

1 **Telling Our Story: Honoring the Past**
2 **The History of the Forest Grove City Library**
3

10 Interviewer: Linda Stiles-Taylor (LT)

11 Interviewee: David Pauli (DP)

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14 LT: (photo of old library from the outside, showing neon sign)when you started?

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16 DP: Yeah, I don't remember that neon sign, but I do remember it at some point being out
17 there. It was just a little store front, like 1700 or 1800 square feet, something like that. It
18 was *really* small.

19

20 LT: What brought you to work there initially?

21

22 DP: Um, well you know I grew up here in Forest Grove, so I used to use that library as a
23 kid and especially when I was in high school all the time. And then I came there in '75,
24 in January of '75 when the economy was in the tank and I was looking for a job and they
25 just happened to have one open. Just sort of blind luck I guess.

26

27 LT: How old were you then?

28

29 DP: Um, let's see, I was 28.

30

31 LT: Aah. And so had you planned to launch a career in the libraries, or are you just
32 saying "blind luck" in the sense that you were just looking for work?

33

34 DP: Yeah, I had no plans to become a librarian at that time and I just needed a job and,
35 of course, you know, I'd been a teacher and I'd done a lot of research so I knew about
36 libraries from a user's perspective, but I sure learned a lot more after I got that job.

37

38 LT: (photo of table, books, Librarian) So here you are inside the old Forest Grove City
39 Library on the right with Barbara Dunnette's back to you and Hallie at the circulation
40 desk?

41

42 DP: Right. That was probably, I don't know, about 1977 or something like that, and we
43 had no work space other than right out where the public was. So, it looks like I'm
44 cataloging books out there using an electric typewriter to type up catalog cards. It's one
45 of the things I did.

46

47 LT: One by one, piece by piece. What a concept.
48
49 DP: Yeah.
50
51 LT: (photo of Marlo Danko). And here's Marlo Danko filing good ol' circulation cards.
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53 DP: That's right. Everyday we counted circulation and then had to file all the cards.
54 And Marlo was a volunteer for quite a while before she actually became a paid library
55 employee, and did some really great stuff for us in both capacities.
56
57 LT: So, when you started, Mike Smith was the director and you were an actual
58 employee, and who else was actually paid?
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60 DP: We had two other paid employees. We had a library clerk, Jerry, and we had a high
61 school student who came in after school and shelved books. So there were basically four
62 paid employees. And then we did have volunteers. That was it.
63
64 LT: The volunteers would do normal things like do the circulation and of course, the
65 children's services were provided by the volunteers.
66
67 DP: A lot of volunteers worked on story hours and that sort of thing, but you know, in
68 that building there wasn't room for a whole lot of people to be doing stuff at once.
69
70 LT: (photo of outside of library) So this is along about 1978.
71
72 DP: Moving. Well you know, I'm not sure. It could be that was moving out old books
73 getting ready for the book sale, which is one thing that we used to do. We took them up
74 to somebody's house, I can't remember who, and stored them in their garage. So, I know
75 that Mike weeded out a whole, I mean it's hard to believe there was room for stuff in that
76 building, but he weeded out a bunch of old, old books, I know, when he first got there,
77 that hadn't been done for years. So that's prob, I'm guessing that's what's going on there
78 is a truckload of books to go to the book sale.
79
80 LT: (photo inside the library with Mike Smith) So here's the library with Mike Smith
81 standing there.
82
83 DP: Right, right. I just want to say how fortunate I was to have him as my boss and
84 mentor in this whole profession. But moving the library was pretty much Mike and I and
85 a couple other staff members and a lot of volunteers and a few, the city hired a couple of
86 guys to help us with the heavy stuff, but we did a lot of heavy lifting. You know, I was
87 just astounded at the number of books we moved out of that tiny library. I couldn't
88 believe there were that many in there.
89
90 LT: (Laughter) They seem to grow as you...
91

92 DP: Yeah, it was amazing. (photo of _____). More moving stuff. I recall having
93 this dream when we got through moving the library that I was back in the old building
94 and there was stuff we forgot, and I was hunting around and hunting around for it and
95 couldn't find it. I thought I was going to be stuck in there forever. Like one of those
96 anxiety dreams. That's really hard work moving a library.

97
98 LT: It must have been just like an incredible experience growing up here and always
99 having the Forest Grove City Library being in this little tiny storefront and then all of a
100 sudden having this enormous, beautiful new facility to move to.

101
102 DP: Well, I think it was long overdue. I think really the credit must go to Mike Smith
103 for spearheading it. You know, this community *really* needed a new library for a long,
104 long time. We're really fortunate.

105
106 LT: (photo of inside of new library showing seating and reading area). Here's the new
107 facility.

108
109 DP: I remember how astounded the people were when they first came in to see it. *We*
110 were astounded, the staff. It was just amazing to have that much room and to think about
111 all the possibilities that faced it, but you got to remember that there were still four people
112 running this library the same size it is now. The first year, which was my last year here,
113 we were incredibly busy here. I was exhausted every night.

114
115 LT: Because people just came running. New facility, skyrocketing circulation.

