] The three—there are about five--but the three big ones that you [saw] all around in the early years—now we have many more—but it's Sumitomo, Mitsui, Mitsubishi.

JB: Well, Mitsubishi and Mitsui I recognize.

TK: The Sumitomo Bank is just as big as the other two. And Mr. Sumitomo, who is the head of the family, is a small, slight man who is a poet. And so he was enchanted with Howard! This Caucasian, who understands him, who speaks Japanese fluently, who knows Japanese poetry, you know, the whole bit. So, Mr. Iba had introduced us to them [the Sumitomos] and when we went anywhere, when we went to Kyoto, when we went to see the Bunraku or the Noh plays, he always gave us a letter of introduction. And to have this letter of introduction from this well-known family was "Open Sesame." So we had a wonderful time! And so we were able to penetrate parts of Japanese society, particularly in the cultural and [at a] level that we wouldn't have [been able to] otherwise, if we didn't have this opening. **[1:20:00]**

JB: How wonderful! So—how did it come to an end then? What took you away from Japan?

TK: Well the Junior Fellowship had to end.

JB: Oh, I see. That was just the end of the term.

TK: We went back to America and it [the Junior Fellowship] was, I think, a two-year or three-year appointment, so that he had to spend some time at Harvard, finishing up, and so at the end of it, he entered the Ph.D. program. He was a Junior Fellow and so, because he had done most of the research already, he submitted [it] and got his Ph.D. And the first job that he was hired [for] was UCLA.

JB: Oh-h-h!

TK: That's why I'm in Los Angeles! And that was in 1952.

JB: Very interesting! Well, perhaps we should take a break now

[End of Session 1: 1:20:44]

**CRAFT AND FOLK ART MUSEUM ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW OF TOMI KUWAYAMA**

Session 2 (1:53:50), Friday, January 25, 2008. Interviewed by Joan M. Benedetti.

JB: OK. This is Friday, January 25, 2008, and I'm here again with Tomi Kuwayama in her home in Los Angeles. At our first session, last week, Tomi summarized her life story up to the point where she arrived in Los Angeles in 1952. Today we're going to focus more exclusively on her involvement with the Craft and Folk Art Museum and at another session we'll go back and get the rest of her personal history and also do some other follow-ups. So, Tomi, I can't resist asking you--which came first, the chicken or the egg? Did you meet the Wyles first, or had you heard about--was it The Egg and The Eye at that time--or the Craft and Folk Art Museum?

TK: It was still The Egg and The Eye, and Edith Wyle had started her gallery/restaurant, and so she had wanted, I believe, to make it a little more—I wouldn't say academic—but interesting, with lectures and talks and things of that nature. So, she consulted my husband, Bob Haas. Since the [story I was telling of my life at the last recording session], I was divorced [from Howard Hibbett] and remarried [to] Robert Bartlett Haas, who was head of Arts and Humanities for the [UCLA] University Extension. It was in his area of expertise to develop programs outside the university. And Edith Wyle consulted him on developing some sort of program that would be part of her gallery. Also at the time, we were living in Beverly Glen, and across from us were a family by the name of Zolotow and Milton Zolotow was a designer, and he was asked by Frank Wyle and Edith Wyle to develop a logo for The Egg and The Eye, which he did, and that logo is still around today.

JB: So that must have been before the opening of The Egg and The Eye in 1965?

TK: I believe it was soon after because I think The Egg and The Eye was already functioning as an omelette restaurant and gallery. But she wanted to create [a logo] that would be prevalent, and could go on every one of the materials that they sent out, and this would be part of—whether there was a lecture series—The Egg and The Eye logo would appear—whether it was a newsletter or whatever—invitations to gallery openings, things like that, would have that logo, and it was conceived by Milton Zolotow, our neighbor. And so we had this kind of on-going connection, one way or the other.

JB: You were surrounded!

TK: Yes, and because [in] Los Angeles—particularly West Los Angeles--in spite of the fact that it's a big city, there is sort of a cohesive kind of neighborhood feeling among people who seem to be interested in the same type of things, whether it's the university lectures or whether it is a political organization. And I became very active in a political organization

called “Women For” and at some of their big meetings and [in] other areas [at other events] I would notice [Edith Wyle] and Edith Wyle would notice me and we would greet each other, and so that was the way we got to know each other--but not really. We were more or less casual acquaintances at that point.

JB: Well, it seems it was inevitable that you got involved with The Egg and The Eye.

TK: Yes.

JB: And then the Craft and Folk Art Museum. What were some of your first impressions of Edith Wyle? **[0:05:00]**

TK: Oh, I felt that she was a charming person, quite lovely and dynamic. She seemed—her interest in Japan was very evident to me, because she would—she came across that way, because she talked about it with me and, particularly, [she was interested] in Japanese folk craft. At that time, I wasn’t that well acquainted with Japanese folk craft, as an area of interest. I was thinking of Japan as a complete cultural entity, which I began to be very interested in because of Howard [Hibbett, Tomi’s first husband], who was into Japanese literature. And so I was interested in the Japanese culture through the literary [culture], rather than through [the] folk art. And so she widened my horizons—very much so, and that was very good. And so when she started the Craft and Folk Art Museum, I—and changed The Egg and The Eye to the Craft and Folk Art Museum—I became a member.

JB: Do you remember—did you go to the opening of The Egg and The Eye? I’d like to know a bit about your remembrances about The Egg and The Eye—about the gallery, that is.

TK: In the beginning, I did not—I wasn’t that knowledgeable and didn’t attend. And I really didn’t know that much about it because we didn’t get the announcements, etc. But as we gradually became more acquainted with the Wyles, with the shop and everything, we did begin to get those announcements. And I think—and it’s blurred whether it was the Craft and Folk Art Museum or still just The Egg and The Eye [Gallery]--when we started to go. And I remember feeling the surge of crowds as you entered in the shop area--

JB: --at an opening.

TK: --at an opening. And it became—and as the years went by—you either went left to the shop or right to the galleries or go straight upstairs to the refreshments [laughing]—and the [third floor] gallery.

JB: There were always—a lot of things were going on always in every part of--

TK: --in every part of the building. And they were young, enthusiastic—and, of course, at that time, we were relatively young—although you had a better cross-section of ages, and I

think, predominantly, people were in their thirties, forties, and fifties, and so we were [of] comparable ages, so that it was very—a place to go and to get to know other people.

JB: And did you meet Frank Wyle at that time too, or later?

TK: Oh, later, actually, because it seemed to me, in the beginning, when we first met Edith and [got to know] the gallery and shop, Frank wasn't that much around. He was working and it wasn't until much later, when I became quite involved, that I began to meet Frank.

JB: So, let's see, you knew the Zolotows. Were there other people involved with the gallery, or the museum, at the beginning, that you particularly knew, or remember?

TK: Well, once we became—it became the Craft and Folk Art Museum, Edith wanted to have two support groups, the [Contemporary] Craft Council and the Folk Art Council, and she asked me to help her form the Folk Art Council. And at that time, we knew Jane Ullman [who was on the CAFAM board].

JB: Oh, yes.

TK: And Jane Ullman--we actually knew her because across the road from us on Chrysanthemum Lane, where we lived in Beverly Glen, were the Tedescos. And Laura [Lorenzo's first wife] Tedesco's foster mother—foster parents—were the Ullmans.

JB: Oh, my goodness! [Tomi's third husband was Lorenzo Tedesco.]

TK: "Foster" isn't the correct word for it because Laura has her own mother, who was very much involved with Laura too, but the Ullmans really were—took the role of foster parents to Laura Tedesco, and they were around a lot, and we met them, of course, through the Tedescos. And Jane is interested in art of all kinds, and she's an artist herself, a sculptor, and she worked—so the two of us started the Folk Art Council, and asked Joyce Hundal to join us. Now Joyce Hundal--we knew her because she and her husband imported Indian artifacts and art. And they had a shop—I think on Melrose, or in that area, where so many of those shops were. And after they closed that shop, she was still active in the Indian art [collecting] community, and so we asked her to join us because she was so knowledgeable in that area. So the three of us then: Jane Ullman, Joyce Hundal, and myself started the Folk Art Council—which still exists today. **[0:10:00]**

JB: Which still goes on today, yes, and it's always been very active. Do you remember some of the first activities of the Council?

TK: Well, for the opening event, which I thought was very nice, it was in Jane Ullman's garden. She has a lovely garden, and it was an outdoor affair, in which I had thought it would be very nice—there [are]--Japanese restaurants all around the Ginza, which they call *teriyaki* places. They are chicken on skewers. It's food all on skewers. And so they [had] just

opened one, a restaurant called the Nambankan on Santa Monica Blvd. I think it's still there. So, we asked them if they would come and make *teriyaki* on skewers for us, which they did, and we had little rice balls with sesame to go with it and then we brought in other things, you know, to make that as part of the refreshments. And I got my Japanese summer kimono yardage—the *yukata* [a light, cotton fabric], which is made into a summer kimono; we had the rolls of *yukata* cloth. And I put them up as banners, to make stands, where the chefs would be making the *teriyaki*, and we put the cloth around the stands so that it looked like a banner around the service stand. And so it was, I thought, a very auspicious beginning for the Folk Art Council.

JB: Absolutely. And your describing [it] brings back a lot of memories for me, too, of similar occasions, but with different ethnic groups represented—and always there was food, wasn't there?

TK: There was always appropriate food.

JB: Usually associated with whatever the exhibition was. So, do you remember any of the exhibitions, in particular, especially the first ones that--

TK: I don't particularly remember the first ones and I don't know exactly how they fit in, but there was a wonderful exhibit on middle European costumes that was really quite spectacular. [Two costume exhibitions opened simultaneously in March 1978: "The Art and Romance of Peasant Clothes" and "Romanian Folk Textiles," curated by Joyce Hundal.] And I think my friend Joyce Corbett was one of the curators, or lent costumes because I bought a costume from her and then, eventually, donated it to the museum. And, so there were costumes from Hungary and Romania and that area—and Czechoslovakia. Another one that I remember--because I have the catalogs that I remember those--was the one on Greece. Do you remember the exhibit on Greece?

JB: There was an exhibition of--

TK: Greek artifacts.

JB: Yes, Greek folk art. Actually, I have a list here [looking through the lists] both in chronological order and alphabetical order and--"The Greek Ethos," I think, is probably the one you were thinking of. Basil Jenkins was the curator and I think he worked at the Fowler—it wasn't the Fowler at that time, but--

TK: It [wasn't called] the Fowler Museum, but it was a small museum [separate from what became the UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History]. And then, of course, she [Edith Wyle] did these wonderful exhibits of, for example, toys--folk toys. And quite a few on Mexico.

JB: Yes, Mexico. I think Mexico and Japan were her favorite--

TK: --the dominant--

JB: --areas. It seemed we had several of those and they were really, really memorable. Anything else about the Folk Art Council that you remember in particular, the activities? [0:15:00]

TK: Well, it was Edith's idea that [the Folk Art Council] began to have booths and sell things and they did it—at the zenith of the Craft and Folk Art Museum, I think—when they took over the building next door—really across the street [on the east side of Curson] before they built that huge building [the California Courtyard, a block-square office development].

JB: Oh, yes. We called it [the second floor of a 2-story building at the corner of Curson and Wilshire] the "Annex," I think, yes.

TK: In the Annex, on the second floor, they had booths and folk art [and] the Folk Art Council was involved, but it was a Craft and Folk Art Museum thing. It wasn't only [the] Folk Art Council. And they had food and they had everything. [This was the second Folk Art Market, held in December 1984. The first Folk Art Market, in December [actually October 30], 1983, was in Dorothea Casady's garden.] But it was smaller than what was developed later on [as the Folk Art Market]. The Folk Art Council took it over and then began doing it. And then we began making it an annual event--

JB: The Market--

TK: The Market, the International [Folk Art] Market became an annual event. And we rented the Culver City Auditorium [in December 1985], which was the Veteran's Auditorium. And we had 25 [annual markets]. [The Auditorium] accommodated 50 booths and, if we used the stage in the Culver City Auditorium Annex, it was 55-56 booths that we had. And we always were able to at least turn over around \$10,000 to the museum as our net profit from that undertaking, even though our expenses were high because to put in ads in different throwaways, to get out enough cards and brochures—not brochures, but [posters]--

JB: The announcements.

TK: The announcements and the mailing for that--

JB: And you had to rent the booths [the booth set-ups], didn't you, the--

TK: And we had to rent the Auditorium and the booths—and that went over \$1,000.

JB: But still, that's a very high ratio of profit. I seem to remember that it's always been very successful.

TK: Yes, it's always worked out.

JB: And it happens fairly close to Christmas, I think, or to the holidays, so that people--

TK: Well, it's always at the beginning of November.

JB: Yeah, so people are in a gift-buying mood.

TK: Yes, because it's the start of their Christmas shopping. And it's always been representative booths from—people from Africa, from Asia, from South America, as well as, of course, Mexico.

JB: What was the process of developing the list of vendors in the beginning?

TK: Well, we used as a base the vendors that [participated in the original bazaar in 1983 at Dorothea Casady's and in 1984 in the CAFAM annex space, as well as our own members who collected and made and sold folk art] and then the vendors that were around for the Festivals [of Masks] and then word of mouth--other people would contact us because they wanted a booth. In the beginning, the booths were very inexpensive. And some of us who had [shops]--for example, Joyce Hundal--always had a booth. Some of our own members would want to have a booth, because they were collectors and they wanted to winnow out their collections—or they had collected other things that were not part of their collection, but now they were ready to get rid of [them].

JB: So, they were not entirely dealers?

TK: No, they—but as the market evolved—that was in the beginning. As the market evolved, then they became more and more professional. And the dealers were the ones that stayed on. The others didn't. You know, once [the members had] sold one season they weren't ready for the next season. Whereas the dealers would be--

JB: --always--

TK: -- [ready] for every season. And so that we have dealers from the very beginning who have been with us.

JB: And I would think they would be very happy to have such a venue.

TK: Right. But the booths, now, I think they're \$100 [for] you to buy a booth.

JB: Well, I think most of those dealers are used to paying that kind of a price for--

TK: Oh, that's cheap! When you buy a booth in Santa Monica [at the various fairs that are held at the Santa Monica] Civic Auditorium or in the [Santa Monica] airport hangar, it goes into the thousands. **[0:20:00]**

JB: That must have been a pretty exciting time, seeing the flowering, so to speak of this organization.

TK: And it was very much a cooperative effort. You know, to be vendor chairman took a lot of time.

JB: I meant to ask you--you said that you and Joyce [Hundal] and Jane Ullman started it, but did that mean that you were also the first officers of the Council? Did you--you had officers, didn't you?

TK: Yes, we did and--I think Jane and I co-chaired it for a while; then Joyce and I co-chaired it. And then Joyce was chairperson and then I went back and became chairperson at one point. And I became vendor chair at one point. So that, you know, I filled in a lot of roles in the Council. Right now, I'm not any particular title, but I'm still on their board.

JB: How many people are on the board?

TK: On the board? About ten.

JB: Ah.

TK: Uh-huh. And most of them have been with us for a long time.

JB: Yes, but the membership as a whole is fairly large isn't it?

TK: Well, it varies. And I think we have—I've lost count actually. But they have a very loyal membership. On the edges, there are a few that [go] in and out, but the nucleus have been with us for a long time. And they--we're all getting old [laughing] and a little more tired, so we don't--they're not as active as they used to be. But we still do, I think, relatively strong programs.

JB: Are there monthly meetings, or, how does that work? Do you have regular meetings at which there are programs for the--?

TK: What we do is that we have our board meetings the first or second Tuesday of each month, and we try to have an activity each month, and so that there's always something that is going on that is an activity. Now since this [the past month] has been the holidays, of course, the big activity in November was the Market--

JB: The Market, right.

TK: And then in January we have always a dessert and *hors d'oeuvres* pot luck and this [is] to announce—by that time we know exactly—how much the Market cost and what the net profits are. And so we can give that report and also—and let the museum know how much we're giving—and so this year we gave our usual \$10,000. And since one of our loyal members had passed away during the course of the year—and we always try to have our gift earmarked for an exhibit on folk art—Maryna [Hrushetska, the present CAFAM director] told us that they're coming up with a puppet show [the exhibition

“Mythical Creatures and Characters”), and we thought that was very appropriate, particularly, since Monroe Morgan was a puppet collector.

JB: Oh, he was the one that passed away? I hadn't heard--

TK: He was the one that passed away, uh-huh. So consequently, Lita is sort of acting chairperson right now, and she represents us at—on the board of the [Craft and] Folk Art Museum--

JB: Say her name again?

TK: Lita Greenberg. So Lita, talking to Maryna, said “Oh, that sounds just perfect for us to give,” and Lita said that [Maryna] was in need of more money to cover the cost of the exhibit, so she welcomed the fact that we could now give her the \$10,000 to use for that purpose, and because of Monroe's death during the course of the year, we thought it was appropriate to say that we would honor Monroe and his memory for this particular exhibit. So that has been done. And some people think—thought--why isn't Monroe's puppet [collection] in the show? But, as you know, all these exhibits are planned a year or more in advance and this was a one-man show of Alan Cooke's and his puppets and what he has done with them.

JB: Oh, yes.

TK: So, consequently, it had not been organized that way and it was really quiet [fortuitous] that we knew that this show was coming up. Our market report was [in] January. The show opened in January, so that it was very— **[0:25:00]**

JB: --it was very good timing, I'm sure, for the museum. I wondered, as you were talking, obviously, whoever was the director of the museum would come to at least the meeting at which your gift was given to the museum, but I'm wondering to what extent Edith and then Patrick and the others [the other directors] that followed have been involved with the Folk Art Council?

