Ellen Revelle Eckis: A Scripps Legacy

Interviews conducted by
Judith Morgan

This oral history was made possible by the generous support of the E.W. Scripps Associates.

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SIO Reference Series No. 99-12 August 1999
INTERVIEW HISTORY

Ellen Virginia Clark Revelle Eckis has had an extraordinary lifetime of family ties to the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, California. She was born on July 31, 1910 in the La Jolla guest house of her great-aunt Ellen Browning Scripps, the newspaperwoman whose generous benefactions, together with those of her half-brother, E.W. Scripps, included founding funds for a small marine laboratory which later took the Scripps name and became part of the University of California.

At age twenty, ten days after graduating with the first class from Scripps College in Claremont, she married Roger Revelle, a Pomona College geology graduate who, that fall, became one of five research assistants at Scripps Institution of Oceanography. The Revelles launched married life in one of the original board-and-batten cottages on the sea-cliff campus, north of La Jolla, and, in a sense, never left.

As a keen listener, observer, and mimic, Ellen absorbed scenes and anecdotes from three generations of academics, Nobel laureates, rogues, royals, Navy admirals, Marine generals, U.S. presidents and their wives. She managed a household of four children, moving back and forth from West Coast to East to keep Roger’s life in as much balance as his curious, inventive nature would allow. Though professing shyness, Ellen became a lyric speaker, a passionate playreader, a behind-the-scenes force in the cultural, civic and university life of San Diego. Her philanthropies have been as diverse as those of her namesake and great-aunt, Ellen Browning Scripps, ranging from undergraduate scholarships to chamber music concerts, from the La Jolla Playhouse to land use and conservation groups.

At age eighty-eight, when these interviews took place, she was still so busy that our appointments had to be worked around morning swims in La Jolla Cove (“but not every day anymore,” she demurred, “sometimes it’s just too cold!”); Wednesday Club meetings in downtown San Diego; an autobiography-writing class at UCSD; driving her second husband, Rollin Eckis, to the doctor and dentist; board meetings of the La Jolla Playhouse; gatherings of Oceanids (the UCSD women’s organization she co-founded); consultations with her son, Bill, about the San Diego Daily Transcript newspaper which the family bought and of which she was publisher; and coast-to-coast travels to keep in touch with children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

It was usually three in the afternoon before we could meet for ninety-minute interviews in the living room of the Mediterranean-style home her mother built by the sea in 1922. This spacious room, cozy with family photographs, floor-to-ceiling books, souvenirs of travel, and a grand piano, has been the setting for memorable social events over the years. It also served as ground zero for much of the plotting and planning in the early days of recruiting a faculty and setting a course for UCSD. Scientists were wined and dined here, usually in winter months if they came from colder climates; the satiric musical Endless Holiday, written, produced, and performed by Scripps professors, was staged within its walls. Among those who enjoyed Revelle hospitality were Harold Urey, Maria Mayer, Jonas Salk, Eleanor Roosevelt, Theodor Geisel (Dr. Seuss) and John Steinbeck.
Our taped interviews began in late July, when surfers in search of the perfect wave clogged the streets with their vans; they ended in November, after the neighborhood had returned to its calmer nature—an enclave of tile-roofed homes looking out to the Pacific. Throughout the sessions, Ellen Revelle Eckis was forthright, funny, and specific in her opinions of, and feelings for, the professors, politicians, and characters she has known. Her loyalties proved as unflinching as her dislike of pretense; her sense of justice as fervent as during World War II, when the Revelles lived in Washington, D.C., and she was indignant over the discrimination against Negroes, specifically that the Daughters of the American Revolution would not allow the great contralto, Marian Anderson, to perform at Constitution Hall.

Both interviewee and interviewer read the transcript and made minor emendations. First names are often used because of our many years of personal and professional association. Further details of her Scripps College years and classmates are covered in an oral history conducted by Enid Hart Douglass in 1989 as part of the Scripps College Oral History Program. Newspaper clippings about her community and university activities, her honors, and her letters to Roger Revelle may be found among his extensive papers collected at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography Archives in La Jolla, California, where preparation was done for these interviews. The six original audiotapes are also housed there.

The interviewer wishes to thank SIO Archivist Deborah Day for her unfailingly enthusiastic and successful searches to substantiate obscure facts, quotes, and anecdotes. She artfully suggested topics of possible perusal and questions of interest.

Judith Morgan
La Jolla, California
March 7, 1999

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Morgan: First we will do the date, which is July 29, 1998. This is Judith Morgan interviewing Ellen Revelle Eckis, and because we are in this place, in the home that your mother began in 1922, I believe . . .