116
117 DP: We were busy all the time. I don't recall having a chance to even sit down for a few
118 minutes, you know. Just on my feet all the time that year.

119
120 LT: And it was still, everything was manual basically.

121
122 DP: Pretty much. We weren't automated. That's right. We still had to file all those
123 cards, it's just that there were thousands more.

124
125 LT: Oh joy! Success! (photo of DP in the staff room) And here you are in the staff
126 room

127
128 DP: Yeah, this would have been September 1978 when we moved into the building.
129 Boy, I'm glad I was young then because we did so much hard, physical work getting this
130 place ready to open and moving all the stuff and setting up things. I know Mike spent
131 hours. I kind of wondered if he ever went home during that time. It was a really pretty
132 overwhelming, also pretty exciting. It was good to be young and full of energy.

133
134 LT: (photo of Willetta Matson) Here's Willetta Matson who was the chairman of the
135 library commission at that time.

136

137 DP: That's right. I remember first meeting her when Mike, my first or second day on the
138 job, he took me up to her house and we delivered her board packet and I met her and we
139 talked a little bit. She was tremendously supportive of everything we did in the library
140 and I think having that citizen support just made such a difference to us and made us
141 really confident about what were doing.

142
143 LT: She was a former librarian herself.

144
145 DP: Yeah, I think she had been a librarian in Alaska if I'm not mistaken, and so she had
146 a really good background. She understood a lot about libraries and the mission of
147 libraries.

148
149 LT: And she was just a very charming, very intelligent person and was just a real asset in
150 terms of her ability to work with people and make them feel good about the trials and
151 tribulations.

152
153 DP: Absolutely. Yeah, you just have to have those kind of people in the citizen role.
154 We do what we can as professionals, but those are the really key players I think.

155
156 LT: And there she is with the card catalog, one of those vintage items that people
157 viewing this videotape, somebody will say now what did a card catalog look like?

158
159 DP: I still have people tell me, I sure wish we had the card catalog back, but you know I
160 just spent so many endless hours filing cards, and I remember we'd have this huge
161 backlog of cards that weren't filed and we couldn't find stuff because the cards weren't in
162 there.

163
164 LT: Incessant because you could never get ahead of it.

165
166 DP: Yeah, at least you know they didn't ever go down like computers do sometimes, but
167 still it was just way too labor intensive.

168
169 LT: I don't think too many librarians were sorry to see them go.

170
171 DP: No.

172
173 LT: So Dave you said one of the outgrowths of having a new building was circulation
174 skyrocketed. What other kinds of changes did you see in the way libraries were seen in
175 Forest Grove after the move to the new building and how they were used?

176
177 DP: I guess people didn't have a conception in Forest Grove of what a Library really
178 could be because all they had ever known was that little building and there just wasn't
179 much space to do any kind of programs and so we did see increases in youth services.
180 And they actually were able to, shortly after I left, hire some people, actually pay them to
181 do youth service work.

182

183 LT: What a concept.

184

185 DP: Yeah, all kinds of great things like that started happening. Of course, increased use
186 of the library. You know, when we were in the old library we virtually knew everybody
187 that came in. Even by name, and once we got over here we started seeing so many
188 people that we didn't know who had been in the community for a long time and the idea
189 of this facility just brought so many more people in. It was great.

190

191 LT: You mentioned Mike Smith as a mentor. You are one of, let's see, four people
192 who worked for him who went on the get their masters in library science and become
193 professional librarians, which is rather unusual, I think, for a library director to have that
194 many employees decide to go into the profession. Do you want to talk a little bit about
195 how you went from finding a job when you were 28 to deciding to become a professional
196 librarian?

197

198 DP: I guess, well when I first got that job I saw it as a temporary thing and I didn't really
199 have any idea about getting a degree in library science, but that occurred to me after I'd
200 been working there I think about three years and talking to Mike. I think more than
201 anything his modeling of what a librarian could be and you know, what kind of
202 profession this was helped me make that decision. He never really specifically told me
203 you ought to become a librarian or you ought to go get a degree, I just think that the very
204 fact of the way he did things was kind of an inspiration to me.

205

206 LT: Even in the old building, I recall, he had really high professional standards that you
207 sort of don't equate with a little tiny storefront. He had one of the first large print
208 collections in the county and one of the largest even in the limited facilities. When I first
209 came here as a VISTA volunteer to work on the outreach program, he was sort of one of
210 the instrumental people in getting that moving. Despite the size of the town and the
211 collection, he felt that library service was for everybody and made a real point of
212 diversity in the service.

213

214 DP: Yeah, I remember. I also remember he was also a leader in the library community
215 outside of our own library. He was really instrumental in getting the Washington County
216 Cooperative going. He provided the kind of leadership that was, evidently, I don't know
217 the history, but evidently had been lacking in the past. Efforts had been made in that
218 direction clear back to the '40s. My father-in-law remembers being involved in some
219 kind of effort to do more county-wide, and it really didn't happen till Mike came here.
220 So I credit him with some of that impetus to get that whole thing going.