TK: Well, this is one thing that the Folk Art Council has [agreed about] that the museum was not always present when we would have liked to have had them, so that our big events, particularly our big events--usually, though, [as at] the January event, when we announce the gift, and it is more or less a social event because it's a pot luck—they do come, somebody comes from the museum.

JB: Sure.

TK: And Frank Wyle has been to the one a couple years ago. Patrick has appeared. And we ask them to say—give a little progress report on the museum. And Maryna did a very nice job this last time. So that we do have them coming to that particular meeting. Oftentimes

the last meeting of the year is in June and it's a garden pot luck and [at] that meeting we do a show-and-tell and since it sort of summarizes the events of the year and plans for the next year and the election of the new officers, we do invite [a CAFAM representative] and ask them to please come. And usually somebody from the museum shows up for that too.

JB: Tell about the show-and-tell. Tell what that is.

TK: A show-and-tell is when members of the Folk Art Council come to the event with something that they have found, that they collected, or [that] on their travels they have picked up, or they have something—and sometimes they don't really know what it is--and they will do a show-and-tell and ask for information--or they would know very well what it's all about and why they bought it, and they would tell us that. So, it could work out both ways. When, on somebody's travels, they've found something that they were very interested in and found it beautiful—or whatever—and they'd buy it and they would not be sure what they'd bought, and oftentimes when they'd bring it to a show and tell, somebody will pipe up and say, "Oh, yes, that's from New Guinea," and it's this, that, and the other thing.

JB: That's terrific. It sounds very entertaining as well, something where people will learn.

TK: And people would tell why they were--

JB: --so they'd tell a little story about it, the circumstances

TK: Yes, you know, where they were when they—found it—and why they were attracted to it.

JB: So, I know, Tomi, that you were also involved, besides being on the [Folk Art Council and the CAFAM] board, that you were involved with the CAFAM Associates. Now was that before or after you came on the board--uh, the board of the museum, as opposed to the board of the Folk Art Council?

TK: Well, Edith asked me to be on the museum board, the Craft and Folk Art Museum board--

JB: Do you remember when that was, approximately?

TK: I think it may have been about 1974 or so?

JB: So, you have been on the board virtually from the start.

TK: I didn't realize that. I thought that the board had gone on for quite a while--I think--[Mort] Winston was the chair at that time. **[0:30:00]**

JB: Well, if that's the case, then it was two or three years later [Mort Winston was elected board chair in September 1976].

TK: But I know that she [Edith Wyle] asked me to come on the board to represent the Folk Art Council. And I think Jane Ullman was already on the board and so the two of us were

[together] on the board.

JB: And I think Bernard Kester was--

TK: Yes, he was also on the board--

JB: Actually, I think that, at least for a brief time, he was the first board President,

TK: Oh, that I didn't know.

JB: Yeah, I think that it was a very brief tenure, but they had to elect someone as the president of the board and Edith, course, was going to be the director, so she couldn't be also the president of the board. So, he was, at least officially, the first president. I think that Mort Winston was the next. But it seems like there was someone else in between. [Frank Wyle was board president from November 1975 through August 1976.] So, your remembrance is that he [Mort Winston] was the president when you first started with the board?

TK: Right.

JB: And what was your impression of the board when you first went to those meetings?

TK: Well, I thought it was--

JB: --quite different from the Folk Art Council board, I would think.

TK: Yes, because the Folk Art Council board consisted of people that I knew quite well and they were quite informal, whereas this was a little bit more formal board. But at the same time, as you say, you had people like Bernie Kester, you had--oh what is her name—the designer--

JB: Gere Kavanaugh?

TK: Gere Kavanaugh—and people who were active as hands-on people in the craft and design area, as well as someone who's a corporate person like Winston.

JB: Right. He was president of the Tosco Oil Company, I believe.

TK: It was Tosco, yeah. And he was thinking about oil shale before it's time.

JB: That's right. Now, Frank, of course, although he wasn't the president of the board, he was on the board and a very active member.

TK: Right.

JB: So tell me what your impressions were of him—and any committees that—were you involved in any committees at that time?

TK: [No, but,] well, as the board evolved [I became involved with the Associates] and I think there

were a couple of people who were already very active in the Associates. [The Associates was a high-end support group founded in 1980 by board member Judith Stark.]

JB: Do you remember who they were?

TK: Oh, if I saw a list of names I think I could pick one out. [0:35:00]

JB: OK. That's something we could come back to next time.

TK: And so eventually I went on a couple of their trips. One to help out, and one to Seattle in 1986, I believe it was. That was the first trip I think I took with the Associates. And so that was very—a lot of fun and interesting. They also had hired, I think, a coordinator, so that she met us in Seattle and she had made the connections to galleries, to other venues, to collections, and things of that nature, so that it all was, you know, well-integrated and well-organized.

JB: Well, let's talk about the CAFAM Associates, then, and we'll get back to the museum board in a little while. So, what was the usual pattern of the activities [of the Associates] --

TK: Well, the Associates was very much the "high end" for CAFAM. And it was planned that one of the activities were these long weekends. So that it would be a four- or five-day weekend that would take you to different cities and different places and then in those places the whole group would be well-organized, put up in a very nice hotel, [and] the people they met in those areas would be really very important collectors. We would go to the museums, be met by the director or the curator, and taken through the different collections that were interesting to the craft and folk art people. The lunch, oftentimes, may have been at the museum or a comparable, pleasant place. Dinner would always be quite a fabulous affair. So that it was set up as a high-end type of trip to take.

JB: So your fee would not only pay for the cost of the trip, but it would also contribute to the museum. Is that correct?

TK: Yes, I believe so. And since it was very expensive, I either helped (to defray some of the cost) and then, eventually, Edith asked me to take care of the Associates, and I thought this was going to be beyond my ability because I don't know these people who have these fabulous collections, and all of that kind of thing, but everyone was very helpful.

JB: But you were getting to know them.

TK: I helped to coordinate, in a sense that, if you had the names and addresses, someone has to write the letter, someone has to do the timetable, someone has to—you know, that kind of thing. And I guess that's what I was called to do.

JB: Did you have a—did that position have a title? Were you Coordinator, or--?

TK: Whatever [laughing].

JB: [laughing] OK.

TK: I'm not quite sure.

JB: Did that include planning for the trips and other events?

TK: Definitely planning for the trips. And planning within the trips. And the idea was to have this kind of access--

JB: Yes.

TK: --not only to the museums, but to private collections and homes. And to take in whatever that city had that was special. For example, [in] Seattle, you always go to the Pike Place Market. And that kind of thing. I'll never forget the 1992 trip to Philadelphia, when Diana [Munk, the Wyles' younger daughter] did all the coordination--

JB: Oh, I've heard that that was especially wonderful.

TK: That was a fabulous trip and the homes we went to were just beyond my ken, completely. They were just amazing. And she did such a wonderful job of that. And Chicago was wonderful too. They went to a lot more, and toward the end of that period of time—some of the very well-to-do people who were involved with the Craft and Folk Art Museum were in the Associates.

JB: Yes, I meant to ask you—I guess there were quite a few board members who were Associates, although not all.

TK: Not all, yeah.

JB: But then [there] were quite a few others [Associates] that were not on the board. You must know approximately how many were in the Associates group?

TK: I'm not sure. I never did a count, a head count, but the last trip we took was the one to Guadalajara. I was more or less in charge of that one, and what happened with that one was--the day we were to leave, where everything was coordinated for that date—they had that explosion or something in Mexico City and the trip had to be postponed.

JB: Was that the earthquake in Mexico City?

TK: No, it wasn't an earthquake. It was some sort of--

JB: Oh. I don't remember. When was—how long ago was that?

TK: Let's see. What date was that? Hmm-- [On November 19, 1984 a major fire and a series of explosions occurred at the government owned and operated PEMEX LPG Terminal at San Juan Ixhuatepec, Mexico City. Some 500 people were killed and the terminal

destroyed.] After that, they [the Associates] more or less disintegrated. [0:40:00]

JB: Oh, so the Associates are not active anymore. I guess I didn't realize that.

TK: Not any more. I think Maryna would like to have them revived.

JB: Oh, I'm sure. Yes.

TK: One of the nice things that they did in the beginning of the Associates group—before my time—is that they assigned everyone to write each day up--

JB: Oh yes!

TK: So that they'd have a report on what really happened.

JB: Those reports are in the CAFAM archives at UCLA. Yes, it's wonderful to have them.

TK: Right. Cause you really have a day-to-day activity log--

JB: A diary—yes.

TK: For the early trips, it was really done very conscientiously. This was when Edith was, more or less, very much involved in the whole thing. And [when] she let go of it, it really wasn't quite up to the standard of the first trips. And--

JB: Do you remember when the Associates began to--

TK: --disintegrate?

JB: --disintegrate—or be less active or--

TK: I think it was when Edith retired--

JB: Yes, in 1985 [sic—1984]?

TK: I think after that it began to not be quite as--

JB: Really? So it wasn't because the museum closed at the end of 1997?

TK: I think it was earlier than that, but it wasn't—not right away—because she was still active--but I think as she let go, I think it really wasn't as--

JB: So it never has been active since the museum reopened then?

TK: No there was no Associates [since] then. And even before the museum closed, it seemed to sort of--went on the wayside. [The Associates continued to have some activities, though not necessarily tours, at least through early 1996.] The other thing, too, [is] that [the] nucleus membership of people disbanded, and they were the people who—they would be the ones who would sign up [for the tours] all the time. Well, if you didn't have the numbers--

JB: Right, it wouldn't pay.

TK: It wouldn't pay to do it.

JB: Yeah. Well, that's very interesting.

TK: And I don't think-- So many of these people, now, have passed away, or they let go of their memberships quite some time ago. I don't think any of them renewed—well, I won't say any of them because I don't know the listing--but [they] have not rejoined actively into the museum, so much. I think mainly it's because they've passed away. They've grown old. You know?

JB: Well, that's certainly possible--

TK: One of them was Anna Bing Arnold, for example. She was in the beginning.

JB: Yes, that was quite a coup for Edith to get her on the board to begin with. She was very interested, I think.

TK: And she loved the trips. And she went on the beginning trips, particularly when Arnold, her husband, was alive. I think after that she didn't and she became reclusive because she was not well. [She passed away in 2003 at the age of 100, after many years as a recluse.]

JB: I see.

TK: For many years. And it was people like her, you see, that kept the Associates going.

JB: Of course, that would attract other people. Too, if you have particularly interesting or--

TK: Fabulous people!

JB: Fabulous! [Laughing] That's a good word, yeah. Were there any other Associates events or activities besides the trips? I know that those were the main events, but--

TK: One of the things that we did were dinners. And I remember going to the different restaurants, finding out the menus--

JB: They were in restaurants?

TK: Yeah—to have their meetings. For example, I went up and down La Brea [Avenue], to a couple of those restaurants there and tried to [find out] whether we could have a private room and how much would it be, and what kind of menu they would have, and whether we would have exclusivity in an area so that we could carry on in a very private manner. And that was hard to do and still get a price range that would be a good price range that would sell. **[0:45:00]**

JB: Occasionally, weren't there dinners in people's homes? It seems to me I remember one in

particular that for some reason the staff was invited to--the staff wasn't often included-- but I seem to remember one at a board member's—well, maybe it wasn't an Associates—there was a board member named Joan Borinstein, I believe. I think she was in real estate or something. And she had a [laughing] fabulous, contemporary craft collection. Now maybe that wasn't an Associates meeting. Maybe that was another--

TK: I think it was people like her and Anna Bing and all those people who were Associates. But, so once a year, or twice a year, there would be a dinner. There'd be the trips and, beyond that, I don't remember.

JB: Now, there was another group at the beginning, and I guess I never understood if they, sort of merged with the Associates, or if they were entirely separate, but it was a fund-raising group called Las Primaveras, which were, uh, women, wives [of Board members or other prominent CAFAM members] for the most part, who would put on the La Primavera Ball, and it was an annual fund-raising event. It was, I think, almost entirely [a fund-raising event]—although of course, it was an important social event too, but, uh--you were not involved in that?

TK: I wasn't involved. I remember the name, now that you mention it. And I remember, way back, in the early years, that they did give a fund-raising [banquet] in a hotel.

JB: Yes, it was in a hotel.

TK: And [it was] a big fund-raiser--.

JB: It usually had some individual who was honored. In fact, at one of them, Isamu Noguchi was the honoree. I think it was at the same time that his exhibition of the Akari lamps was [on at CAFAM]. But they were normally corporate leaders who were [honored], you know, and then of course their friends would be invited. So that was an entirely separate group [from the Associates]? Well, the Associates group was both a fund-raising group and a social group obviously.

TK: Yes.

JB: It would certainly be wonderful if it was reinstated. Well, let's talk about your experiences on the board then. First it was because you were in the Folk Art Council. So, uh, you started to tell how it was different from the Folk Art Council at the beginning.

TK: Well, it was a little more formal board. It was the board of the museum, rather than a division of the museum. And so that--I took it as quite an honor to be on that board. And, you know, any of these things, when you first start, you feel a little intimidated.

JB: Sure.

TK: But you get over it after a while [laughing]. Whereas with the Folk Art Council, you didn't feel

intimidated at all.

JB: Sure.

TK: But you always wondered who the other people were and, even with people like Gere Kavanaugh and Kester--I always think of Bernie Kester, I always think of him [and Gere] as being such terrific craftspeople, beyond my capabilities—and, so that they deserve to be on the board because they could get their cohorts to participate. And there's always a reason—or should be a reason—for each member of the board being on that board—that they could help out in one way or another, either by money, by influence, or because of their interests that would broaden the museum and help bring about the content of the museum into a category that's higher or better. So that I always think of these people, then, as having special assets, which I don't feel that I have [laughing]. **[0:50:00]** So at any rate, it was interesting to be on that board as a result, and I also got to know the Winstons. I knew Julia Winston [Mort Winston's first wife] quite well, so that it was good to be working with Mort Winston on it because he was, at that time, a very liberal man, you know, and he was very much interested in promoting and developing whatever he got himself into. So that was a positive kind of thing to happen. I did feel that being on the board—and I still feel that way to a degree, but I'm a little bit more involved now—but the museum reports, oftentimes, particularly the financial reports, went over my head because I never knew exactly how it all worked out, and that always made me feel a little uncomfortable, because I didn't really realize what was going on that way.

JB: Yes, I remember reading some reports of the board and thinking that they were difficult to understand. Well, what were some of the—well, I guess, first of all, you served on the board for several years as the Folk Art Council representative, but then, at some point, you were elected on your own and— isn't that correct?

TK: Well, I think I—I know that at one point I retired from the board. Then I was asked to come back on again. And then when I came back on again I was asked to help out with the Associates.

JB: So was it several years that you were off of the board?

TK: Yes, it was several years. And it was probably sometime in the 80s and then—and then when the museum closed—at the time the museum closed I wasn't on the board. [Tomi was on the board from November 1976 to September 1981 and from October 1991 to April 1997.]

JB: OK. And always your special interest when you were on the board, then, after the Folk Art Council, [was that] you had the Associates that you were working with. Were you on any other committees or subcommittees of the board?

TK: No.

JB: None?

TK: It's just that when the museum reopened, they asked me to be on the board again and at that time I was working on programs.

JB: OK. When the museum reopened in 1999, you mean, after it had been closed for a while [14 months]. Well, we'll get back to—in a sense it's a new era—after the museum reopened. Almost all the personnel had changed. [Tomi rejoined the board in 2003 and in 2004 co-curated (with Lyn Avins) an exhibition, "Eclectic Collecting: Folk Art A to Z," of folk art from the collections of Folk Art Council members.]

TK: Right.

JB: But before we get to that point, I'd like to talk some more about the history of the museum. At some point—and I'm not certain of the date—something like 1986 or 1987—Mort Winston had resigned and Frank Wyle took over as president of the board [December 4, 1987] and it was at that point that he had met Wayne Ratkovich, the developer, and they had started talking [in Fall 1986] about the new museum and the "Museum Tower."

TK: Wonderful dreams!

JB: Yes, wonderful, wonderful dreams! I can speak from the point of view of the [former] staff. It was just a glorious dream—although we were a little [laughing] worried about how it was all going to get paid for and work out. But certainly, it was a tremendously exciting time. Perhaps--do you remember when, maybe, Frank Wyle first announced that-- [0:55:00]

TK: I don't think I was on the board then [but] I remember hearing about it.

JB: OK. Well, just tell from your point of view--

TK: And Edith talked about it. And Edith was, you know, [she] said how wonderful it would be because they would also have commercial space, and—where the museum would be--

JB: Mixed use.

TK: --a mixed-use building, with living space on top, and it seemed like a wonderful idea and a very practical idea, particularly for that area--

JB: Yes, and I think that that was one of the very first mixed-use developments. It was certainly one of the first I had ever heard of. Now—I mean--if they had had that [opportunity now].

TK: But they had to secure the property first, and that they couldn't do. It was not only the property of the museum—and the two houses that they had [on Curson St.], but everything in between—the parking lot and the corner building. If they could have gotten ahold of that, then they would have been able to go ahead with--

JB: Well, we had it [the corner building at 5800 Wilshire Blvd.] leased [and occupied it] for several years [1993 – 1997], but in the end, they were not able to buy it. But can you tell a little bit—besides just a general excitement--were you involved in any of the--planning or the fundraising that was done in association--

TK: Actually, at that point, I think my connection with the museum was the most tenuous. And I don't think I was on the board or any of that in that period of time.