Eckis: Began and finished.

Morgan: And finished, by the sea in La Jolla. I thought that we’d start with family and perhaps go back a little farther and talk first about your great-aunt and namesake, Ellen Browning Scripps, who was such a force in La Jolla history. Perhaps beginning with your earliest memories of her. I read something about a birthday party . . .

Eckis: I think I remember my second birthday, but that’s not too likely. But I have a memory of a long table on the lawn, on the Prospect [Street] lawn side where it was level. She did tend to have all the relatives during the summer to family gatherings. I remember that grass had little English daisies in it that were a delight, and I always wondered how they kept going, because of course they’d get mowed down when the lawn was cut. I may be quite wrong, but that’s what I think; that, of course, is the place and not Aunt Ellen. So it’s a little hard to think when I first was aware of her. I remember going to the house almost every afternoon when we’d be here in the summer, and that she had a long table in her sun room with toys and children’s books on the lower level and adult things on top and that it kept children occupied while the adults had a chance to chat. So my earliest memories are of her against the background of the ocean in that long sun room that she loved.

Morgan: There are a lot of portraits of her also with that beautiful light coming in.

Eckis: Yes, yes. She really enjoyed that.

Morgan: Did you stay over with her as you were growing up?

Eckis: I did sometimes in high school when we lived in Pasadena and Mother brought us. Mother and I used to come down to see her sometimes, and we stayed at the house. And then in college I came down a couple of times, once with a classmate, and stayed in the little bungalow where I had been born, her guest house. And I had a

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4 The symbol ## indicates that a tape or segment of tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes, see the last page of this transcript.

5 Ellen Browning Scripps (1836-1932). She founded Scripps College in Claremont, California in 1926.

6 Grace Messenger Scripps Clark (1878-1971), mother of Ellen Revelle Eckis
horrible experience, because Miss Cummins\footnote{Caroline Cummins, headmistress of Bishop’s School in La Jolla, California from 1921-1953.} asked my friend and me to come over to Bishop’s and talk about Scripps College. And Helen managed to become ill and not be able to do it, so I went over alone, thinking I was just going to tea, and getting there and discovering that there was the little hall of girls lined up with their ankles crossed, and there were two chairs, one for Miss Cummins and one for Ellen Clark, and Miss Cummins saying, “Now Miss Clark will tell you about Scripps College.” I don’t think a Bishop’s girl went there for years as a result. Because I wasn’t used to this, and I wasn’t expecting it. And Aunt Ellen’s English cousin, Hilda Gardner, who was her companion, had been there and when I needed a little comfort that night at dinner she said, “Well, it was too bad you couldn’t have said something.” Which is not what I needed.

Morgan: There was some empty air, as they say.

Eckis: Yes. Because I was just so intimidated and, you know, not expecting that I was supposed to give a lecture. I just thought I’d answer any questions and just chat with the girls.

Morgan: What were some of the things about your Aunt Ellen that you really admired?

Eckis: Well, I liked her independence, and I grew up being aware of that and knowing that she did not like to be helped and taken care of. And I completely sympathize now. I find myself brushing away, saying, “I can do that.” I quite understand. And she, until she broke her hip when she was—I don’t know, eighty-eight, eighty-nine, I forget how old she was—and her brother put an elevator in, and she would sometimes forget to use it. She wrote Mother once and said, “I sometimes forget I have that thing.” She was furious that it had been done until she found it was her brother Ed,\footnote{Edward Willis Scripps (1854-1926), newspaperman and one of the founders of the Marine Biological Association of San Diego, later the Scripps Institution of Oceanography.} and of course he could get away with anything. He saw to it that she had her first car. I did use to enjoy going with the two aunts and Mother, going to the zoo. And of course, sitting on the jump seat facing them and feeling very important that we could drive around the zoo.

Morgan: You were driving inside [the zoo grounds] then?

Eckis: Inside, because Aunt Ellen couldn’t walk [that far], of course. And so she was allowed to take her car inside. I felt very, very special that I could get to ride along and do that.

Morgan: How old would you have been then?
Eckis: When did the zoo start?\footnote{The San Diego Zoo opened in 1916 and moved to its final location in Balboa Park in 1921.} I was probably nine or ten. I’m not quite sure.

Morgan: Was that with your Aunt Virginia?\footnote{Eliza Virginia Scripps (1852-1921), sister of Ellen Browning Scripps and Edward Willis Scripps.}

Eckis: And Aunt Virginia, too, whom I mentioned once after sitting on the jump seat and looking at her, I finally said, “Aunt Jen, you shouldn’t say words with ’s’ in ’em, because that’s when you spit.”