221

222 LT: So, when you started working, Washington County Cooperative Library Services
223 didn't exist, but during your tenure is when it formed.

224

225 DP: That's pretty much when it formed. I think in 1975 when I started it was kind of an
226 informal sort of group of people that was meeting and talking about the whole thing and
227 then it really got off the ground just during the four years I was there. Things got started.

228

229 LT: And so libraries stopped working in isolation and became part of a larger picture.

230

231 DP: Right, which makes a lot of sense, especially in this county since geographically
232 we're not that far apart compared to some places I've worked. Yeah, it's just amazing to
233 me to think about the strides that have been made in Washington County in the past 30
234 years.

235

236 LT: Before WCCLS was formed, there was a lot of reliance on the state library and that
237 seemed to be the main link. If you needed something, you got it from the state.

238

239 DP: Right. And I remember when I first started at Forest Grove, if you lived outside the
240 city limits, you had to pay a \$2 fee for a library card, which seems ludicrous now. I just
241 can't believe that was still going on but it was.

242

243 LT: After WCCLS got going and there began to be a lot of interlibrary loan and
244 cooperation between communities, people outside of the city could use the library and
245 that probably impacted who you were seeing as patrons as well.

246

247 DP: Yeah, I didn't think about that, but I'm sure it did. I mean, in my experience, any
248 fee, no matter how small, in a library is a barrier to service. And even \$2, people say,
249 well, I'm not going to pay it. And so I've always opposed, and I think that's probably
250 where I came by that philosophy was working with Mike, and I've always opposed
251 charging people fees and I've taken a lot of grief for it in my career at certain times
252 because not everybody in this field feels that way. But you know, I've really felt I had a
253 good ground to stand up and say you know we're not going to charge fees, we're not
254 going to charge people to use a publicly supported library.

255

256 LT: And that certainly takes us to one of the things that has been a hallmark of the
257 library service in this building for many, many years, is the fact that we don't charge
258 fines, which is so unique, as well as other kinds of fees for rental books and bestsellers
259 have never had a charge affixed. And also not having a theft detection device is kind of
260 unique in the library world. Just the idea of trusting your patrons and making things
261 accessible to them. So when you left this area and went to library school, what did you
262 take with you from here? You say one thing was you got a lot of grief in your career
263 about trying to combat implementing fees everywhere. What other kinds of things do
264 you feel like you thought differently maybe than other people as a result of having roots
265 here?

266

267 DP: Hmm, well that was definitely one of the things, was barrier-free access for
268 everybody. Also I guess a real dedication to serving kids. I mean even though I was, I
269 happen to be a school librarian now strangely enough, but for most of my career I was a
270 public library director and I saw that you know my support for youth services was really
271 crucial and I made it a priority everywhere I worked to try to see that kids got the best
272 service possible. So I think that's another thing I took away from here.

273

274 LT: So you left the area in '79....

275

276 DP: I finished library school in 1980, I became a director, shortly after that I became a
277 director of a public library in Wisconsin. I was there eight years, and I was also a public
278 library director in Montana for a number of years. And it was a very interesting
279 experience for me because just to work in different states and see, you know, how things
280 are done differently in other places, but always that grounding I got here served me really
281 well in terms of having a philosophy of what a library is about made a big difference to
282 me. Because there are differing points of view out there and I think our profession really
283 needs people to stand up and say, "Hey, this is what's right, this is what I believe and I'm
284 going to go to the wall for it".

285

286 LT: Hmm mm. And then you've sort of come full circle, in that you're back in
287 Washington County. What year did you move back?

288

289 DP: I came back here in 1998. I didn't come back for a job, I came back to be with my
290 mom who was in her last days of an illness. So, I just sort of came back with no job. But
291 things worked out fine. I'm a school librarian at the Portland Jewish Academy and I
292 really love it. I'm sort of a one person operation. We're a small private school. And
293 then I also work part-time as a reference librarian at the Hillsboro Public Library.

294

295 LT: You serve on the library commission for the Forest Grove City Library.

296

297 DP: Oh yeah, I'm on the Forest Grove Library Commission too, strangely enough. I
298 live, eat, sleep and breathe libraries.

299

300 LT: So for a man that never intended to go that route.

301

302 DP: Yeah, it's pretty weird isn't it? I think its just one of life's little curves that get
303 thrown at you, and I'm just really grateful. I think if there hadn't been that certain
304 circumstance at that time, you know, it wouldn't have happened the way it did.

305

306 LT: So, serendipity that unfolded in a wonderful way for both you it sounds like and for
307 library patrons everywhere because you've been a great benefit and service in several
308 states and in this community. And you know we have the great luck of having you come
309 back and serve once again in our library commission.

310

311 DP: Yeah, it's a pretty exciting time for the Forest Grove Library, too, I think, and I'm
312 really charged up about being on the commission, going into this fundraising mode,
313 looking at a new addition to the building and renovation. Actually those are all things
314 I've been through in my career, so I'm hoping I can bring some knowledge to it that'll be
315 helpful to everybody.

316

317 LT: Well thank you very much Dave for being with us today.

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