JB: OK. Let's see. What about, at least when you *were* on the board, and probably just as a member—and in the Folk Art Council too—you must have been aware that there was something like a permanent collection that the museum had. And, as I recall, it was somewhat controversial—as to whether or not the museum should even be collecting, and yet a collection grew. Can you address that?

TK: Well, I think that it is considered, if you are a museum, that you must have a collection. Why be a museum if you don't have a collection, and be able to, you know, have your own things? So I think, for that reason, Edith Wyle wanted for the museum to have a collection. I think the controversy was—is that--they didn't have the wherewithal to have the best kind of recording [procedures] and a place [where the objects] would be preserved—the conservation of what they had received—and all of that end of it was not thoroughly examined or carried out. I think that's where the controversy came. Because there is a factor of money!

JB: Yes.

TK: In order to do that.

JB: Yes, even if an object is given, there are the accompanying costs.

TK: There is an article by—the man who was the head of the Metropolitan [Museum of Art] that--

JB: Oh, Hoving, Thomas Hoving, yes.

TK: Hoving—in the *L.A. Times* about how lucky LACMA [the County Museum of Art] is because [Eli Broad] is not giving his collection. That saves them on insurance. It saves them on storage. It saves [laughing]--

JB: [laughing] I didn't see that article.

TK: --and still they could have his things on loan--

JB: Ah yes.

TK: --which you can still show and have and all the rest of it. And you could have it on “indefinite loan” and the cost of keeping that collection, of keeping it in good quality, and insuring it would not be on your shoulders. **[1:00:00]**

JB: Right. Good point! Now we've talked about folk art, of course, your involvement in the Folk Art Council, but I remember, from being on the staff, that the museum was interested in a lot of other things, primarily contemporary craft, and then--after Patrick became Executive Director--he was very interested in design and—architecture as well as product design. And I can recall even being upset because people would refer to us as “the folk art museum,” and of course we were a lot more than that. Do you have any memories of that being an issue? Well, let me put it this way: it seems to me that there was an issue around what the museum should be collecting—not just collecting, but exhibiting—what it should be about. At one point, there was even the possibility of changing the name of the museum and there was an attempt to come up with a name that was more of an umbrella name or--do you remember any of that?

TK: Well, rumbles of that. Actually, you know, when Edith started—and wanted--a [Contemporary] Craft Council as well as a Folk Art Council--and the [Contemporary] Craft Council was started—she put--was it Doris De Lorean—what is her name?

JB: Dora De Larios, yes.

TK: She and another woman were to create and develop the [Contemporary] Craft Council.

JB: I think Shan Emanuelli was also involved. She was on the staff, but I think she helped to organize it.

TK: Right, and I remember when it was first put out [about it]. The membership for each council was something like \$5. So everybody joined both councils.

JB: Ah.

TK: You know, you—[they] just [put] their \$10 in and said, I want a membership for both councils.

JB: Interesting.

TK: And for the first meeting, Dora De Larios had it at her studio. And she had—I'll never forget it. She took out of her ovens pizza and stuff!

JB: Her kilns!! [Laughing]

TK: Her kilns. You know who she is? She did--

JB: Yes, she did those tiles. [De Larios made ceramic tile art pieces.]

TK: Yeah, tiles, she heated all this wonderful food in her [laughing]--

JB: [laughing] How wonderful!

TK: And she served that, you know, as refreshments. And they talked about the crafts. That [didn't last].

JB: I know it didn't last very long. [The Contemporary Craft Council was active from 1979 until sometime in 1990.]

TK: And the Folk Art Council prevailed.

JB: Yes.

TK: Now the other thing is that [the Folk Art Council] always felt that Edith's interests—though she was very much interested in [contemporary] crafts—was more in folk art--than in crafts, that is contemporary crafts. We always felt very much enriched by that interest. And so that we felt that the exhibits were quite—that those that were shown were--quite a few of them—maybe predominantly--were in the folk art area. When Patrick took over, we felt more orphaned, because his interest was more in craft and design. And we felt that he let folk art sort of slip by the board. So there's always that kind of--

JB: It was almost a competition in a sense--

TK: Right. And there shouldn't be, of course. But there was that element.

JB: And for whatever reason, it seemed difficult to attract members to the Contemporary Craft Council. Whereas, I think that the Folk Art Council, as you said, had a core of people.

TK: Right. And they're folk art collectors. They've been folk art collectors. They've been interested all through the years. And they're devotees. And they are the base of our membership. And they just keep going year after year. They [the Contemporary Craft Council] didn't--and they should have because there are enough [contemporary] craftspeople in Los Angeles--

JB: Yes.

TK --but I think—there are so many—that they go off in their own craft groups, rather than to the museum.

JB: It may be.

TK: Yeah, they don't think of the museum as their center. And somehow, they should because [for example] I go to Manos [the Del Mano Gallery] and a couple of the other shops--

JB: Right.

TK: -- [and see] beautiful crafts work done by people. They have wood turners and potters—and all those people--of course potters are folk art you could say—and wood turners are folk art too, but they [the contemporary craft wood turners] are so finished-- **[1:05:00]**

JB: Yes, well, of course, there are folk art potters, but there are many contemporary craft potters and wood turners too, for that matter. We did have both [at CAFAM]. The proportions of one to the other in terms of exhibitions may have varied from year to year, and maybe

there were more [exhibitions of] folk art—but there always were some contemporary craft [exhibitions], and I know, as far as the [former] staff was concerned, they really tried to balance it as much as they could. So, there would, from time to time, be this discussion [about the museum's purview] that would take place about--you know--why did it all—what was it about all of those three or four things--what was the common thread? Have you had some thoughts about that? Have you ever wondered, I guess, personally, whether or not the museum should have, perhaps, dropped one or the other?

TK: Well, I've never thought that the museum should drop one or the other because I thought there was room for both, and both are important. Actually, when you think in terms of craft, when you get more or less a professional folk artist, he's doing a craft. It becomes a craft.

JB: --depending on how you define--

TK: --how you look at it, and what he was doing. And you—[a] potter is a good example.

JB: Yes.

TK: And so, then--when does folk art become less of a *folk* art? You know, when I go down to Mexico sometimes and go to the village[s] and see every man in the village doing the same thing—and they turn it out--by the hundreds—I just wonder about it.

JB: That's true. I haven't been there recently--in Mexico—but in my experience, even though you could go to a Fonart store [the Mexican government folk art stores showing representative crafts from each Mexican state] and see many examples of the same thing, each one was made by hand and it seemed to me that, inevitably, there were slight differences, and so, you know, that's another whole area of discussion—what is the meaning of production ware as opposed to the one-of-a-kind item, and so on? But you never doubted that any of it was appropriate for the museum to carry?

TK: Yeah, well, I always thought that they did a beautiful job of representing those two areas. And I thought design is an important area too. I agree with Patrick Ela that design should be part of it. And I do think that—so many of the museums, even in New York—it's craft and *design* now. [The former American Craft Museum has changed its name to the Museum of Art and Design.]

JB: Yes.

TK: And so that is very important, particularly [for the] contemporary. There are contemporary people in design that are interested in producing that type of thing, and whether they produce a design on a piece of paper or produce it as an object, you know, it's the same thing.

JB: I always thought it was interesting that it seemed as if people who had a lot of interest in contemporary craft or design also had an interest in folk art. These are generalizations, of course, but often it seemed as if those that had a special interest in folk art were not necessarily interested in contemporary craft and design. So—I'm not sure what that means [that is, what the significance is] except that there's no doubt that we had more people in our membership who were interested in folk art. But those who were interested in contemporary craft seemed to be able to take in--

TK: Both sides.

JB: --the whole spectrum. Did you ever have any thoughts about the name of the museum—the Craft and Folk Art Museum--whether it would be more successful if it was changed to something else?

TK: No. I always thought it was appropriate because it covered the area that the museum covers. I can't imagine what other kind of name you would give [it] that would still cover the area. I do know (and I think Maryna said) that as a craft and folk art museum, combined together, we're the only one or two in existence today. **[1:10:00]**

JB: I—don't believe there's any other museum that does both—and only those. There are other museums who do those things and a lot more, but--. Yeah, I think that is always what has made CAFAM unique, really. [That was true at the beginning of CAFAM, but not at present.] And I know that, among the staff and--Patrick certainly—and Edith, too—there was always a lot of discussion about--you know--what the common thread was. Edith was, obviously, always interested [in these questions, and] you said yourself that you got involved originally because of your husband Bob Haas's involvement in the extension programs [some of which discussed these issues].

It's been interesting to me to realize that The Egg and The Eye gallery—which was ostensibly a commercial gallery—had so much interest in educational programs. And when it became a museum (we were not in Los Angeles [at the time]—so I didn't know, personally, The Egg and The Eye gallery, but [from] what I have heard about it), it doesn't seem as if the museum was all that different from The Egg and The Eye gallery. After all, The Egg and The Eye gallery apparently never made any money, never made a profit [laughing]. But aside from the tax--you know--the IRS's opinion--the Craft and Folk Art Museum has always had a very strong educational component, and I'm just wondering--were there any programs that you particularly remember, or were involved with—lectures or workshops or--

TK: No.

JB: --demonstrations--?

TK: Frankly, I don't really recall. Maybe my mind is too clouded with what is happening today over there.

JB: There certainly is a lot of that [educational programming] going on now.

TK: Yes, there is. Very much so. But I do know that even during the time when Edith was there, that they did contact [L.A. County and City of L.A.] Parks and Recreation [and] contacted the schools to have those groups come to the museum and see what was happening [at CAFAM], particularly the exhibits that would be appropriate for the children. I think they also did demonstrations and workshops for them too. So that it was very important when they planned and redid the building to have that area behind [the shop] that the [Weingart Foundation] gave [in 1995] to do educational programs and workshops, hands-on workshops. I think that always was in Edith's mind—that there was always an educational component.

JB: Well Karen Copeland was the first museum educator, and I believe she was hired to be the registrar first [in 1975] because that was essential, but [in 1979] as soon as it was possible to hire someone else [Marcia Page] to be the registrar, she [Copeland] took over the role of educator. And I don't think there's ever [since] been a time that there wasn't a staff person who was the educator. So, uh, yeah, it's always been a very basic part of the-- [1:15:00]

TK: Well, what was the role for Willow—and Shan Emanuelli? They seemed to be the right and left hand of Edith during those years.

JB: Yes. Willow did a number of different things, including curating a couple of shows. The thing that she was most involved with—and maybe we should talk about this next—was the Festival of Masks. Shan Emanuelli, who later became more associated with contemporary craft, was actually the first coordinator of the Festival of Masks, but within a couple of years she had turned it over to Willow Young, and Willow was the coordinator for—oh, gosh—at least eight or nine years of the Festival. What is your remembrance of the Festival of Masks? Do you remember the first time you went to it?

TK: Yes, I always felt it was a very exciting event. And during those years there wasn't that much competition for that event. It was a unique event. And it was large. You had wonderful vendors. Of course, the food was always terrific. Everybody went and tasted everything. And it was *the* place to go—and for two days, you know, the whole weekend. So that it was, I think, a very exciting event, and I always enjoyed it. I always made a point of going to it.

JB: Just describe—as if I didn't know anything about it—tell me what it was like to go into the festival grounds and what you would see there.

TK: Well, I think, in its heyday—at its brightest—you would cross the street [Wilshire Blvd.] to the park [Hancock Park], by the tar pits, and the whole area would bloom--with the different ethnic booths, which sold all these things, and because ethnic booths are always colorful because they have colorful things to sell. It created a great deal of—what are we going to say—a bazaar effect (bazaar being b-a-z-a-a-r) [laughing].

JB: Yes, yes, yes [laughing]. Right.

TK: And it gave—when you'd walk in, you'd feel the excitement. They added music, so that there was always—music adds to the excitement. And when you have the food booths, you know, then you know, the whole thing becomes a day-long festivity. And then on top of that, they started the stage [performances]. They put up the stage, and they had programs on the stage, ethnic dances and other—they brought in the different [ethnic] communities and their cultural events that they could show on the stage. So that it became a three-part kind of festival: you had food, you had these booths, you had the dance show, all these activities--

JB: And the theme was masks.

TK: The main theme was masks, and so there was always a booth in which children could make their own masks, sort of a workshop thing that the Craft and Folk Art Museum would set up. And people could go buy and produce their masks. But, of course, the other thing that went on with the Festival—was the parade—and that went [on Wilshire Blvd.] from Fairfax [Avenue], past the museum, to La Brea [Avenue], didn't it?

JB: I believe I so. In fact, the very first year—it took me a while to figure this out because I don't think I was there [on the day itself], but—the very first parade did not include a festival. The parade [by itself] was the start of it [the Festival of Masks on October 31, 1976].

TK: At one point they had a dance, they did a dance, the night before?

JB: Yes, the Maskerade Ball! [It was always spelled "Maskerade" instead of "Masquerade."]

TK: The Maskerade Ball. And I don't think that lasted more than several years, a couple of years.

JB: No, it was three or four years maybe.

TK: No--and so [then] the next morning was the parade. And the people who went to the Maskerade Ball were supposed to put their masks back on and parade [laughing]. So that there were all of these things coming together! And it was a lot of fun. I only remember going to the Maskerade Ball once. I don't think I went twice. I don't know how often they did it. I don't think it was more than two or three times.

JB: I'm sure it wasn't more than four times.

TK: And of course, you know, the Ball, you stayed up late, so that you came to the parade quite sleepily. And then when—what is it—one of the restaurants—I think it was Marie Callendar's--started giving us breakfast, which was wonderful! And before that they [the Festival staff] did put up a row of seats for the--

JB: Yes, a sort of spectator's stand.

TK: Yes, a spectator's stand for the--

JB: --for the honored guests--

TK: For the honored guests--

JB: —for the board and the Associates-- [1:20:00]

TK: --for the board and special people of CAFAM—and then, after that, when Marie Callendar's opened their restaurant, they invited us [those on the spectator's stand]—for free breakfast--at Marie Callendar's and then you could--

JB: --and you could use that coffee in the morning—after the Ball [laughing].

TK: [laughing] But I think [the breakfast at] Marie Callendar's came after the Ball [in the years after the Ball was discontinued]. But it was very nice, sipping coffee and eating your omelette, looking out at the parade. It was the most luxurious kind of thing to do [laughing].

JB: And those parades were pretty elaborate for a long time!

TK: Well, I think that when Shan and Willow were actively doing it--they had, I think, schools, and particularly, Parks and Recreation groups--who made those masks, and they marched along, and they had the school bands--

JB: Yes, I think they would have for--at least two months beforehand--they would have workshops, both in the parks and--and the schools--where the kids would make masks and then they would end up in the parade.

TK: That's right—and each school would be represented. And it was—it was a big parade. At that time, it was a very long, big parade. And the school bands would play. And then they would get some celebrities to--

JB: Oh yes, to be the--what do you call it?

TK: --to be the master of ceremonies, or whatever [the Grand Marshall].

JB: I remember when Danny Selznick was on the board--

TK: Oh yeah.

JB: --and he was involved with—with— “Star Wars,” [the movie] somehow, I don’t remember [how], and Darth Vader was the leader of the--

TK: --of the parade?

JB: --of the parade [laughing].

TK: Well, those were the days, and we did get quite a lot of people like Selznick—and people that had the influence to bring in these kinds of exciting [celebrities that could participate in these] events together.

JB: Yes.

TK: So that—this is what I’m saying—the Associates, in the beginning, were such a great group of people!

JB: Yes.

TK: But it began to dwindle down. **[Pause in recording]**

JB: We’re back and I’m just going to ask, Tomi, for your impressions of some of the other aspects of the museum that we haven’t talked about yet—the restaurant. Of course, the [museum] originally was The Egg and The Eye gallery, and then when it became a museum, it—the restaurant--

TK: --was The Egg and The Eye restaurant.

JB: —took over the name of the gallery. But the restaurant had existed, of course, during all of the time of the gallery. [It was “The Egg” in The Egg and The Eye gallery.] So, just tell me what some of your impressions [were] of the restaurant.

TK: Well, the restaurant, I think, was really quite wonderful because at the time it opened, it was the only viable restaurant to go to on that whole stretch [of Wilshire Blvd.] from Fairfax to La Brea. There wasn’t anything [in terms of a good restaurant] in between those two streets.

JB: I guess LACMA’s restaurant never was very good. At least, not at the beginning.

TK: Well, at the beginning, it was just a sort of a cafeteria. I don’t think it went much beyond that—

JB: Uh-huh.

TK: --and so when people came—went to—LACMA and they wanted to make it a lovely day—particularly women—they would come to The Egg and The Eye, or meet at The Egg and The Eye, have lunch, and then go to LACMA, or vice versa or spend the whole day in that area. And it worked out perfectly because, when they got to The Egg and The Eye

and had lunch, they would go to the gallery or—and then after it became the Craft and Folk Art Museum— [they would] look at the museum things and get interested, and that was one way of drawing new memberships. The restaurant was always a special place to go to. It was—the atmosphere was very nice. It was a white tablecloth restaurant. You felt very comfortable. It was like— [“the ladies who] lunch,” you know. **[1:25:00]**

JB: Yes, but the décor was an extension of the museum in a sense.