Morgan: And she said?

Eckis: She took it and kind of laughed, thought it was funny that I had noticed it. They were so different, those two.

Morgan: Tell me about them.

Eckis: Well, Aunt Ellen was so gentle and sweet and soft, and Aunt Virginia was a little on the common side and used to—you’d have thought \textit{she} was the newspaperwoman. She used quite bad language sometimes, and of course is famous for her cussing out the carpenters when the church was being built. That famous story.\footnote{Ellen Clark Revelle, “A Quiet, Adventurous Life.” \textit{Scripps College Bulletin} (Claremont, California) XLI (3): 14-15 (February 1967). Speech given at Founder’s Day Convocation, October 20, 1966.} She said once, well the difference was that Aunt Ellen’s mother was a gentlewoman and that hers was an American, was common.

Morgan: I read later on that it was when Ellen Browning Scripps could not make the trip to Japan in 1906 or something that that was the reason that Aunt Virginia got to go. I remember seeing a photograph of her on top of Mount Fuji.

Eckis: Really?

Morgan: Years ago.

Eckis: Well, she traveled, of course, Aunt Ellen did, a lot with Uncle Ed, because of his health. And it was when she still lived in Detroit with my parents, and he, Uncle Ed, was advised to travel for his health and Aunt Ellen gave up her position at the paper and went with him. She was so used to writing her—I don’t know if it was daily, maybe only weekly—column, that she wrote back to the paper, and of course it would be probably a long time before they would get there and be printed. She
wrote these travel letters all through her travels.^{12} And she managed to get herself in some amazing places, like in a harem once. No language, but they somehow communicated.

Morgan: And where was this?

Eckis: Well, where do they have harems?

Morgan: Perhaps Turkey. Istanbul?

Eckis: It may well have been Turkey. And they were in North Africa, and on the Continent, and in Spain, because I know she went to a bullfight, and obviously did not approve of it at all, but she wrote about it so vividly that when that particular letter was being read once at the [La Jolla] Woman’s Club, the woman behind me said, “I’ll have to leave.” I mean it just was making her sick! Aunt Ellen had this reporter’s eye and was just watching everything and writing it down, and it is a very vivid description of a bullfight.

Morgan: Well, I was going to ask, “Did you consider Aunt Ellen a role model?” but I don’t know if that should follow a discussion of the harems. You seem to have many of her qualities.

Eckis: Thank you. I began to realize as I went along and got older that her philanthropy was not just big things, but that she saw individual needs. I may have told you about that one little episode that I was so touched by when Roger and I were first married, and Mother was divorced from my father^{13} and was planning to remarry but her family in Detroit were all sure that Gotfried^{14} was a fortune hunter and got her to say she wouldn’t marry him. But she was miserable. She was spending the winter in Detroit with my brother and other family, and Aunt Ellen called me in one day and said, “I think you and Roger should have Christmas with your mother.” And instead of just giving me a big check she just had Hilda get us the railroad ticket. We couldn’t have afforded it on a hundred dollars a month. I don’t know what we did about a hotel. I have no recollection of that. But she had the feeling that we should go and spend Christmas with Mother, and Mother and I had always been very, very close, and I think it did help her quite a bit. But to me that was an indication of how she saw where a small gift could do a lot.

Morgan: She just did it. She didn’t ask.

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^{12}Ellen Browning Scripps. *A Sampling from Travel Letters, 1881-1883* (Claremont, CA: Scripps College, 1973)

^{13}Rex Brainerd Clark (1876-1955), father of Ellen Revelle Eckis.

^{14}J. Gotfried Johanson, second husband of Grace Messenger Scripps Clark.
Eckis: Well, she called me in and said she thought I should do this, and I didn’t object. She [also] knew me well enough to know that I didn’t care about jewelry. And she had been giving each niece, grandniece, a diamond bracelet when they turned eighteen. And she said, “I don’t think you really would want a diamond bracelet, so I am giving you a check.” And so I bought a car instead of a diamond bracelet. Of course she had no children, but was very, very warm and loving to the vast number of nieces and nephews that she had.

Morgan: You also seem to share a trait in that you say you’re shy about public speaking, or used to be, but have always loved play reading and acting.

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: And I gather that Miss Scripps also had that dichotomy. . .