TK: Yes, it was. Any art [objects] on the walls were from the museum—or the current show--

JB: Or related to the show--

TK: I think in the beginning when Edith—and I don't know about this [personally] because this was before my acquaintance with Edith—she—Rodessa [Moore, the chef] made these beautiful omelettes and had such a variety of omelettes and she [Edith] felt that that was a cooking craft. So it would fit into [the overall concept]—that Rodessa was a craftsperson, making her omelettes. And so that became a part of her whole concept of what the museum and the gallery was all about. So the omelettes were very special. And they were. They were delicious. She had—I don't know—an infinite variety of different kinds of omelettes. So you would go there—and that was before eggs got such a bad name.

JB: Exactly, exactly. In fact, for a while, they were considered, you know, a very fashionable thing to eat. I remember my favorite was something called an African omelette, which [had] a kind of lamb curry [filling]. Did you have a favorite?

TK: There was one, I think, that was more like an oriental one?

JB: Ah, of course, there had to be [laughing]!

TK: And that was quite good and that was—I'm just wondering [making a tasting sound] --what was it that made it special? Was it--what did they use in it? Did they use some *miso* paste or something? I forget.

JB: I don't know—bean sprouts, maybe--

TK: Yeah, something like that. And the—maybe mandarin oranges and bean sprouts or something—anyway, it was delicious, whatever it was. And there was such a variety that you could always go there and get something different.

JB: Yes.

TK: And another thing that they had—to go with the omelette—were excellent breads!

JB: Oh, yes. I don't know where they got it, but it was excellent, yes.

TK: And I think that Edith was especially attuned--

JB: There was a brown—brown bread, I think, with raisins, or something.

TK: Edith was attuned to breads. You know—she knows bread. So that with the omelette and bread—that was so good. That really was all that she needed to start with! And then, of course, they had ice cream for dessert and other things that they made. And it got a little more elaborate as it developed and as the kitchen grew. In the beginning, Rodessa just stood on her—with her little burners doing the omelettes--

JB: There was sort of a little stage, almost--

TK: Like an alcove, yeah--

JB: Yes.

TK: And that's all. They didn't have a real kitchen. And so it was just a clean-up kitchen because the cooking kitchen was what she had there [in an open archway facing the dining room]. And then it became bigger and more elaborate and more varied as it became a real restaurant.

JB: Yes. Yes, I've had many people tell me that, you know, they took their—the person that they eventually married--to the restaurant--that they considered it the most romantic place to eat and, yes, it certainly was very special. Now, I can remember when the discussions [about] a [new] museum or a renovated museum began, there was a discussion about whether or not the restaurant should be included. Well, actually, I guess what happened was, you know, the museum had to move and the May Company [department store] offered them a--

TK: Accommodations.

JB: --but they had to move out of the original building because of earthquake improvements [retrofitting] that had to be made. And that was when the restaurant was closed and that was in 1989, I believe, and it never did reopen, but it was thought by a lot of people that when the museum reopened in 1995 that it would include a restaurant. Now were you—I think you said that you were not on the board during that time when--

TK: No, but Edith and I discussed that. **[1:30:00]**

JB: Oh, tell me.

TK: We all felt that a restaurant was important to draw the people—we still do.

JB: Yes.

TK: But it's so expensive to develop a kitchen and everything else that we don't have the funds to do that. But when Edith and I had this discussion, we said, well, what kind of restaurant would we have? Eggs, since they have a bad name for cholesterol, is not a good idea

anymore. So, we thought we would do pastas around the world—and do all kinds of noodle and pasta dishes, because every nation--you know, the Chinese--

JB: --has some kind of--yes--

TK: --yeah, of pasta.

TK: You know, Chinese noodle dishes, Japanese *udon*--

JB: Oh, yes.

TK: *Ramen*--

JB: What a wonderful idea.

TK: --as well as spaghetti and lasagna and the rest of that.

JB: Yes. Now I did hear and I don't know if it was Edith or not—but there was someone in the administration who was saying that they always felt as if people would come in to the restaurant because they were going to LACMA either before or after lunch. They would come to our museum—to The Egg and The Eye restaurant—for lunch, and then go to LACMA, rather than [visiting our galleries]—and you would hear people say that they weren't even aware that the Craft and Folk Art Museum had galleries. And I also heard someone say that perhaps it wasn't really—what's the word—but the idea was that perhaps we would get more respect if we *didn't* have a restaurant. Well now, in retrospect that seems--

TK: Well I—since I've been on the board—since it [the museum] restarted, we've always been talking about—what kind of food service can we have? Because we know that food service draws people.

JB: Right, right.

TK: We know that we have competition today. When we first started to talk about it, Soup Plantation [a cafeteria-style salad bar restaurant at the corner of Wilshire and Curson] was still going--

JB: I remember that, yes.

TK: And, of course, we have Marie Callendar's and all those fast food things over there [on the other side of Wilshire next to Marie Callendar's] and, of course, LACMA has developed its own [higher-end, sit-down] restaurant.

JB: Right.

TK: But, still, it would be good to have. So what we're thinking of [now] is having some sort of cart in the open-air area. With, perhaps, umbrellas or something to shade it, or maybe a

canopy. But, essentially, open-air. We're [thinking of] building, in the back, a service area. We'd use paper goods so that we don't have to do dish washing, and it would be-- sort of--beverage service, with perhaps sandwiches and salads, kind of thing.

JB: So, there's a general feeling that—uh, you should have it.

TK: Oh, yes. We've been working on that ever since—[the] discussion comes up every year. The cost analysis is done and we can't afford to build it up. We need to have basic monies to do—to make those improvements.

JB: Yes.

TK: And I think you also need to have at least a couple of heaters out there. Usually when we're discussing it, it's in the hot weather, but in this [winter] kind of weather [laughing]--

JB: [laughing] Yeah.

TK: But it's always been in the minds of people—and at one point Frank Wyle, uh, for lunch, for one of our board meetings, had these wonderful near Eastern sandwiches, the rolls--

JB: Oh yes, the wraps?

TK: Wrap sandwiches and things--. And this was all from this woman who's very interested in-- serving these, you know, as part of, of a service like that. And so, we thought, it's delicious, you know, she would serve them with salads and stuff. No—we've had the people to do it [who are interested in running a small café], but [the problem is that] we had to develop the equipment for them to do it in.

JB: Yes, well, that's good to know. I know that there were many of us on the staff that loved the restaurant and were incredibly sad to see it disappear. But at the same time, until we had to work in the museum without the restaurant, we didn't fully comprehend, I think, what a difference it was going to make in our attendance—and in just the general atmosphere, and I began to realize—and Edith used to say this--that she wanted to “feed all of the senses.” And I began to realize that more than just a way of making money and drawing people in, that it was, in fact, a basic part of—certainly of her original vision. And--and that's why it doesn't—it hasn't seemed complete without something like that.

[1:35:00]

TK: Well, I think it—your feeling is prevalent, and on the board, particularly, because they feel that food becomes an integral part of--any sort of [museum experience] and museums are a sort of recreational activity, so anything that [enhances that experience] --even in businesses, there's always food!

JB: Yes. Now, even in libraries! They're planning a coffee shop in the UCLA [Research] Library.

TK: Oh, really?

JB: Yes, this next year--

TK: Because there's food all around campus--

JB: Yes, but they're, you know-- Well, that all seems obvious now. But at the time, it wasn't so clear. OK. Now, what about the shop? Again, when the [Egg and the Eye] gallery closed and the museum opened--the gallery [had] had pretty much everything that it displayed for sale, and now in the--in the museum--there's always been a separate shop. [And] the intention has been for it to be a fundraiser. Tell us about the shop and what has made it—at least in the past—and I think today—so special.

TK: Well, I think everyone finds the shop, really, quite special. I know that people come over, at Christmastime, and they say they went through the museum shop at LACMA, but they find things much more of their liking at the—at our museum shop. And I do think that—that we do have a variety of things. It's not all things at the high end--and it has a good grouping of things, although nothing is really cheap-cheap, but you do have a greater range of prices. You have things for children that are very nice, and so that I think people feel that they could come in and really find something of value that they would like and could afford to buy. Whereas, when they go into some of the other [museum] shops, they don't feel that way.

JB: And I remember that at the time the museum started, back in the mid-seventies, it was more often that a museum shop would have reproductions from their permanent collection, or from [their] exhibits, and one of the things that I always thought was special about the CAFAM shop was that they were all original items—folk art and contemporary craft—but all original pieces. There were no reproductions, so you could spend a relatively small amount of money and get a good, interesting piece of [original] folk art.

TK: Um-hm. And it still goes on today. When they had, for example, the Eva Zeisel show--

JB: Yeah.

TK: They had Eva Zeisel products, you know, as she [still] does [have her products available commercially]. And they had the Ardmere ceramics.

JB: Yes.

TK: Which were from Africa—[with the exhibition, “Zulu Fire: Ardmere Ceramics from South Africa”] being shown [in the] upstairs [gallery and objects from the Ardmere Ceramic Studio made by Zulu artists from South Africa] being sold below [in the shop]. So that [an example of] the real object that they're exhibiting is also in the shop for sale.

JB: Yes, I guess maybe the tax laws have changed now, and museum [shops], generally, are

able to have more variety of things, but at the time [that the museum opened in 1976], that was really kind of ground-breaking, I think.

TK: Uh-huh.

JB: So—and then we had the library!

TK: Yes. And I think that's something we miss now because we don't have the library.

JB: Well, of course, it—technically, it's available to anyone at LACMA [who goes to the LACMA Research Library] and you can look it up [the library catalog] on the—on the LACMA Web site, but yes, unfortunately, there's no room [at CAFAM] for it [the CAFAM library collection] --

TK: I think it's different when you were sitting there in the library [Benedetti was CAFAM's librarian 1976-1997], so people could consult you, and say to you, you know, I'm working on the exhibit that we're planning for—in six months—but I do need some basic material on this particular subject, and you could help them find that material, which I think was a big asset! **[1:40:00]**

JB: Well, it's true that we worked with the docents, especially. And, of course, we worked with the curators when the show was not completely finished already [that is, when a traveling show needed more work]. The *raison d'être* of a museum library is to [support] research for the permanent collection and the exhibitions and the idea--you know--at LACMA, they'll work three, four, five years ahead of time and, not only use the library collection that is there, but order books especially for [their] research—you know this very well because of what George did. (Tomi's brother, George Kuwayama, was the senior curator [at LACMA] of Asian art.)

TK: Right.

JB: --for many years.

TK: Over thirty.

JB: Over thirty years—and practically lived in the library, if he wasn't in the curatorial offices. And many curators do that. At CAFAM the situation was a little bit different because we didn't very often have full-time curators—some of the time [we did] and the library was able to work with them. At the beginning, the library—because it was tiny, really, only a token collection—we had to figure out what we could do, since we couldn't really serve as [an in-depth] research facility [at the beginning]. We could get general publications that the docents could use, but also, the other thing we did was to develop what was called an "Information & Referral File." That is, we collected information about, uh, all of the different museums and galleries and shops and classes and courses [all over the U.S.]

and—just anything that had to do with folk art and contemporary craft and design--

TK: Oh, that's wonderful!

JB: And originally, we were hoping to put that on computer. Well, the museum closed before we were able to do that, but we did have these files of material, of information. So people would often call the museum, not even knowing that we had a library, and assuming that they would be referred to a curator or, you know, someone who would have the information [they wanted], and, in fact, they'd be referred to the library. [The CAFAM Information & Referral files are now part of the LACMA library.] So it served a lot of different purposes. Were you—I'm sure that you were aware of the library. I'm wondering if the board, uh, generally, had a good concept of what the library was doing?

TK: I don't think they do because they're all new people, generally speaking, although there's some carry-overs. But I don't think—unless you're a library user, unless you're an academic or--

--a person like that—or a museum person—you don't generally think in terms of using it [a museum library]. And I think that now that you're physically at LACMA, I don't know how much the [current] staff uses you [the library].

JB: They—I've had them all over—and gave them a tour. I brought Maryna over separately and then had all of the staff come. And they were very impressed, but I think that, really just as was the case before the library was moved, unless someone on the staff, or a docent, had a specific need, they were really so busy. I mean, I don't think it was lack of interest necessarily. I think it was—and is—that they are so busy; they're just so overworked in a way--

TK: Yes, if you're doing an exhibit, for example, you always have to look up something. There's always material that you're not quite sure of, or you're interested in and you need to—to deepen your knowledge on it. And, of course, that would mean to go to you [as the CAFAM librarian]. I don't think people think of that because, physically, you're not in the forefront of their mind.

JB: Well, and those "short" answers, those—what we used to call— "ready reference" questions—often can be found on the Internet now. I think we have to—librarians have to face the fact—and they *are* facing the fact--that a lot of that kind of information—the sort of superficial information-seeking—is done on the Internet. Now, it's possible that the [current] staff do call the main library [at LACMA] number, and I might not ever hear about that because the library collection, actually, is physically over in the May Company building—kind of ironic [because we were there in the early nineties]— **[1:45:00]** and I am doing cataloging and, you know, just cleaning up of various "rats' nests," so I'm only

there one day a week [since I retired], and it's very possible that they could even page books from the Craft and Folk Art Museum collection to be used in the main library, and that [kind of thing] could go on without my ever knowing about it. But it is a different, a different situation.

TK: Uh-huh.

JB: But even in the past, do you think that the board, even when we were very much there [in the museum] and often even served as the meeting place for [laughing] the board meetings and other, you know, events, with a few exceptions—you were certainly an exception and Elizabeth Mandell was an exception—but I had the impression that, as you say, unless someone had a special reason for--

TK: And not everyone on the board is an active collector. And I think they may have a superficial interest and knowledge, but they're not deeply into it. They're on the board for other reasons.

JB: Yes.

TK: So that they wouldn't think of it—I mean they [those that are not collectors] don't do research, period.

JB: Well, I was just going to say—I think that if you have not ever done research for an exhibition, or, you know, for other reasons—you see the labels on the wall and don't really think, necessarily, about how that information [laughing] got there.

TK: Right.

JB: And that's understandable--for someone who isn't--

TK: Well, I think that the role of the curator—this is his field; therefore, he just knows it--

JB: We did—the library did evolve a Center for the Study of Art and Culture as part of the preparations for what was going to be the new museum. At that time, in the late 80s, Patrick Ela said to us—to the staff—that he wanted us to think about projects that, uh, could be viable in an enhanced physical facility, and the thing that I thought of was what I was calling the Center for the Study of Art and Culture. And it was intended to be a fellowship program.

TK: Uh-huh.

JB: And then of course we never had the funding for that. We had the funding—quite generous funding from the Irvine Foundation—for the development of the Center, for the enhancement of the library as a research facility [but not for the fellowships themselves]. But [a] thing that we did do that drew some attention to us was to have that series of

workshops on diversity and inclusion that were specifically for museum workers. And there were some board members at that time who were at least aware that that was going on. Do you think that they connected that with the library?

TK: You know, I'm not sure. I don't know--

JB: This may have been a time when you were not on the board. [Tomi resigned from the board in September 1981 and did not rejoin until the end of 1991.]

TK: Yeah, because I wasn't too aware of it.

JB: Edith was quite involved. We had an Advisory Board, a National Advisory Board that had a couple of meetings over a period of two or three years—while we were in the May Company [1989 - 1992].

TK: Um-hm. **[1:50:00]**

JB: And she came to every meeting and took part in the discussions, and Patrick came to most of the meetings. And she did try to involve the board at that point. It was an exciting time. I wonder—I'm sure you remember in the early 90s when, especially in 1992, a time when there was so much talk of diversity and the need to include many more kinds of people.

TK: Yeah, right. That's when the boards were trying to diversify, instead of having a WASP corporate board.

JB: Right. Do you remember anything about CAFAM being involved with any of those issues?

TK: Well, I think that they were conscious of those issues. And I think that that's why they had Ron Davis, for example, and some of the other people that they had on the board. And why they have me on the board [laughing]! And—so that--

JB: And rightly so!

TK: --they were aware--of diversity.

JB: Yes.

TK: And I think they still are—and I think even though they still are, it's not a conscious effort that's right out in front of you so much. It's because it's been absorbed.

JB: Um-hm. It's more accepted--

TK: It's not something that you do on purpose. You do it because—I mean it just evolves, rather than stop everything and say, "Now we don't have a black person. We don't have a—"

JB: But it is more in one's consciousness.

TK: Yes, it's just part of your make-up now.

JB: Yeah. Well, that's good, and I'm glad that CAFAM was involved with that--

TK: Well, you know, I love the staff now.

JB: Yes.

TK: It's a very nice [ethnically] diversified staff. They're all young. They're all quite attractive young ladies. And they are hard working.

JB: Yes. Well, you know, Edith Wyle started that. She was smart enough to hire young women who had a lot of ambition. And she knew that they would work their--

TK: --tails off--

JB: --tails off. Exactly. And that's what happened. And I think Maryna--

TK: --is doing the same thing.

JB: --is doing the same thing. Absolutely.

Well, I think we're getting to the point where we need to wind up for the day, but I think we also have quite a bit that I'd like for us to talk about next time. We haven't talked a whole lot about some of the sadder times, like when the museum closed.

TK: There were so many rumors flying about at that time too. And I can't pinpoint them at this moment in time. And we at Folk Art Council were discussing whether we would go on as a separate unit without the Craft and Folk Art Museum—that [maybe] we would be a [stand-alone] Folk Art Council because we had enough of a nucleus of people that were interested in what we were doing--

JB: And you did, in fact, I think, for those [14] months when the museum was completely closed.