Eckis: Yes. I had not realized though that she had given speeches until several of us began transcribing her letters when Scripps College acquired them. And she gave a lot of talks at the Woman’s Club, for instance, when she was very much opposed to alcohol and was wanting Prohibition, I think probably because of her brother Ed who was famous for the amount of whiskey he consumed. And she spoke very, very movingly and forcefully about the importance of having Prohibition and then about getting out the vote. And when women were legalized and could vote, she gave one impassioned speech about how important it was now to get out and use the vote. And here I had thought she was so shy and never made speeches. But she did. Maybe not anywhere but the Woman’s Club. I don’t know. But I have records of those.

Morgan: And that is also where she was in a Greek—

Eckis: Where she was in a Greek play, yes.

Morgan: Share the story about Mary Ritter15 that I think—

Eckis: Well, Mary Ritter, the wife of the director of Scripps Oceanographic—Scripps Institute I guess it was then. Aunt Ellen, in her part, had a quite impassioned speech that she gave. Mother was on the way back across the street to Aunt Ellen’s house, and said, “Aunt Ellen, you just lived that part.” And she said that Aunt Ellen sort of looked around and said, “Gracie, you know I’ve always wanted to say those things to that woman and I never had the chance.” So she had really loved it. I made the

15Mary Elizabeth Bennett Ritter, MD (1859-1949). She married William Emerson Ritter (1856-1944), director of the Marine Biological Association of San Diego, now the Scripps Institution of Oceanography.
mistake of telling that once, and it turned out that it was to a relative of Mary Ritter’s who didn’t find it very funny.

Morgan: I gather that Miss Scripps was not particularly keen on her surname.

Eckis: No, no. The thing that she said about it I loved, that she didn’t really like to have her name on things, it was a ridiculous name without rhyme or—what was the rest?—with that one pathetic little vowel struggling against all those harsh consonants. So she didn’t want the college named for her or anything. She really wasn’t trying to have her name on things, but she was overruled. And it was a shame that she never saw the college, because she was deeply concerned with it, and very, very interested, and when the college realized that she was not going to get up there [to Claremont], it was arranged that the whole college would come down and see her. And our class of fifty-two, the first-year students, had made up a photo album ahead of time with pictures of each student, either singly or in groups, and their names of course, and she had studied that so hard that when we went in she knew each girl by name.

Morgan: That’s amazing.

Eckis: She had a remarkable memory. And one of them, Ada Watkins, when she got to her Ada was astounded because Aunt Ellen said, “You were the first one to register, weren’t you?” And she even knew that, and Ada couldn’t imagine how she did, but she had absorbed that, she’d remembered it. And we had, I think, something like five on the faculty. It was a quite small faculty, obviously. But we really had a wonderful day coming down on the bus. Aunt Ellen was supposed to remain seated in her sun room but she defied her doctors at that point and stood up at the end of the room and greeted us all as we filed in. So it was a very special thing that no other class had but ours.

Morgan: And that was the first class.

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: Let’s talk some about your parents. Your parents moving west from Detroit.

Eckis: Yes. Dad had, I think, a stationer’s store or something like that, I’m not quite sure what it was, and somehow it wasn’t talked about a great deal. I have a feeling he went bankrupt or else his health failed, and the two aunties invited Mother and Dad to come out and visit. And they came out. Neither of them had been west before, and they both loved it. And a local realtor, Mr. Dearborn, took them up to Julian and showed them this big ranch which is, as you come into Julian, instead of going right on the Main Street you go left and it’s about two miles out that way. They fell
in love with it and bought it. And went home and picked up my two brothers[^16] and
moved out. So when they first got there, of course, they had to build a ranch house.
They lived in sort of bunkhouse arrangements and Mother told about having to put
on rubber boots when she’d get up to take care of the baby, my brother. And they
meanwhile were building the house, which was up on a hill and had a lovely view
out over meadows. It was an apple-and-cattle ranch. So my early, really early, early
memories are of being up there. And my grandparents, my Clark grandparents[^17]
seemed to have followed Dad and Mother wherever they lived, so they came out
from Detroit, too, and they had a little house up the hill from our house. When we
moved to San Diego, they did, and when we moved to Pasadena, they did. We were
up there until I was about four, but came down to La Jolla for summers.

Morgan: But you were born in La Jolla.

Eckis: I was born in La Jolla because it was July, and we always came to La Jolla.

Morgan: And when you say Miss Scripps’ guest house, is that the Wisteria Cottage?

Eckis: No. That was Aunt Virginia’s guest house. No, the house was set back—well, you
know which one it is—and then there was a circular or semicircular pergola, and
then on the south end of the pergola was a very nice little library with a fireplace. I
have many memories of reading in that library, curled up in the window seat. It had
a fireplace and a fire going. And it did have a vault where her most valuable books
were kept in safety. And on the other part of the circle was this little one-bedroom
guest house that was Aunt Ellen’s guest house. And mother had already, this was
already planned, that she was going to have me there and not go to the hospital.