TK: We still put on our [Folk Art] Market and continued.

JB: Well, I'd like to talk about that next week and we'll follow up, too, on some of the other odds and ends of things that we didn't have time for today.

TK: Um-hm.

JB: So, thank you very much!

[End of Session 2: 01:53:50]

CRAFT AND FOLK ART MUSEUM ORAL HISTORY PROJECT INTERVIEW OF TOMI KUWAYAMA

Session 3 (1:55:50), Friday, February 1, 2008. Interviewed by Joan M. Benedetti.

JB: This is Friday, February 1, 2008, and I'm here once again with Tomi Kuwayama in her home in Los Angeles and this is our third session and we're going to begin by continuing to talk about Tomi's involvement with the Craft and Folk Art Museum and then later we're going to hear some more about her life in Los Angeles outside of the Craft and Folk Art Museum.

Before we begin, I think we should clarify, Tomi, what your formal involvement with CAFAM has been. You were an early CAFAM board member, starting in December 1976, shortly after Mort Winston became chairman of the board and continuing through 1981—that was about five years. And then you were one of the founding members of the Folk Art Council, which was founded in early 1979, and you've remained involved with them all of this time into the present. And in 1986, you began to help out with the Associates—or, you may have begun before then, but that was the first record that I found [in the CAFAM archives] in the board meeting minutes--that you had planned an Associates event, to go to Seattle. And then in October 1991, you were named the Associates Chair, and at that point you began again to attend board meetings. You remained on the board until April 1997. Then a few years after the museum reopened under the auspices of the [L.A.] Cultural Affairs Department, you again rejoined the CAFAM board [in mid-2003], where you are today! As well as, of course, continuing to be an active member of the Folk Art Council Executive Committee. As far as I could tell, the CAFAM Associates became inactive around 1995-1996, and they have yet to be re-established. [The last Associates trip was to San Francisco in December 1995.]

TK: Correct.

JB: So that's the bare outlines, and I thought now we would fill in just a little bit more. I'd like you to go back to the early days of the museum when Mort Winston became chairman and you [first] joined the board and just ask you what his tenure on the board was like?

TK: Well, I thought he was a very good chairperson. He not only was quite efficient, but he brought in some of his colleagues, so this is why we had Ron Katsky, who was our treasurer, and therefore it made it more efficient in a way.

JB: Was Ron working for Tosco [Oil Company] at that time?

TK: He was working for Tosco at that time.

JB: And he was a lawyer.

TK: He was a lawyer. And, uh, and he [Mort Winston] brought in the resources, which were considerable, that he had at that time because he was chairperson [CEO] of Tosco. And so that he—and I think at one point he did have his staff, for example, man telephones to bring in people.

JB: Ah! I remember some telethons. Yeah, I think that our staff took part in that.

TK: Yeah, and he also got his staff to augment what the CAFAM staff had in order to make the telethon successful and have a--quite a number of telephones available. And so, these are the kind of resources he brought to bear, and as a result, I think, we had some very good years and an accelerating membership, and good, very excellent, activities were going on at the museum. I think—during that time I think the museum was at its heyday in membership and in its recognition through the community as a viable museum.

JB: Yes, it seems to me that there was a lot of confidence in—

TK: Um-hm. **[0:05:00]**

JB: --the museum at that time. And he was very enthusiastic about what the museum was doing, but also as—well, he wasn't an administrator, but--in terms of his leadership on the board--uh, he was very pro-active, I think, wasn't he?

TK: He was. He was very much that way--and at home, in networking and in dealing with people, since he—in Tosco—he had the highest management position as an administrator or as a director. So that he was well aware of what he expected of people who were in comparable roles in the museum.

JB: Now, I wanted to just talk about Patrick Ela for a bit. He was hired in 1975 to be Administrative Director to Edith's Program Director. They had a co-function. And then when she retired in [July 1984], he became Executive Director, and functioned alone as the sole administrator of the museum. And how would you assess his performance as an administrator?

TK: Well, I think Patrick has—is a charming young man. And he was very good at networking, but I think as a manager, he--I don't think he really liked managing people, [and having] the fiscal responsibility of a manager, I think, was something that he was not as appreciative of.

JB: Yes, he was very charming, and that was important because that, of course--part of his role was to attract people to the museum, both fundraisers and others, and I think he did a good job of that.

TK: And he loved the art—and he loved to go—pursuing galleries and getting to know the people at the galleries, and things like that. And so he was an excellent networker. He was a

wonderful PR person. He really was, because he had charm, and he had—he was an attractive young man.

JB: Yes he was and he eventually married someone who worked as administrative assistant—Lisi--Lisi Rona--

TK: --to him.

JB: It was wonderful to see that develop [laughing].

TK: Lisi was the administrative assistant to the directors—to Edith and then to Patrick. And I think she fulfilled her role extremely well. And she was also a very good individual, in that she was able to meet people, have a positive personality that people liked, and she was much quieter than either of the directors, and so that it was—one felt one could go and talk to Lisi if they wanted to get to Patrick or to Edith.

JB: Yes--I have to interject that--I think that all of their administrative assistants fulfilled that role-- [laughing] And that may be the reason that there was such a [laughing] high turnover in that position! But we had some wonderful people who were working in that position.

As a staff member, I found Frank Wyle to be something of a mystery. What are your thoughts about Frank and his relationship to the museum—and--and has it changed over the years?

TK: Well, I think in the old days when Edith was the director—I think Frank really allowed Edith to be the person who—and it was her interest, her knowledge, and her ability to network with people in the [folk art and craft] area—she knew them all. Frank did not. He just followed her. And he allowed her to do all those things. So he was an enabler, in the background, an enabler in many ways, not only giving her moral support, but financial support. And I think that really made it, particularly in the beginning, a viable growing museum because they could rely on Frank—at least *she* could rely on Frank to come—to come forth and help when it was needed. [0:10:00]

JB: Yes, he did have to step in, when Mort Winston retired as chairman of the board. Did you notice, uh, changes at that time, in terms of the board?

TK: Well, in the composition of the board, it's always fluctuating. And Mort Winston, I think, tried hard, being a corporate person, to bring in more or less corporate-type people. Edith, of course, furnished the people who were interested in the arts, and particularly, in her area in folk art and crafts. So that she—we had on the board at that time, uh, Gere Kavanaugh, Bernard Kester, and these people who were known to be experts in their fields. Uh, this was not either of the two men's forté. But they were able to bring people they felt—which may have—*may* have deep pockets. And this was also essential for the

museum.

JB: Absolutely, yeah.

TK: And so that this was balancing the two areas together.

JB: Well of course, you've talked some about Edith. At first, you were casual acquaintances—I guess through "Women For" -- . Can you tell me how your friendship deepened after--?

TK: Well, after I became active in the museum—and Edith was the instigator in putting me on the—you know, suggesting me for the board--

JB: I was wondering—uh, huh.

TK: Yeah, I think it was through her suggestion. And of course, Edith loved the things Japanese. I think [that] made her very sympathetic to my interests and to me as a person. So that I've always felt this warmth with Edith, and so our friendship grew.

JB: Did you go to Japan with Edith? I know she led a couple of tours to Japan. I was wondering if you were ever on either of those?

TK: In the eighties, my first trip back to Japan in the eighties, was with the Craft and Folk Art Museum and--

JB: Oh, it was! OK, good.

TK: --and Harriet Moore was the travel agent. And Edith and Ruth Shireson [now Ruth Levin] and their husbands all went and we had a wonderful time. And it was at that time that-- actually, the Tuttle went too, you know—not Ed Tuttle, but his mother--

JB: Oh, uh-huh.

TK: And, uh, uh, Lisi? —no it was Lui--Luisa!

JB: Luisa Del Giudice, yes!

TK: Luisa. And she had just married Ed Tuttle, and so she and her mother-in-law were on the trip. And most of the people who were on the trip wanted to expand their knowledge of Japan, but they really didn't know too much. And as a result, they came to me with a lot with questions, and I would answer them.

JB: During the trip.

TK: --during the trip. And Harriet Moore noticed this, so she suggested that I take a trip--lead a trip—to Japan, which I did after that.

JB: Oh, I see. But was that in association with the museum?

TK: No. The original trip with Edith and Ruth and the others was a CAFAM trip.

JB: Yes, I remember hearing a lot about that. There were pictures in the newsletter and so on.

TK: And what Edith did—of course, it was through her that—she knew the artisans in Japan.

When they would come to America, or she would invite them to do a demonstration, they would put them up in their home. As a result, she had a personal relationship with the—really the Japanese treasures in craft--

JB: The Living Treasures, yes.

TK: The Living Treasures--the craft papermaker--

JB: Yes—Eishiro Abe?

TK: Yes, Abe-san that she used to talk about.

JB: Oh OK.

TK: And, uh, and some of the potters—so that when we went, we were always welcomed, because they had that personal relationship. And Edith was able to do that, which was really—which was almost necessary—to have a successful visit. **[0:15:00]**

JB: Well, it sounded just wonderful. Well, were you aware that she intended to retire in 1984?

TK: Not until it almost came to be. And—I guess there were rumors, you know, floating, that she was planning it, but--I was working, actually. I didn't retire from my job until '84--

JB: I was wondering—ah. Well, we'll talk more about that—but, yes, of course, you couldn't devote *all* your time to the museum [laughing]. I remember being shocked to realize that she was, in fact, sixty-five years old at that time.

TK: Um-hm.

JB: Because she always—like you—seemed much younger and--

TK: Well, she was energetic!

JB: Absolutely! Yes. I remember Edith saying that—in talking about the roles that she and Patrick played in the museum, when he was Administrative Director and she was Program Director, she would say that she was the accelerator and he was the brake. That's the way it was supposed to work anyway. And she certainly was an accelerator!

TK: I don't think he was much of a brake, though! [Laughing]

JB: No. [Laughing] Oh well—that's another story! So—she did retire—and I know she continued on the board--

TK: Yes.

JB: --but, did you notice changes after her retirement?

TK: Yes, because I think she tried hard not to interfere with Patrick's administration. I think she was conscious of that, and so, even on the board, she would defer, rather than, you know, charge ahead [laughing] with her own ideas. And when you know Edith, you have to admire her for that because--

JB: Yes--

TK: --it's not her temperament!

JB: She did have, I think, Wednesday lunches with him, pretty much every Wednesday [laughing] was his day to have lunch with Edith. So, she kept her finger in--

TK: Well, at the board meetings, etcetera, she would speak up, but she did *not* overshadow him.

JB: Um-hm.

TK: Or she tried hard not to.

JB: Um-hm. From a broader perspective, did you notice differences--?

TK: Not really. There wasn't—it wasn't that different.

JB: In terms of the programming--

TK: In the programming, etcetera.

JB: Well you--

TK: There is a slight difference though. Patrick is interested in crafts and design.

JB: Yes.

TK: Edith was interested in folk art.

JB: Yes.

TK: So that there is that difference. So you would see that, I think, in the exhibits shown.

JB: You felt that there was more of an emphasis on craft and design--

TK: Right. And as the years went by, the Folk Art Council began to protest that there wasn't enough folk art.

JB: Ah-h-h.

TK: So that—we were quite aware of that.

JB: OK. I want to go on now to some of the less happy times. You've seen the museum, obviously, go through a number of crises. And there were two periods of time when the museum was completely closed. The first time was from 1993—the beginning of 1993--through May of 1995, after we had to move out of the May Company. You know, the May

Company closed. We thought we were going to be able to stay there for several [more] years while the renovations were done on the museum, but they [the May Company corporation] suddenly decided that they were going to close down that [Miracle Mile] department store entirely at the end of 1992. So we had to get out.

And that's when we first moved into the building on the corner [of Curson] at 5800 Wilshire. The renovations on the museum were not done, by any means. I'm not even sure they had begun at that time, although there--there were plans afoot. **[0:20:00]** **So** the museum was closed for almost two and a half years. There were some activities during that time. There were a couple of exhibitions at the Pacific Design Center. There were the diversity workshops that the Center for the Study of Art and Culture put on. There was at least one Festival of Masks during that time. And they did put on their annual fund-raiser/dinner-dance in both '93 and '94. But both the galleries and the shop were closed for two and a half years. And that was very hard.

[JB had to replace microphone on her shirt.]—I'm sorry—but at the same time it was a very exciting time [for the staff] because we were planning for this new building. Craig Hodgetts and Ming Fung, the architects, the young--you know--very creative architects had been hired to redesign, uh, renovate the original space and include the building at 5800 Wilshire in a combined space. We, of course, were already occupying 5800 Wilshire. So they were to come up with a plan to merge both of those buildings. And you were on the board at that time, as well as being chair of the Associates, and, of course, being very active with the Folk Art Council. So, uh, from that perspective, can you tell me what it was like?

TK: Well, I think at that time—it was a very confusing time. And just prior to what you just cited was a time when they had a huge fund-raising activity--

JB: Yes, yes.

TK: --spearheaded by Frank Wyle. And at that time [1989-1990] they did raise quite a good deal of money and whether most of the money was in promises or were actual money I'm not quite sure, but they had tentative plans that were drawn up on making a multi-use building [the Ratkovich "Museum Tower" development] in which there would be living quarters on top and, uh, retail down on the bottom, and the museum someplace in between. And I think they did [plan to] have a shop on the bottom; I'm not quite sure. But it was to be the museum in this multi-purpose building, which would generate their own monies, so that it would be sort of an endowment to the museum, as far as taking care of what costs, so that the museum would not be liable for costs on that building. What happened was always a mystery to me, through that whole project—and, of course, uh, with the earthquake [January 1994], the whole complexion of things changed, plus

the fact that I heard that it was the recession, that acute recession of that period of time, and so those promissory notes sort of evaporated, I guess? But whatever happened, it was never clarified. But we do know there was a recession; there was the earthquake; and all of these negative happenings.

JB: Yes, I know a little bit about that, and I believe that the recession was the major problem, because I remember hearing that they—by “they” I mean they had some representatives—who went out looking for the [development investment] money and the—I know they had looked into Asia, in particular, and this was really a worldwide recession, as I recall, in the early nineties.

TK: It particularly hit Japan.

JB: Yes, and I guess they were really relying on that money to put—for the bulk of the financing for the development. I don’t think it was just for the museum that they were looking for the money. I think they were looking for financing for the development as a whole and—that is, the Ratkovich people—and it just was not forthcoming. So that whole project was set aside—the multi-use, 22-story tower--Museum Tower--project. In the meantime, we had to--the city was pressuring the museum to comply with the earthquake codes. This was really very fortuitous, given that just a couple of [actually five] years later we, in fact, had one of the worst earthquakes L.A. has ever had in 1994. But it was in 1989 [that we had to move from the 5814 building]. **[There was a break in the recording here and some of the next 37 lines are approximately a repeat of the content above.]**
[0:25:00]

TK: [I never did know what happened to the money that] was raised for that [Ratkovich] program.

JB: Yeah, I think that I know a little bit about that. The Ratkovich plan, which was the plan for the 22-story multi-use tower, was a plan that relied on getting funding from outside sources. And I believe that they went on a worldwide search—and I think that this was not just the museum board, but the Ratkovich Corporation—I believe the funding was needed for the development as a whole. And there was this terrible recession going on at that time. So, they went searching in Asia, and just came up empty. This was in the early nineties.

In the meantime, we had had to move to the May Company department store, which was just a few blocks west of the museum because of the city’s insistence that we upgrade the earthquake compliance for the 5814 building—the original building—and so in 1989 the staff had to move out of our home at 5814 Wilshire and move to the May Company department store. And, of course, there were a lot of pluses and minuses to that situation in the department store, but it did mean that we were able to stay open and have our gallery on the 4th floor there, with a wonderful entryway designed by Charles

Moore's design firm. And we had the library and all of the offices and so on in the May Company. It was rather ironic that we had to move out because of earthquake compliance issues because, in fact, we did have a terrific earthquake—6.7—in L.A. just a few years later, and what was done worked [laughing] because we didn't have any--any major damage. We had a few books fall down off the shelves in the library and that was about it.

But as far as the funding was concerned, what happened was that monies that had been raised for the Ratkovich Museum Tower development were shifted to a plan which, although not as grandiose, was really, in the view of the staff, a much more practical plan, which was to merge the original building with the building on the corner at 5800 Wilshire. At that point talks had already begun with the owner of that building. That building, by the way—I'm sure you know this, Tomi—Edith Wyle had tried to--

TK: --purchase it.

JB: --get that building for years and years. I found memos in the CAFAM archives [from] her saying, you know—this was back in the late sixties, early seventies—it was like \$300,000, and, you know—[what Edith said was] “That's what we need.” Well, uh, eventually, we were able to lease that building with an option to buy. And suddenly at the end of 1992, the museum [was told that] the May Company [corporate management had] decided to close—to just close down that store all together. So we had to get out and we--at that point the renovations had not begun on the museum, but--we were able to move into the corner building at 5800 Wilshire [next door to the east at Curson and Wilshire]. And so that's when we began to occupy it, and Craig Hodgetts and Ming Fung were hired as architects to design that merged structure. So, yes it was a very confusing time. Certainly, for the staff. And I'm sure for the board, but at that point—that's when we were closed to the public for that two and a half years and, although, as I said, there were a lot of things going on, there was no gallery and there was no shop—and, of course--there was no restaurant either. I forgot to mention that when the museum moved to the May Company, that's when the restaurant closed and it never did reopen.

[0:30:00]

TK: I think that move to the May Company, although it was a salvation for the museum, it also—that's when we began losing our membership, because a lot of people felt that the museum had closed and was no longer in existence. And even though you'd say, “It's in the May Company,” it seemed to go over people's heads. And unless they saw big signs at the entrance of the May Company—which they never had—you didn't know to go up to the 5th or 6th floor [the gallery was on the 4th floor; the offices on the 5th; and the library on the mezzanine], where the museum was. And not too many people got up there for the

museum. And so, consequently, I think, that's when the decrease in membership began to occur. And then when we actually closed after the May Company closed down—and those who knew about the May Company—then when they saw the museum close down, we lost the rest of the membership. So that when we reopened, it was really an uphill climb to begin almost from scratch to develop the museum again—and its membership.

JB: Yes, that's certainly the way it seemed to the staff. When we were at the May Company, we tried very hard to get the May Company employees to help us. I mean, we had been promised by their administration that the employees would help [in directing people to where CAFAM was], but, in fact, they always seemed either confused or indifferent.

TK: Right.

JB: And people would be directed to the wrong floor—or not directed at all. So, yeah, that was—that was always a problem. But, uh, somehow, we did survive, and we got to the point where the building was completed—the Hodgetts and Fung-designed--quite a wonderful looking--space. There was some controversy about it. I guess not everyone was thrilled with it. But it was bright and clean and new and it was very different from what we had had. And I do want to spend just a few moments talking about that because it really affected what happened later.

What they came up with was a plan that really relied on the 5800 Wilshire building, the corner building. Not only were all the offices—or pretty much all the offices—there, on the second floor of that building—and the library—but there was a very large gallery on that first floor as well as storage for some of the collection. I think even more critically, the decision was made to transform what had been a small, but functional parking lot, in between the two buildings, into a lovely courtyard with a water feature—and this really is what made the merger work [architecturally]. However, it meant that we were totally reliant, then [for parking], on the parking lot that went with the corner building. And it was a large parking lot. If we could have kept that building, it really would have been wonderful because there was plenty of parking right in back. But it belonged to that corner building.

In the [redesigned] original building [at 5814 Wilshire], there was a shop on the first floor and education spaces in the back, and a gallery on the mezzanine, and a gallery on the third floor, but there was no restaurant. So—and there was no space for offices there—at least at that time. So it was a kind of strange situation, which we didn't fully comprehend, I think, really, until we began to realize that there was a possibility that the museum wasn't going to be able to buy that corner building. What do you remember of that? **[0:35:00]**

TK: What I remember is that, uh, apparently the people who owned the building [Joseph Ventress and Lena Longo] had—and they had many discussions—with the director and the board chair and—but somehow or another, we missed out! From what I understand, by just a few minutes-- from signing the contract! Someone slipped in between and signed a contract before they [the museum representatives] ever got to the office—and they were on their way when they got the—the affirmative—to go ahead with it. And so we lost the building—and we lost the building to people who, apparently, were not sympathetic to the museum, so that, therefore, there was no compromise in the usage of space, which they had hoped that [there might be]. And since the parking was completely with the [5800 Wilshire] building, it made a real negative happenstance to the museum because there was no parking, only street parking—which is difficult in that area.

JB: Um-hm.

TK: --so therefore, we felt that was too bad. Some felt that it was negligence and not being alert enough, and some felt, well, you know, we can't help it. But it was a big loss because that would have made the museum, really, into something. I think there is, right now, at this particular time [an opportunity] --the company that took over that building has gone bankrupt!

JB: Oh-h.

TK: And so there may be a chance to do something about that. But also--I think--because at that time when they were so involved in bringing all their resources together to retrofit and make the original building—because they're only left now with the original building—so that it could become [again] the complete museum and shop space—they used whatever resources they had, which included some of those grants. So it took years for people to return [to giving] grants to us, [for foundations to again want to fund us]. ... Because we used them [the earlier grants] not in the way that the grant was [awarded].

JB: Yes.

TK: So it took a long time for foundations to forgive us and say we are a viable museum and that you will be putting the funding that we give you for the purpose we give it to you for—which is usually education or exhibits, things of that nature, rather than any capital improvements. And this is what makes funding by outside sources so difficult because people do not give for capital improvement—and this is what we need so badly at the museum.

JB: I think that some of the money [given in that first capital campaign] actually was for capital improvement—but it wasn't enough, so—all of the above was true. [According to Patrick Ela, the donations were used, at least partially, for "entitlements" for the planned

“Museum Tower” as a whole, rather than only for the museum space in the Tower. This made some of our donors unhappy.]

Now, just turning for a moment to a happier subject. We did reopen in May of 1995, and had a wonderful weekend! It was a brief respite, I guess [laughing] you could say, in retrospect. But I’m just wondering what you remember [of that weekend]. We called it the “Homecoming,” and we really felt like, you know, we had come home after being away in the May Company [and then being closed] for so long—how would you describe the changes to the museum and—did you attend any of those festivities? We had a gala dinner the first night of the weekend. **[0:40:00]**

TK: I don’t remember that very clearly, so I must not have attended. But I do remember one huge party, which they tented--

JB: That was it!

TK: That was it. . . . Yes, I vaguely remember that—only vaguely—because I don’t think that at that point I was that much a part of the museum on a day-to-day basis.

JB: . . . At any rate, there was a whole gala weekend. There was the dinner-dance, which really functioned [the same] as the annual fundraiser except now we were celebrating, you know, coming back, the reopening of the museum--

TK: --the reopening.

JB: --the reopening of the museum. And then the next day there was a whole day that was supposed to be just for members to come in and see the [redesigned] museum. And then the third day was the official opening to the public. And there were some wonderful exhibitions at that time. And I just wonder if you remember any of them. There was one, in particular, that was open for several months, which was basically a history of the museum. It was called “Museum for a New Century.” It was in the 5800 building gallery space and—oh, it included such things as the door for the old Egg and The Eye [gallery]. Edith—I think it was a screen door—at any rate it was a door [with the logo on it] that Edith had kept all these years from the days of the Egg and The Eye. And it included [objects from] exhibitions of some of the artists that had been shown during that time, and all of the years since. And then there were exhibitions in the main museum of collectors that we had been associated with—Jerry Slocum, who was the collector of those fantastic mechanical puzzles; and Bob Stocksdale, who was a wood turner and had a wonderful collection of wood turning; and so on— Oh! And then the Warmbold collection! We were given—I think this was almost the most important gift that we were ever given—by Ted Warmbold’s widow—[his collection] of Mexican folk art. He had died of AIDS; he was the editor of the—the newspaper in San Antonio, Texas [*The San Antonio Light*]—

and he had died of AIDS—and his wife—and he had this enormous collection of Mexican folk art--

TK: What happened to it?

JB: It was given to the Craft and Folk Art Museum, and that was our—our--part of our opening exhibition.

TK: But where is it now?

JB: Well, it was one of the collections that were sold at Butterfield's, at the auction--

TK: I thought that Butterfield was before the opening. I thought it was--

JB: Oh no. No, no. That was [held after] . . . we had to close at the end of 1997. And the Butterfield's auction was in March of 1998.

TK: So—so--what you're saying is that we opened in '95 back at the old--and then closed again?

JB: Oh yes. Well, yes, in—we had this grand reopening in the middle of 1995 and within a year everything--

TK: --collapsed.

JB: kind of collapsed. And Patrick resigned at that point and then they hired Paul Kusserow--

TK: Um-hm.

JB: And he hired Martha Lynn as a curator and they tried to salvage something, but I guess the debts were just too great. [That was what we were told by Kusserow.] And so we closed at the end of 1997—within, uh, let's see--within two and a half years of the reopening, [which had happened May 12, 1995.]. **[0:45:00]**

TK: Um-hm.

JB: And then just three months later [March 26, 1998], the permanent collection was sold at auction in order to raise money to help--

TK: Yeah, I remember that. Because I had given one of the original costumes—of—Romanian costumes—peasant costumes [that was in the “Romanian Folk Textiles” exhibition]—and that was sold. I remember that.

JB: Did they talk to you about that before the auction?

TK: No—I think it just went in a bundle—with the other textiles--

JB: I know that, uh—I know that Mrs. Warmbold was contacted to tell her what our intention was—and I guess to ask her what, uh, you know—I'm not certain whether she was asked whether she would like it [the Mexican folk art collection] back, but I do remember that

she said she didn't want it back, and to--

TK: --to go ahead.

JB: --to go ahead. But that was a huge collection. It was a large part of the Butterfield's auction. Did you attend the Butterfield's auction?

TK: No, I didn't. That was too sad an occasion—really. And Edith was still alive then.

JB: She was, but—I was going to ask you—if you were aware that she had become quite ill by that time—this [the auction] was early [1998].

TK: I don't remember the dates, but I do remember that she had an operation on her throat.

JB: Yes.

TK: And that developed into a cancer, and that was really the beginning of her ordeal. And I remember that she rallied and Frank gave her a wonderful birthday party. Do you remember that?

JB: Yes, I do, actually. Yes, we were there. It was fantastic. [It was April 18, 1998.] I think that was her 80th—or, well, at any rate--it was wonderful. [Edith was born on April 21, 1918.]

TK: Yeah, and she—and it was a lovely birthday. She was already ill, but she was able to rally, and, uh, take part in that, in the festivities, but that was the last time, really, after that. And then I remember Frank's [80th] birthday, in June [1999] --

JB: I think I wasn't at that--

TK: --up at the ranch. It was up at the ranch.

JB: Oh-h.

TK: And Edith was very ill. She stayed in bed up there, at the ranch, in her room, and just came [downstairs] for the party.

JB: Um-m.

TK: --and then left to go back to bed again. And I remember that she—I stayed with her a lot in the afternoon—and she didn't want anyone else--

JB: This was at the ranch?

TK: This was at the ranch. And then she—flying home, they shuttled people, but she was the last to fly out with Frank. She didn't want anyone else in the plane when she flew out to go home. And we flew out earlier in the day. And they must have taken some of the other relatives and people like that--

JB: This was Steve's plane?

TK: This was Frank's plane, but Steve piloted it.

JB: Yeah, OK.

TK: So that was— And then soon after that—maybe a couple of months—she was gone.

[0:50:00]

JB: Yes. Patrick called me. It was in October of that same year of 1999 that she passed away. Of course, at that point, uh, there was . . . hope for the museum because, uh, uh—let's see—the auction was in March of 1998 and the museum did remain closed then until early 1999 and it was at that point that the Cultural—L.A. Cultural Affairs Department--

TK: Backed it.

JB: Yes. Offered to help out. Do you remember any of the details of that, uh, that deal?

TK: No, the only thing I recall is that, apparently, Patrick Ela was the instigator of that—was able to convince the Cultural Affairs people that this would be a good thing for them to . . . have under their wing because it was an ethnically diverse museum and it, uh, was able to produce exhibits and programs that would be very beneficial to their image as well as . . . for the city. So, he was able to sell it to them and so that's what happened and they sent one of their staff people to be the first director. [The City moved their Folk and Traditional Art offices to CAFAM at 5814 Wilshire on February 11, 1999.]

JB: Yes, Joan de Bruin, I think her name was.

TK: Joan de Bruin. And that first year—it was a confusing year because we didn't know—there were so many people from downtown [from the Cultural Affairs office] and we always felt that they were not very well aware of our museum and what it stood for and the kinds of artifacts that we were interested in and that—but we survived--and went through that.

JB: Yes. We skipped over a couple of things, which I—I don't actually know if you were on the board at this time. I believe that you were on the board almost until the museum closed, but then—you don't—you didn't attend the last few meetings. I suppose—was that because it was just so--so sad at that point?

TK: Yes, it was a—definitely a downer!

JB: Yes.

TK: And I think that, uh—I don't think I was so actively involved at that point.

JB: Well, the Associates by that time were not really, uh, active.

TK: They were not functioning at all. Uh-huh. I think we lost most of the membership in that category [in the Associates].

JB: Uh, I mentioned Paul Kusserow and Martha Lynn. There was also another change that happened after the reopening of the museum [in 1995] and that was that Frank stepped down from being chair [of the board]. Of course, at that point--I assume--that he expected that his work had been done, so to speak. He ushered in the new building—the renovated building into existence, and then he was hoping to be able to turn over the reins to someone else and Bud Knapp, the publisher, Bud Knapp was [made board chairman].

TK: Oh yes, I vaguely remember that.

JB: He--I don't think he was the chairman of the board for very long [July 20, 1995 – August 28, 1996], but he was [elected] the chairman after Frank had stepped down. And, as I said, Patrick resigned at that point. And then Paul and Martha, uh, tried to salvage things. In the meantime, the effort to buy the 5800 Wilshire Building--

TK: Collapsed.

JB: --failed. And that was really, I guess, the death knell of the museum for the time—for the time being.

TK: It was also, I think, a period in which no one really knew whether--whether the museum—you know, under Kusserow—if the museum was still existing. Cause I don't think there was a real sense of program. And I think also, there was no one there with a real passion for the existence of the museum and for its vision and its tradition.

JB: Do you feel that that was partly because— Well, Edith was still on the board at that time, but she--she was ailing. She was not well.

TK: When Paul Kusserow was there—and Bud Knapp?

[Knock on door.]

JB: [Yes.] Ohp! **[Interruption in recording]**

TK: [There was a lot of confusion.] You know—to the museum and its purposes--purpose in the community—what it stood for in the community.

JB: Yeah. That was a very difficult time. So—how did you become aware, then, uh, that the City of L.A. was interested in--in helping out? **[0:55:00]**

TK: I never was really aware of it until it was a *fait accompli*. When it was announced--

JB: In the newspaper? Or announced, uh--did you just get something in the mail?

TK: I'm not quite sure how I heard, whether it was through the newspaper, through the grapevine (probably) and, or whether there was an announcement from CAFAM.

JB: I think actually Frank did send a letter to the membership, which you probably got.

TK: Maybe that's the way I found out.

JB: And so, do you remember when or how you got back on to the board? After—there were several directors of course [in the interim], who the museum--

TK: Frank was the president of the board all the way through. [Actually, Patrick Ela was board chair from January 1999 – April 2002; Frank then resumed chairmanship.]

JB: Yes.

TK: And I think he asked me to come on the board to represent the Folk Art Council. Because I was—at one point I was president of the Folk Art Council—chairperson—and I think at that point I stepped down from the board. And then—even though we had other chair people, uh, they said I should stay on the board. [Laughing] So I stayed on the board.

JB: Maybe you could talk about what the Folk Art Council was doing during the time that the museum was closed. And there must have been some discussions about--

TK: There was a lot of discussion. The Folk Art Council was very disturbed about the whole process of what was happening.

JB: Of course.

TB: And although they understood the move to the May Company, it was things that happened afterwards that were really quite disturbing. And they said, Folk Art Council had its group of very stalwart members—and we kept it close to 100 members. And that didn't change very much all through the years. They renewed. We had our international market. Even the years when it [the museum] was closed, we still did the international market. So we said that we could probably incorporate as a separate organization, and we discussed that. When we were getting serious about that discussion, the museum reopened, so we had that attachment again.

JB: But you—[that is] the Folk Art Council—really was the only visible [public] expression of the museum during . . . [the 14 months the museum was closed before the City came in.].

TK: It really was—and we felt that.

JB: Yeah. Well, that's marvelous that your [Folk Art Council] membership continued all of that time. So, we had Joan de Bruin, who came in with the L.A. Cultural Affairs—and she--her tenure was, I guess, about two [actually three, if you include when she was on sick leave]] and a half years. [Joan de Bruin was the director from February 1999 – April 2001, when she began sick leave; she then resigned in April 2002.] Then they conducted a search and, uh—let's see—were you, uh--do you remember being on the board during

the search for a new director? [Tomi was re-elected to the board in mid-2003 during Tokovsky's tenure as director.]

TK: No, I don't actually.

JB: OK. Uh, Peter Tokovsky--

TK: Came in.

JB: --is the one who was chosen, and he was a folklorist. [Tokovsky's tenure began January 1, 2003.] I think you and I talked about your having come on the board at some point late in his tenure.

TK: Or during his tenure because—I remember him very clearly. And he was a charming man. And I think most people liked him, uh, it was only when we began to hear rumors about interrelationships with staff and other people that things began to be troubling. And I think that since most of the board members never experienced any of the things that were rumored, it was hard to believe. But a committee took over and did a lot of interviewing and searching. And I think they came up with the fact that, uh, the morale of the staff was not good—and too bad in order to retain him.

JB: Yes, it was a very troubling time. He did put on several interesting exhibitions during that time.

TK: During this period. And, of course, the people on the board felt that he was the best qualified we've had since he had his degree in-- [1:00:00]

JB: In folklore.

TK: In folk art—in folk—in folklore.

JB: Folklore—with a specialization in folk art. Yes. So—when he was let go [at the end of 2002], uh--uh, I think for a time Patrick stepped in to help--

TK: Yes, because I remember Patrick at that period being a director for a while. ... Yeah—for at least a year, I believe. [Ela actually served as the director for one year starting in April 2001 when Joan de Bruin began her sick leave; he then continued to oversee the exhibition program on an unpaid basis while the board searched for a new director; he stepped down when Tokovsky was hired in January 2003.]

JB: Yes, my records are not clear about that.

TK: . . . I remember during his period of time I was on the program committee on the board and Lyn [Avins] was on that committee.

JB: Is that how the idea for the exhibition that you organized ["Eclectic Collecting, Folk Art A to Z," January 20 – February 27, 2005] came about?