Morgan: So it was not a surprise.

Eckis: Except that I was in a hurry. They thought it was corn on the cob that had disagreed
[with her], but it was I. And this Episcopal bishop was just moving out as Mother
and I moved in. No time for a nurse, a doctor, or anything. So Dad and Aunt
Virginia delivered me. That little house—when the art center began remodeling,
they tore down the library and they wanted to get rid of this little guest house. And
nobody bought it. Seeing I was on the board then of the old arts center, not the
[Museum of] Contemporary Art, they said if I’d take it away, I could have it. And
so we moved it up where the Munks[^18] live, up there.

[^16]: Rex Scripps Clark (1902-1986) and William Scripps Clark (1908- ).

[^17]: Ransom Bruce Clark (1844-1925) and Ellen Rosena Russell Clark (1846-1929).

[^18]: Walter Heinrich Munk (1917- ), PhD in physical oceanography 1947 at UC Los Angeles/Scripps Institution of
Oceanography, and Judith Kendall Horton Munk (1925- ), artist and architect.
Morgan: On Ellentown Road?

Eckis: Yes. Except this one is on Horizon Way. It’s just one block from Ellentown Road. But we kept its integrity almost entirely. I didn’t want to change it. We changed the entrance in order to have a big view window looking at the Cove, and over that way, and then added a breezeway and another bedroom and bathroom and garage. But kept it very much the way it was. It’s a dear little house. It now belongs to my two younger children, and it’s been rented. Never been any—Mary Harrington Hall¹⁹ lived in it. Remember her? And she lived in it very happily for several years.

Morgan: Interesting. What were your early memories of La Jolla?

Eckis: Well, mainly the Cove.

Morgan: You have always loved swimming.

Eckis: Yes. And as I think I mentioned, this house was considered dangerously far out from town by cousin Floyd Kellogg, and it was pretty remote. I think there was one old wooden house up at the top of what is now Marine Street. But Marine hadn’t been cut through, and so Vista Del Mar just dead-ended in what we kids called the Badlands, and from there on for some distance it was just a wonderful playground, fairly rugged, and some caves and nice places to play.

Morgan: Now is this Miss Scripps’ house you are mentioning, or this house?

Eckis: No. This house. In those days kids were not chauffeured around as much, and we walked up to La Jolla when we wanted to do things. We had rented—Mother originally, they had had a house on Virginia Way, the very end of Virginia Way. I don’t know why she sold that one, but from then on until ’22 when she built this, she would arrange to rent a house each summer. And two summers we had one that’s now nonexistent. I think it’s about where the hospital part of the White Sands is. It was at the north end of this beach. So this particular beach had been my play yard for a long time. And that one we had for two years, and then Mother built this in ’22 and we moved in in August. Of course I remember it as being a small enough town where little girls could walk up, go shopping at Smith’s Store and everything without any worry about being out on the streets.

Morgan: Was Smith’s a department store?

Eckis: Dry goods. Of course everything was one-story, and there was Putnam’s Drug Store and McCarthy’s. It’s funny, I don’t remember the one where Gregory

¹⁹ Mary Harrington Hall, San Diego writer.
Peck’s\textsuperscript{20} dad was the druggist. I don’t know which one that was. The movie theater at that time was next to the corner of Wall and Girard, and there was a store there, and then next to it was this movie theater that had a balcony and very nice big low seats and all. And Spence Wilson ran that one.

Morgan: Forever.

Eckis: Yes! Just a very small town, and a haven for kids, I’d say.

Morgan: And then at age six was it that you moved to Pasadena?

Eckis: I think it was about that because I went to kindergarten down here at Francis Parker [School] with Ham Marston.\textsuperscript{21} That’s the only one I remember. And then first grade in Pasadena.

Morgan: And why did you move to Pasadena?

Eckis: Because my father moved his business to Los Angeles. Dad was one who couldn’t pass up a bargain, and somehow the lumberman Weyerhaeuser’s house became available, and apparently Dad thought it was such a bargain that he bought it. I don’t know if Mother had even seen it yet. And my brother and I used to sit out on the curb when tour buses would go by and [they’d] say, “That’s the Weyerhaeuser house, and there’s old Mr. Weyerhaeuser sitting on the porch.” And Bill would say, “No, that isn’t. That’s Grandpa Clark.” And it was a nice house to grow up in. It was a very comfortable old house. Of course during the war we had potatoes instead of the lawn, and were very patriotic.