TK: That came later, but it was during--you know, it was percolating.

JB: It was percolating. And I think that Patrick Ela was in part, uh, uh, responsible for James Goodwin's name being put forward as the next director?

TK: Hm-hm. I think that came up in the [board's] Executive Committee.

JB: I know that he had known him. James Goodwin had been administrator at the Pacific Design Center for a number of years and--

TK: Well, I met James Goodwin quite some years back, before he was our director. And he was always sort of a bubbling, uh, personality.

JB: I think he was an actor also—years before.

TK: Well, he invited us to his home. And that's when we met Sushuela and she, uh—they were—this was [when] I was married to Bob Haas—Bob loves music and James Goodwin invited us because they were giving an anniversary party for their piano [laughing]! He is a pianist too, and loves music apparently. And so, he and Bob were very *simpatico* when it came to the piano, and so that he—I think that they had a little miniature piano cake or something anyway—or design—of a grand—and whether it was on the cake or what, I don't know. I forget. But it was very—it was sort of a, you know, one of those parties. And I wouldn't forget that because it was a party for the piano, you know, it's something a little unusual--

JB: That's funny!

TK: And so you don't forget it. And so, I remember him as being, uh, one of those, sort of personality type of people. And that was fine, you know. The Pacific Design Center I think nurtures that type of person and so that it [he] probably was very good in the Pacific Design Center. But when he came to us, it was a different story, because we're—particularly the Folk Art Council—are very earthy people. And so that personality-wise, we did *not* get along. (Our membership [the Folk Art Council], I'm talking about, generally, not me in particular.)

JB: Did he, uh, not have any interest in folk art, or was it that you felt he didn't really understand--

TK: I think a little bit of both, but he did not—he felt he was all-knowledgeable!

JB: Oh-h-h.

TK: And so I know that during the exhibit ["Eclectic Collecting"] Lyn found him extremely difficult. [Lyn Avins was the co-organizer of the exhibition along with Tomi.] And Lyn more than I. She is a *real* collector of folk art. And does delve into her interests there—and visits the areas. So she has quite a few things from New Guinea—and she's been there—and

bought objects—from their roots—and really knows her stuff. So, uh, she was a great person to be with to do this exhibit and we found it all-encompassing. It took all of our time for a year! But it really was fascinating to go into our [Folk Art Council] membership homes and see how many of them were excellent collectors—and what collections they had—they had wonderful objects! **[1:05:00]**

JB: The exhibition was really done under the aegis of the Folk--

TK: Folk Art Council. And the objects were all from Folk Art Council members' collections.

JB: Yeah. They must have loved that.

TK: Well, I think they did enjoy it. On the other hand, we sort of narrowed ourselves by having the alphabet.

JB: Yes, that was an interesting concept. Tell about that.

TK: Well, Lyn's thought was, you know, ABC blocks--

JB: Oh yes, uh-huh.

TK: And it started out that way with folk art and—she's a teacher, she's an art teacher--

JB: In high school or--?

TK: In LAUSD. In elementary school. And I think that was her idea in the beginning, but it all developed, you know, widened. And we—A is for—whatever.

JB: Angel, I think, it was.

TK: Angel. So we had to have an angel. And in looking—and knowing some people, we knew that the Basslers [the artist, James Bassler and his wife] had one of the best angels—from Mexico.

JB: So you had some particular things in mind.

TK: In mind—so that A for angels was just a given. And so going through the people we knew [and their collections, it was easy for most of the alphabet], but when we got to things like “Y”—[laughing], “U,” etc.--

JB: [laughing] Yes--

TK: Some of the others—“X”— [laughing], it got to be a little hard. “I”— “Z” was easy; Z was zebra, of course. [It later became “Zoological Zone.”]

JB: Yes.

TK: But then, you know, you think of an object—but then you have to find the object too. And a good example [of it]. So—it was a great deal of fun.

JB: And I suppose, having that kind of a structure to the exhibition, made it easier to be able to limit, uh, the number of pieces that you—which you would have to do--

TK: Well, it gave it focus. And I think that Lyn felt the need of focus.

JB: Yes.

TK: And so this definitely focused us and our choices and we had to do that because when you go into those homes you wanted to take everything! And you would say, "Oh, these are so wonderful."

JB: Of course.

TK: And we would have loved to show them [all]. But if they didn't fit into the category—and we couldn't have two or three objects in one thing [category] and ten in another. We just wanted one or two examples in any category. So it did limit us.

JB: Do you remember the exhibition that was put together by Lee Mullican years ago back in the seventies [1977] that was—I think it was called "L.A. Collects Folk Art"? [Opened April 12, 1977.]

TK: No, I don't!

JB: It was—I don't know—no, I'm sure it wasn't limited to the Folk [Art Council membership]—well, the Folk Art Council, I think, was not even--

TK: --involved.

JB: I don't know if it even existed at that point! Maybe, in fact, it helped to spur it--

TK: No, I don't remember it, because if we were involved, we would know. [The Folk Art Council was established two years later in March 1979.]

JB: Yeah. You would have [known]. Well, he, you know, went through that same process without that focus, although it was a good show. OK, so James Goodwin was there for I think about a year as the director. And at that point, you were on the board—and the board must have been in despair at that point. How--

TK: Yes, it was the low ebb of the board, I think, very much so. I think it started to be that way when we began to discuss what we would do with Tokovsky.

JB: Oh, yes.

TK: Yeah, that's when the board began to be divisive. Before that, they were really together, but that divided the board.

JB: There actually were one or two board members who left--

TK: Who left? And it was a difficult time. And then it never really coalesced as a board that felt things were happening in a positive way, until, I think, Maryna came. And I think we all feel—at least I do—that she's doing a terrific job.

JB: Was there another search then at that point after James left? Was there a search or--
[1:10:00]?

TK: There was a search. And I think we were surprised when Maryna was chosen because her background would not warrant it because she was never anyone involved in the arts. She did work in a gallery for a short period of time, but her positions, they were in management, but not anything [in the arts]. [Maryna had been a dealer in art from Eastern Europe for several years.] But she's proven herself, and she seems to be a very quick study, and she's a hard worker, and she networks.

JB: Yes, and she's hired some good people. What do you think of the staff that she's put together?

TK: Oh, I think they're excellent. I feel that it reflects our diversity beautifully. They're all young, fortunately, in a way, for us as women, they're all women—except for one male [Steve Irvin]. And they all seem to be hard workers. And I know in the beginning, they didn't even have a janitor. And I heard that those girls went in and cleaned the bathrooms and did all that. And I can't imagine—I suppose some men will do it—but I can't imagine, generally speaking, that you would ask staff to do that kind of thing, but apparently it worked.

JB: I can remember a few times when—I was on the staff when we had to, you know, when the bathroom is—is not fit to go into, you have to do something about it, and if you don't have anybody else to do it, you do it. At least that's—I think you're right, that it's—that's the way women think and--but they all do seem to be quite talented and to have been chosen for their positions carefully.

TK: Very well, yes. And they pitch in to help each other out. And I do think that, for example, our—the kinds of things that are going out from the museum—the brochures, the pamphlets, and the announcements—that's all Grace [Nguyen] and she does a beautiful job!

JB: Yes—and the use of the Internet!

TK: And the use of the Internet. They're all young; they all know how to use that. I think Holly [Jerger] and her classes—she's done a wonderful job. Yuko [Makuuchi] with the shop. You know they're really—they have all met the challenge!

JB: Is the shop—how is the shop different from what it was? Or is it basically the same kind of--

TK: I think it—it isn't quite as crowded with merchandise. But basically it's very similar. The big difference is that the shop is now making money. It never paid rent for space; now it does. And these last two months, it's been paying, uh, started giving over some of their profits.

JB: That's amazing. I just—I wonder what accounts for that difference. That's really, really interesting. So how would you sum up the current situation at the Craft and Folk Art Museum? Are there still worries?

TK: Well, I think it's very promising. But I do think we need to expand staff. I mean they can't do everything as they're doing right now.

JB: They don't have assistants or--

TK: No. They're a seven-person staff and--

JB: Which is about half—or less—than we used to have.

TK: Right. And it's very important to have a person who's a registrar to keep track of everything.

JB: Oh yes.

TK: And I think they double-duty that role.

JB: So the curator is also functioning as the registrar, is that--?

TK: Yes—and the curator—oftentimes there are guest curators. We have to pay them extra.

JB: But there is a curator on staff, I believe—or at least someone who is in charge of exhibitions

TK: Yes, there is [someone] in charge. Wasn't that Grace?

JB: I don't have the list in front of me. I'm not sure.

TK: She's leaving us, as you know.

JB: Oh—Grace is?

TK: Yes to start her own business in design.

JB: Oh my goodness.

TK: Her own design firm. Which is great for her.

JB: This always happens it seems. But you're dealing with young people so--

TK: You're dealing with young people and so they hired—there's a person they hired, I think, from LACMA—her name is Sonja [Cendak]? And she might be the one who's on exhibits.

JB: I think she's the one, yes.

TK: She more or less works as the curator for the museum. **[1:15:00]**

JB: Yes.

TK: And of course, Lauren [Watley] is wonderful. She's on admissions and membership.

JB: Oh, yes.

TK: But we do need—I mean they double-duty, all of them when it's necessary. They're all, you know, painting and cleaning and all that sort of stuff. They do have some interns and volunteers--

JB: Yes.

TK: --that work and they do help with the exhibits. But to tear down an exhibit and put one up takes a lot. And I don't know who designs their shows at this point.

JB: Well, I—I don't know for sure. I would imagine that Sonja, being in charge of exhibits, would have a lot to say about that. Is there—there used to be an actual Volunteer Service Council. Is there anything like that now?

TK: Well, I tried to start one. And I did start it, just about the time when Maryna came in. And I got a list of the volunteers that were already there and some new names of past volunteers and called them and tried to organize them and gave a tea and things of that nature--

JB: Oh-h.

TK: --but I got too busy with other things, you know. This [being] chair of the East Asian Arts Council takes a lot of time at LACMA. So as a result I let it go but I do think we need to revitalize that very much and if I remain with CAFAM and I remain on the board I think I'll say my function would be that, you know, when I have time.

JB: I think it would be very important.

TK: Yeah. Right now I can't voice it because I can't back it up. But when I have the time I think I'll say that this is—I'll try to work on that.

JB: But you're obviously very hopeful—for the museum.

TK: Well I am at this point because I think the museum has gotten a new life, in a sense, with a new staff. They have revitalized the museum. And its amazing. I think the choice of exhibits are terrific. They—currently they have, of course, a marionette show and they're opening up the *katakami* show, which is the cut-paper work.

JB: Oh, uh-huh, the Japanese--

TK: The Japanese style—but by a Caucasian woman.

JB: Oh-h.

TK: She learned in Japan and this is her show. So I'm very interested. It's going to open, I think, this—on the ninth of February.

JB: Well, I'll be looking forward to that. **[Recorder paused.]**

During our last session I misspoke about something regarding the number of museums that focus only on folk art and craft. And I think I said that there weren't any except for the Craft and Folk Art Museum. And at the time that the museum started [in 1975] that was true. I did quite a bit of research in connection with getting the library started and there really—there were, of course, important museums devoted to folk art, both in Santa Fe and in New York and there were important museums devoted to contemporary craft and also to specific crafts like ceramics and glass—the Corning Museum of Glass and so on. But at the time there really was no other museum that was devoted to the range of material that we—that the Craft and Folk Art Museum was interested [in].

Now, however, the situation is different. I know that Edith used to think that really the Craft and Folk Art Museum had helped to inspire a lot of other museums to open and, at any rate, today there is the Mingei Museum in Balboa Park in San Diego, which is doing a lot of the same kind of thing that the Craft and Folk Art Museum is, and I believe that the San Francisco Craft and Folk Art Museum also is still in existence. It's been going for quite a while—as [has] the Mingei—although they haven't been in Balboa Park for very long. And then, of course, there is the Fowler Museum [at UCLA], which does occasionally show contemporary craft—although it is primarily folk art-- **[1:20:00]**

TK: Ethnic cultures.

JB: Ethnic cultures, yes. So I just wanted to set the record straight on that point.

[Now I just want to talk] about you a little bit more. So as we left off your personal story at the end of our first session, Tomi, you had just come to L.A. with your husband, Howard Hibbett, and what was he doing in Los Angeles?

TK: This was his first position and he was hired by UCLA and they were creating an Asian department, so he was in the Japanese end of it.

JB: He was a scholar of Japanese literature--

TK: Literature and culture and language.

JB: And did you have any children at that point?

TK: No, they came later. He—we were here for a while—and went to Japan—well, no, we returned from Japan when we came to Los Angeles and at that time when we were driving to Los Angeles in 1952, my first child was born.

JB: When you were driving to L.A.? Oh my goodness!

TK: No—soon after we arrived I had my first child.

JB: Oh-h I see. And who was that?

TK: That was Mariko.

JB: Mariko.

TK: Hm-hm. She's my older daughter and then three years later I had Reiko. She's my second daughter.

JB: And those are your children.

TK: Those are my children. And Howard is their father.

JB: Ah-h, I see. And at what point, Tomi, did you go back to your career in public health?

TK: Well, I—after the divorce—I stayed here in Los Angeles. We had the house that my father helped us to purchase.

JB: Was that the house in Beverly Glen?

TK: In Beverly Glen. And the children were at UES [UCLA's University Elementary School] and I had made close neighbor friends.

JB: That's the UCLA Education School.

TK: Right. The research experimental school.

JB: Elementary School, I guess.

TK: It's an elementary school. And I didn't want to uproot them. And I felt that if I returned home, I'd be living with my family—and I didn't want to be smothered by them. So I decided to stay independent and stay in Los Angeles. And Howard went to Harvard. So I wondered what I could do that would be--go with the children. So I thought teaching in grade school or high school—teaching at LAUSD would be the thing to do. So I got my teaching credential from UCLA and got my first position teaching [in 1958] at the Belmont High School [in downtown L.A.].

JB: Oh. What were you teaching?

TK: Home economics.

JB: Ah! That makes sense.

TK: And biology. And I found that in the classroom—the first [home economics] class I had had something like 50 students--

JB: Oh my goodness!

TK: --in a classroom that was set up for 24. They had six kitchens, you know, set up, with about four students in each kitchen for 24 students--

JB: But you had more than--

TK: No, maybe it was four setups with six students in each kitchen—and I had 50! [01:25:00]

JB: Wow.

TK: So I said to the principal, “This is an impossible situation.” They’re all sitting in the center on new stools and benches, and all next to each other, and they’d be poking each other, and showing pictures of their boyfriends, and combing their hair, and all that kind of thing, and these were 15-year olds.

JB: Oh my. And these were all girls? Was it a girls’ school?

TK: All girls [but the school] was co-educational.

JB: But your classes--

TK: Your home economics class was all women. Mainly Hispanic women. This was the “foreign adjustment” school. This was the only school that was in the United States in which Spanish was spoken all the time by the students in and out of the classroom and down in the hallway. There were a few--

JB: Did you speak Spanish?

TK: Not at all. There were blacks in the class and a sprinkling of Asians and maybe one or two whites. That was the demographics, generally speaking.

JB: Well, this is interesting. What was the—you say it was a “foreign adjustment” school. And so what was the intention--

TK: Of having—since most of the foreign students were from Mexico—this was why most of them were Hispanic—and they spoke Spanish. That was their natural language to speak. And so instead of letting them go into different schools, they brought them all into this school.

JB: This was to bridge--

TK: --to bridge the gap.

JB: Did they usually stay in that school through high school?

TK: Yes, through high school. And they were enough of a mix that everything was taught in English. Nothing was taught in Spanish. And most of the students all spoke English, but they spoke Spanish to each other. The—as I say—the class was unwieldy and huge and

all this murmuring going on all the time and laughter because it was that—you know, if you were next to someone, you can't be silent for an hour or two hours.

JB: Not when you're fifteen.

TK: Not when you're fifteen. And over an hour of classroom time. So I had to make good of a bad situation. And when I first started to talk about, for example, setting a table, one of the white girls raised her hand, and she said, "Oh we never bother to set the table. We just put a glass with the forks and knives in it—a jar in the middle of the table." So I said, "Nevertheless, you never know when you're going to be a waitress or you're going into a home, that it's nice to know." So I began to think, and I said, "OK. All the Hispanic girls-- get together and make up a Spanish menu. And you will demonstrate to the rest of the class cooking some Spanish food—Mexican food. We'll do that with the blacks. We'll do that with the Chinese. And I'll give you an American meal." And so we did this demonstration—and then they got their mothers and fathers to make the tortillas and we had beans and rice and tortillas for the Spanish demonstration. We baked corn bread for the blacks and [cooked] greens and we did—for the Chinese it was a stir-fry and rice.

JB: Did you advise each of these groups or did they come up with--?

TK: Oh yes I had them sit down as a group and pull together a menu that was possible—that they could do. Then they had to break down the menu to--

JB: To the ingredients.

TK: To the ingredients. And they had to vote to see which ones are going to do the cooking.

JB: Ah-h.

TK: See they all worked together to plan, but only a few could really do it [the cooking], and they would be the demonstrators.

JB: Ah-h. Well, this is teaching them a lot of different skills.

TK: Yeah. Well it is also opening their eyes to different cultures.

JB: Yes, yes.

TK: And so, Thanksgiving—you know this is starting in September—so for Thanksgiving I made Thanksgiving dinner. And that was a turkey.

JB: Oh my goodness! Did anyone ask you about your Japanese background? Did anyone wonder why you weren't cooking Asian--?

TK: No, not at all, because there were some Chinese there--

JB: Yeah.

TK: --from Chinatown because this was a downtown school.

JB: Oh, it was in downtown L.A.?

TK: Yeah. Belmont is on Alvarado Street, in downtown L.A. And so when I told the principal, you know, that I had 50 and that it was impossible, she said, "Oh, by Christmas you'll only have half that group." The drop-out rate, especially with the Hispanics, is very great. Because most of the mothers are working and if any child stays home, it's their daughter. Well, at Christmas time I still had 45 students.

JB: Oh my goodness. [Laughing] How wonderful!

TK: And so, anyway, that was my experience and actually--

JB: So you had to stick with those 45 students. You didn't get any additional [help]--

TK: No, but by that time, they were used to me. They knew me and we sort of organized and planned together. So it worked out. It wasn't too bad after a while.

JB: That's wonderful. So how long were you there at that school?

TK: A little over a year and the reason was that my children were in UES. They were little, and to go [and] get up so early, get to Belmont high school before eight o'clock to set up my classrooms, and things like that, was just too much. And by this time, I had met Bob Haas. [1:30:00]

JB: Ah-h-h.

TK: And he said, "Tomi, if you don't need the money that much—"I said, "I do need the money." He said, "But not that much. Then you can teach for the extension."

JB: Oh-h-h. And he was the head of--

TK: The Arts and Humanities [in the UCLA extension program]. So he set up two classes for me. And so I would be home during the day with the children. And one was a demonstration cooking class of Asian foods—Japanese mainly. And the other was Japanese literature in translation. By this time, you know, because of Howard, I had read a lot.

JB: Of course.

TK: And because of Howard, too, the department said, "OK. She can do it," because you had to have the department's permission to teach.

JB: But they knew you.

TK: Um-hm. So [they said] that you were OK as a teacher. So I had these two classes, which worked out beautifully, and I enjoyed them very much. And made some friends through the classes. And then at the end of that year we got married, so that was that.

JB: Ah-h, that's lovely. So did you stay home then?

TK: I stayed home in the beginning. And then Bob also does conferences, and he helped to—he's a facilitator—and so he helped the California Dietetic Association to do a conference, and since it was my field, I went to the conference, of course.

JB: That was the professional organization that you belonged to.

TK: My professional organization, yes. At that point I wasn't such an active member at all. But I did belong to them and I was a registered dietician so when they learned about that and I met all these key people they said, "Oh no, there are openings here and openings there," so I decided maybe that would be a good idea. I'll go back part-time. And by this time my children were in high school. Actually my little one was finishing up elementary school and Mariko was in high school. So I thought this was a good time to do part-time. So I worked two and a half days a week—two, three days a week--three days mainly—because, you know [you develop obligations].

JB: And where did you work?

TK: Actually, in the beginning, there was a program called MIC—the Maternity and Infant Care program—because our maternity and infant death rates were very high. It still is—it still is terrible. And so the federal government set up this program to try to mitigate and see how that could be fixed. [It got better; now it's worse.] So I worked out of Watts.

JB: Ah-h.

TK: So we had--at that time, the County of Los Angeles Department of Health Services had something like 30 clinics, all over the county. And two of them were in South Central. And the main clinic of South Central was called South Clinic. And I worked out of South Clinic. And my counterpart worked out at East L.A. [These were the highest areas of infant mortality and morbidity.]

JB: She was a dietician also--?

TK: She was also. And we called ourselves public health nutritionists because we both had our masters'. And so we developed that whole—worked on developing that whole program of maternity and infant care. It was developing materials, organizing the nurses that worked in pre-natal in the clinics—child care clinics, helping them with materials, doing lectures, and also in talking to the interns, too, about nutrition and pregnancy and that kind of thing.

JB: That must have been interesting, working within the guidelines that you had as a trained dietician, but also, I would assume, fitting in to the culture in which you were working. Were there challenges to that?

TK: Oh very much so because I was in an all-black community. And sort of a—in a sense—also a hostile black community. It was right after the Watts riot.

JB: That was in the mid-sixties?

TK: '68 [was when I worked in Watts; the riot was in 1965].

JB: '68, um-hm. **[1:35:00]**

TK: And I—I was able to hire two to three other nutritionists who actually sat in the prenatal clinics and the nurses would refer patients to them and they would work with the patient on their diets. And they were the ones that they felt needed them the most because there were problems with their pregnancy or they had, you know, their own problems. Some of them, in the beginning of pregnancy, they had such terrible nausea, or they were unable to eat. Some of them, a lot of them had old wives' tales in which they would [have] chalk [and clay] eating. That was one of the things that they did. And that would substitute for food. And there were all kinds of problems. Some ate mud even.

JB: Yes, I've heard of that.

TK: And they even—one of them had mud sent from the south, where her family grew up, to her. And that was the mud she wanted, not any old mud.

JB: Yes, I've heard of that.

TK: And so I was learning about these kind of idiosyncrasies that occurred. And so anyway, that was what I was doing.

JB: Do you think that the—your clients were more or less hostile to you as a Japanese American or do you think that--

TK: I didn't feel that. The three nutritionists I had hired were all black.

JB: Oh, they were!

TK: They were all black—and I was their supervisor. And they worked full-time. And I only came in three times a week.

JB: Yes, yes. Well, that sounds like a good situation. So—how long were you doing that then?

TK: For a couple of years. And then I heard of an opening in the west district. This would—the county had a nutrition department and they had nutritionists assigned to all the different districts, supervising nutritionists as well as counseling nutritionists. And so when the opening occurred in the west district, which means that the main office would be in Santa Monica, I applied for it.

JB: And it was a lot closer to your home.

TK: To home and to everything else. It was much easier. So—and I stayed in the Watts area for about two years—and part-time. But when I switched over to West District, I added another day and eventually went full-time.

JB: Well that--still, that must have been an important experience for you to work in Watts.

TK: Oh, it was an interesting experience and I got to know the area, which I didn't know before. I've forgot now because I wouldn't drive down there. When we got our students—you know, from UCLA—[they] would send their students to—for field experience or to observe and all that sort of stuff. I always sent them to Watts Towers. I would take them at least once to Watts Towers with any new group of students.

JB: Well, let's see, so by this time you were married to Bob Haas, and I imagine you were aware of The Egg and The Eye [gallery] at this point [or had] started to get involved with the Craft and Folk Art Museum. Were there any other organizations that—I know you were active with the dietician's organization. When did you become involved with LACMA?

TK: When my brother, who was a curator--

JB: George.

TK: George Kuwayama, curator--senior curator at LACMA in East Asian art—when he felt—and this was in the seventies—that he needed a support group--we were one of the earliest councils to be formed—they already always had the Docent Council and the Museum Council and all that sort of stuff, but the departments didn't have councils. And so that we formed the Asian Art Council. And--

JB: Was it called the Asian Art Council at the beginning?

TK: It was called the Far Eastern Art Council.

JB: Ah, that's--yeah. Because that's what the name of the department was at the time.

TK: Yes, at the time. And it covered Japan, China, and Korea. And these are the areas of my brother's expertise. And he was the head of that department and it was all three areas. Today it's divided into the Japanese and then the Chinese and Korean are together. The—at that time when he first came to LACMA, he was the only person who took care of Asian art from the borders of Asia, which is just from Turkey, really, onto Japan. And when the collections came in—and he was very instrumental in many of those collections, like the Heeramaneck and all that—when they got their Turkish, when they got their Persian, and their Indian collections, then curators, new curators were hired to cover those areas. **[1:40:00]**

JB: Pratap Pal was--

TK: --for South Asia. So the whole area developed during those years and so when the Council was developed, I always was a member of the Council, but since my brother was my brother, I never was an officer or anything, never on the board. But when he retired, I went on the board. They asked me to be on the board.

JB: Yes. That was just a few years ago, wasn't it?

TK: He is now 82 and he retired at 70.

JB: Ah, so it was 12 years ago, boy--

TK: Isn't that amazing?

JB: Yeah, it is. So, have you been on the [Asian Art Council] board all of that time?

TK: Most of that time.

JB: And are there any other organizations that you've been involved with?

TK: Well, I've always been involved with all the textile groups.

JB: Oh, yes, yes. There are several aren't there? Tell [about] the different ones, because I've always found that interesting that there was overlap in membership and yet they had slightly different purposes.

TK: Well the first one is the Textile Group of Los Angeles, called TGLA. Actually, Stephanie Morehouse was very instrumental—and Dale Gluckman—in developing that.

JB: And Dale was at LACMA.

TK: Yes, eventually, she wasn't at the time. And so they worked on that and since I was a close friend, I helped them--or I helped Stephanie Morehouse—I used to go over quite a lot and help with things.

JB: Excuse me, but do you remember—was that formed before the Craft and Folk Art Museum started? I'm just wondering if there was any connection.

TK: There was no connection. However, I think it was almost simultaneous around that time.

JB: OK. Uh-huh.

TK: And then later on the Textile Museum Associates--

JB: From the Textile Museum in Washington [D.C.].

TK: Museum—yes. And instrumental in forming that were the Kriegers [Fred and Stella Krieger].

JB: Ah, yes.

TK: So that was formed—and Cheryl Hunter, who's still very active with it. And so that was the

TMA. And then more recently, in the last five years, when the Fowler Museum became active as a museum, they formed a textile research group. And so that meets regularly.

JB: And so do you find that there is an overlap of membership?

TK: Oh definitely.

JB: Obviously you're in all three—or four.

TK: Right. And so now there's definitely overlap. The TMA seemed to feature rugs more. And the TGLA textiles and the textile group—research group is textiles more than rugs and is also—because we use the collection that the Fowler has [and its staff].

JB: It's more focused on the Fowler--

TK: --it's more focused on the Fowler and their collection. And so that when we meet, we always have wonderful examples of things that we can really look at and sometimes even touch.

JB: And what about the Ethnic Arts Council? Have you ever been involved with them?

TK: I've been asked to be a member several times, but the Ethnic Arts Council—I never cottoned onto it because it seems to be more African and primitive arts, which I'm not quite sympathetic with. I don't find them--

JB: Yes, I found it very interesting when I was dealing with them—they did give the library some cash awards for buying books—and I never argued with them about it, but I always thought it was interesting that they kind of defined the term “ethnic” as meaning African or Oceanic or, you know, [what are] sometimes called tribal groups.

TK: So, the last time they asked me to become a member, Feelie Lee was the president. Feelie is of Chinese descent. And I told her that it wasn't in my interest because it was so much more of African and then, as you say, the tribal arts. And so she said, “Oh, we're expanding. We're going into Asian. You want to be on!” But I realized that they still were, more or less, the emphasis was that—and the people who are members are interested in that area. And you have—they're very generous—they have given [for] the Folk Art Council exhibits. They have helped to underwrite it by giving some monetary assistance to the Craft and Folk Art Museum for our—for certain exhibits. **[1:45:00]**

JB: The Ethnic Arts Council you're speaking of.

TK: Yes, the Ethnic Arts Council, uh-huh.

JB: Well, you've certainly got your plate full with organizational activities. So--

TK: Yes, more than enough.

JB: More than enough—and it doesn't look like you're going to slow down anytime soon. [Both

Tomi and Joan are laughing.] You're still quite absorbed with the Craft and Folk Art Museum, it seems.

TK: Well, yes, because I personally feel—at one point, like a year ago, I did say, you know, you really don't need me on the board because, you know, I will always be a member of the Craft and Folk Art Museum but I don't think I'm doing any function. I was no longer doing the volunteer thing; I was just sitting there. And he [Frank Wyle] said, "Oh, no, no, you have to stay on the board." So, I'm still there and I decided the volunteers do need that work and so, if I have the energy, after I finish up with the East Asian Art Council, maybe I'll do that.

JB: You are currently the—is it the President or the Chair—of the Asian Arts Council?

TK: The Chair. And this is my second year and it is encompassing. We're doing a fund raiser and, as Chair, I'm very much involved. We're going to have an all-day meeting next Thursday to develop that. We're having a fund raiser at Tony Duquette's [the artist and designer].

JB: Oh-h! Well that should be fun—but a lot of work I'm sure.

TK: Yeah.

JB: So--I just wondered then, just to sort of bring us up to date with your life—what was the transition from Bob Haas to Lorenzo Tedesco? I know that both of them were, to some extent, involved with the Craft and Folk Art Museum.

TK: Bob was originally, but not later on at all. He never was very involved with it. I don't think he was at all. Just to visit it or something like that, but not—I don't know whether he was even a member.

JB: Are you speaking of Lorenzo or Bob?

TK: Bob. Bob Haas.

JB: Bob. I thought he had actually lectured or--?

TK: He might have lectured, particularly early on. Edith might have asked him to. Because he's quite a collector, but his interest was—well, it was in textiles, so it could have been on that. And some rugs. He introduced the whole rug class—Rug Connoisseurship--in antiques, so that he had a real big interest in that and—he's a very Renaissance kind of person, so that his interest is wide, very wide. So--you know, Gertrude Stein was one of his big things.

JB: Oh, my goodness. Well, I was interested in, uh, in Lorenzo. I don't know that I—I guess I must have met him--but I know that he worked on the tea house, the beautiful Japanese

tea house at the Wyles. Could you tell me just a little bit about Lorenzo?

TK: Lorenzo was a neighbor in Beverly Glen [and he was an architect].

JB: Oh!!

TK: --all through the years. So, I've known him very well—and his children.

JB: My goodness! What a community!

TK: Yes. And so--I moved out of the Glen with Bob Haas--

JB: --into your house here?

TK: Well it wasn't this particular house. It was on the other side of the freeway in Westwood Hills.

And so we were all friends—all that whole group. And then Lorenzo and Laura divorced. And Lorenzo was on his own and he went—you know, he built his house in Pasadena, etc. But we got to—since we all knew each other—we started to go out with each other and before you knew it, we got married! [Laughing] **[1:50:00]**

JB: [laughing] That's the way it goes sometimes. But you were married to him when he designed the tea house, were you not?

TK: Yes. And also—that was toward the beginning. And midway in the marriage he designed the house on the ranch for Diana, their [the Wyles'] youngest daughter. And I think he was also a consultant to Edith when they were doing their plans and things.

JB: And what kind of a house was that that was designed for Diana?

TK: It was a contemporary house. And it was very nice—if you ever go up there, look at it because, uh, what he did was because they wanted—they had their daughter Jordie and themselves and they wanted to be apart, yet in the same house, so he gave—you enter into the living area and the kitchen and dining area and to the right it will be the master suite and to the left was Jordie and a guest room and things like that, that kind of suite. So it worked out really well.

JB: And did he have a special interest in Japanese architecture?

TK: Not any more than most--contemporary architects are all interested in Japanese architecture.

JB: Of course.

TK: --which he—and he really liked it very much. Hm-hm. And we went to Japan together. He went with me to Japan and loved it.

JB: On your own or was that with the tour group?

TK: I was leading the tour group.

JB: Well, that must have—that must have been a lovely thing to watch his designs developing and—did he ever take any of your suggestions or did you—were you involved in—
[laughing] ?

TK: Well, I never made suggestions, just looking—and of course he knew about things like *katsura* and he had a whole list of contemporary Japanese architects that he wanted to see what they--

JB: When you were in Japan?

TK: In Japan—and look at their things. Which is always true, no matter where we are, he would—and we would go to see the latest buildings that were being—that had been built, many of them on campuses and elsewhere. So that—but I learned a lot from Lorenzo. You know, he comes from a very musical family.

JB: Oh.

TK: And he loved music.

JB: His family was Italian—or Italian American?

TK: Italian, yeah. He came here when he was nine from Tuscany, from Florence.

JB: Oh, that's where my husband's family is from.

TK: Um-hm—from Florence?

JB: Yes [from that area].

TK: And he—his father is a composer--very well-known in Europe and particularly in Italy. But he was Jewish--

JB: Ah-h.

TK: --and so they had to leave. He had--

JB: During World War II?

TK: Yeah, before World War II. He had state commissions and then when they stopped having state commissions coming to him and he realized the handwriting on the wall, so he brought his family out. He went to Hollywood to do movie—film music. He did a lot of film music. He was attached to MGM, I think. And since he was--

JB: This was his [Lorenzo's] father.

TK: Yes.

JB: What was his father's first name?

TK: Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco. It was a hyphenated name and Lorenzo, being more liking

things simplified, dropped the Castelnuovo. But his brother, Pietro, always kept the Castelnuovo. And it's interesting that his son, Greg, likes the Castelnuovo--

JB: --has gone back to that.

TK: Um-hm. --Tedesco. And, uh, but his love of music—though he did not play an instrument—he did learn how to play a cello, but he really didn't play an instrument—but he loved to listen to music. So we went to more concerts as a result. And he started my music education.

JB: Well, you've certainly had a fascinating life and it seems to me that—of course, I have a biased approach but--or a biased attitude—but it does seem as if all the threads of things that you've worked on having to do with culture, of many different cultures--especially, of course, your family's Japanese background--but being willing to reach out and work--and learn—about other cultures—it seems obvious why you and Edith Wyle were so *simpatico* and pretty much inevitable that you would get involved with the Craft and Folk Art Museum. And I just—I want to thank you for contributing to this history of the Craft and Folk Art Museum.

TK: Well, it was a pleasure.

JB: Thank you.

End of Session 3: 1:55:33]