Morgan: You were in the first class there at Scripps College. Was there any influence from Miss Scripps for you to attend that college?

Eckis: No. I know she was delighted that I did, Judith, but she never pushed me in any way. And I remember when I wrote my letter of application I had the judgment not to say that one reason I wanted to go was I had loved the model of it that was in the Dean’s office at the high school. Somehow I had a feeling that that would not really be right.

Morgan: Not reflect a serious student?

Eckis: No. But one of the letters from Aunt Ellen that Mother had that I had not been aware of, and I think I mentioned that she had said she didn’t have any, and then I

\textsuperscript{20} Eldred Gregory Peck (1916- ), actor. His father was Gregory Pearl Peck (1886-1962 ).

\textsuperscript{21} Arthur Hamilton Marston, Jr. (1910- ).
found this one that was written in the summer of ’27, before I started, in which she said that she had been surprised that she had been given as one of my references. She was surprised to find how much she could say about me, and she said that she was just a little sorry that I wasn’t going in the first year, [as] I might be less interested in studying after a year away from it. Mother and I were going to travel in Europe. And that it might be a very interesting thing to have been a member of that first class. But I really don’t think she had put any pressure on me at all. Then when I decided I wanted to, I wired back from somewhere between Pasadena and Detroit where Mother and I were going to see her mother,22 who had had a stroke. I wired back to see if I could still get in. They said I could. And I have never regretted it. I was really glad.

Morgan: Maybe it was because she didn’t like to be forced to do things that she was careful not to appear to force.

Eckis: It may have been. Yes. That’s one of the famous quotes about her, that she hated to be forced to do anything.

Morgan: Think for a moment about your freshman year. Did you decide at that point to major in child psychology? Had this—?

Eckis: Oh, they didn’t even have it at that point. I don’t believe we did anything about majors, probably, Judith, until the junior year. Because everyone of course took the same thing, except French. There were various levels of French, depending on whether we’d had it before or not. But we all had to take horrendous comprehensives at the end of the sophomore year. And I don’t think that we had any chance of thinking about a major. I was always interested in English and writing, and loved it, and then so my major turned out to be a double one: English and Psychology. And if I hadn’t gotten married ten days after college, I would have worked the next year at least with my psychology professor. She had kind of wanted me to. Unfortunately, I had just enough child psychology to scare me to death that I was going to ruin my child. The first one suffered from that. Because I didn’t have enough knowledge. Because of course there wasn’t any nursery school. Later there was, but there wasn’t then, and I didn’t know anything about kids.

Morgan: Well, speaking of the person who forced you to get married ten days after college, you met Roger Revelle23 your freshman year?

22Harriet Josephine Messenger Scripps (1838-1933).

23 Roger Randall Dougan Revelle (1909-1991), PhD in oceanography 1936 at UC Berkeley/Scripps Institution of Oceanography.
Eckis: Yes, I met him very romantically at a Valentine’s Day dance my freshman year, and he was there with one of my very favorite classmates, Ruth Morgan, who was nearer Roger’s height, and I was with her brother Hank, who was a Pomona student. And in those days you exchanged dances. And even though it was a brother dancing with a sister, we exchanged dances, and Roger and I soon discovered that we shared a mutual friend, Dan Morris, who was then at the national Naval Academy. And then he called me up. I think his first calling me up was, I call it, “typical Roger.” He called about 10:10 [p.m.], and we had to be in at 10:30, (finally having gotten advanced from 10:20, as it originally was), and suggested driving up to the cabin. I said, “Well, that’s impossible. You can’t drive up and back and get me in on time.” And then I thought, “Oh dear, I’ve said no to him. He may never ask me again.” So then I invited him to the next thing there was at Scripps. And then I soon found that he really didn’t give a damn about Dan, it was just me. And I was so surprised.

So we went together quite a bit that year and sophomore year, and then by the end of sophomore year he had to make a decision. Because he was two years ahead and he graduated at the end of my sophomore year, he had a chance to go up and work in Berkeley, and he [also] had a chance to stay and work with Dr. Woodford in Pomona. And we both knew this decision was kind of important, but we hadn’t gotten—we weren’t engaged or even talking about it—but he decided to stay and work with Woody that next year. That probably really made the difference. Because Roger wasn’t what you’d call a big letter writer, and I didn’t hear from him very much during my senior year when he was up there. Probably wouldn’t have lasted if we hadn’t sort of solidified it that junior year.

Morgan: There were advantages and disadvantages, I would guess, to being a Scripps at Scripps College. What was the balance?

Eckis: Well, the main problem, Judith, was that the president, Dr. Jacqua, was a wonderful man about seeing talent and being able to attract interesting professors to come and to take the challenge of coming to this new college much the way Roger was able to for here, but he wasn’t very sensitive. He used to embarrass me profoundly by, when I was waiting on a table and he would say, “This is Miss Clark, the founder’s niece and the richest girl in college and she just does this for fun.” Which wasn’t true at all. I was earning everything except the tuition, I mean all my expenses. And it got to be so much that I almost transferred after my sophomore year. And then luckily my advisor, Dr. Hartley Burr Alexander—no,

24Henry G. Morgan

25Alfred Oswald Woodford (1890-1990), professor of geology at Pomona College.

26Ernest James Jacqua (1882-1972), first president of Scripps College.

27Hartley Burr Alexander (1873-1939), professor of philosophy at Scripps College.
I’m mixing the two—Nathaniel Stephenson, historian and wonderful Southerner with a mustache, and a charming absentminded professor if there ever was one. You’d see him out watering his lawn when it was raining. I went to him and told him that I was going to transfer. Of course he wanted to know why. I wasn’t going to be able to get some of the courses I should get in psychology and things like that. And he said, “Is there some other reason?” And I said, “Well, yes, I just feel I’m getting by on the name.” He said, “Oh, that’s nonsense and you know it. You’re a good student and don’t you transfer.” And I was so delighted. I didn’t want to transfer at all.

Morgan: What a relief that must have been.

Eckis: Yes. Because I would have hated a great big university, I’m sure. So then I felt more comfortable about staying. But that was the disadvantage, and I’m afraid I talked about it too much, so none of my daughters went there. Oh, I promised I’d get off the board or anything. Because I really would have loved to have had one of them go there. I had thought all three would go, of course.

Morgan: Did you have grandchildren who went?

Eckis: None of my granddaughters. Pomona [College] has had lots of the family. Mary Ellen, two of my grandsons, and Bill and his wife, Eleanor, and my nephew and his wife, and their son. And so we’ve done well by Pomona.

Morgan: Let me ask about Una Sait? Your psychology professor. Was she an outgoing character? Was she an influence on you as far as psychology and raising your own children?

Eckis: She was a wonderfully forthright character, who was not Dr. Jacqua’s ideal of womanhood at all. He liked nice gentle ladies whose hair was intact and immaculate and who wore white gloves, and she was very messy, she really was. Her hair was usually coming down, and she was boisterous. I mean you really would have to say that she was boisterous. And he did a very unpleasant thing. She had a chance to go back to Berkeley. Her husband had an offer there. And she went in to ask about her future at Scripps. He said she had no reason to fear for it. So they gave up the Berkeley offer. The next year she was gone. So she was pretty

28 Nathaniel Wright Stephenson (1967-1935), professor of history at Scripps College.

29 Mary Ellen Revelle Paci (1936- ), daughter of Ellen and Roger Revelle.

30 William Roger Revelle II (1944- ), son of Ellen and Roger Revelle; married Eleanor McNown Revelle.

31 Peter Bruce Clark and Lianne S. Clark.
upset, understandably. But she was writing a book called *The Family*. She was writing it as she was teaching it, so each chapter was, you know, maybe two or three lectures of ours that we were having. So it was really fascinating, because we knew that this class was all completely new and we were part of writing a book. She had one child who had been brought up perfectly normally and then the other one, known as Little Bernard, who was this great big beefy kid, was being brought up never told “no.”

Morgan: He was the second child.

Eckis: I’m not sure which one he was, but they were utterly permissive with him. And she’d come into class and tell us the latest thing that Little Bernard had done. When you went to their house, they were very open and welcoming and they had Sunday afternoons and we’d go there and play badminton and have punch and there’d be students from Pomona. Nobody did that at the president’s house, but people loved to go to the Sait’s house. You never knew quite what Little Bernard might do. But I saw him in later years, and he turned out all right, finally.

Morgan: That’s encouraging.

Eckis: She was, I guess, perhaps the most interesting professor. Then the total contrast to her was Miss Ruth George, who was a maiden lady who taught poetry, and I always think of her and Emily Dickinson as almost the same. She loved Emily Dickinson, and I learned to love Emily Dickinson through her. And she was wonderful to me. She encouraged me to continue writing, and she said, “If you write anything and you send it to me I’ll be glad to critique for you.” But of course I started having a family right away, and somehow I didn’t do that. But I’ve often thought of her. She reminded me of Emily Dickinson, but she also made me think of the White Queen, because remember how she was always adjusting her shawl and she was always kind of falling apart?

Morgan: In *Alice in Wonderland*.

Eckis: Yes. And that was the way Ruth George was, too. But we were very, very lucky, being this small group with these wonderful professors.

Morgan: Tell me about Professor Woodford, Alfred Woodford, but he was called Woody, is that right?

Eckis: Called Woody, yes. Well, he was the entire geology department at Pomona. He taught everything. And I finally took freshman geology in my senior year because I had avoided science like anything. But Roger thought it would be nice if I knew

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something of the field that he thought he would be staying in. And so I did. And was always so afraid I would let Roger down by not doing well. And to my surprise I found I loved it. I really enjoyed it and wished that I had had it, had started earlier and had had more. I’m sure it was because of Woody’s teaching. He was a very enthusiastic person. You’d go on a field trip, find some little bit of fossil and show it to Woody and he’d say, “Oh, that’s great now. Let’s keep looking. Maybe you can find a better one.” And years later I said, “Woody, you were just such a wonderful teacher.” He said, “I hated that freshman geology.” But you would never know it in his teaching.

Morgan: He was really a pro, then.

Eckis: He was absolutely the perfect professor. And he was responsible for—I would say nine or ten of the leading oil geologists in this country were Woody’s boys, and there was a great closeness between them. Of course, Rollin Eckis was one of them, too.

Morgan: I was going to ask you about Rollin, because he was Roger’s best friend.

Eckis: Yes. He was older than Roger, and he graduated from San Diego State [University] when it had just two years, and then had gone to Caltech, and then I guess couldn’t afford to go on for a Ph.D. [He] also had very bad luck in having an advisor that was just nothing like Woody. I mean he just never saw his advisor. [The advisor would] go out there and shut his door, and that was it. And so then he went back and worked some more with Woody. And that was, I guess, when Roger and Rollin became friends. They were very close friends.

Morgan: And one of your best friends was Caroline Comstock.

Eckis: Yes. We’d gone through Westridge and Scripps together. And both Rollin and Caroline were in our wedding. We weren’t in theirs, because we were in Norway, and so we missed their wedding.

Morgan: A couple of things I was interested especially in, in your junior year, from outside the campus. I read that Orozco, José Clemente Orozco, came to the campus to paint the famous mural.

Eckis: Oh yes. Yes, that was great fun.


34 Westridge School, preparatory school for girls in Pasadena, California.

35 José Clemente Orozco (1883-1949), Prometheus, 1930. Fresco mural in Frary Hall, Pomona College.
Eckis: And I was taking this History of Art class from Pijoán, José Pijoán.\footnote{José Pijoán Soteras (1881-1963), art historian, professor at Pomona College.} He had a tremendous dislike for authority, and just couldn’t stand it, didn’t like to be bothered with things like calling roll, for instance. Once in a while he knew he had to do it and so he’d pull out his card file and call out a few names and be almost disappointed if you were all there. But he would take us over to—was it Frary? Gosh, I’ve forgotten what the name of that dormitory is, the dining hall where it was being painted, and we could sit there quietly and watch [Orozco] paint. And then back in class Pijoán would rub his hands and say, “The Trustees aren’t going to like it, because it’s this great big naked man! They’re not going to like it, but they can’t take it off!” And it just delighted him that he was doing something that would be thwarting authority. And of course it is still there. And it is a rather startling thing, of course less so now than it was then. Because it’s in a great circular place like this, and Prometheus has the weight of the world on him, and then all these people reaching up through the fire, and it’s a very dramatic thing. But he’s—definitely a man. I remember sometimes when Pijoán would show slides, and sometimes these very primitive little stick figures, and then he’d take his pointer and point and say, “Man, huh?” pointing at the proper part.

And he was famous for not, again, not liking authority. He didn’t see any reason for giving final exams, but he had to go through it. And so everybody knew that and knew that he might not even read them, but one student, alas, who could have done it perfectly well, had written down just something she had memorized and then she got caught. And you would go in and have an interview. My interview consisted of going in and talking about Roger. Because [Pijoán] knew him, and at that time Roger and Rollin were planning to go to Spain. They were hoping they were going to get a job in Spain, and that fell through, because they didn’t really have much Spanish. But I remember Pijoán saying, “So, you’re going to marry this Revelle man, hmm? You’re going to go to Spain, hmm?” But he was a delight. He was a royalist, and I guess he had had to leave Spain. I am pretty sure he died. I don’t know how long after college. But it was quite a feat that he got Orozco to come paint that fresco.

Morgan: And then I read that Edna St. Vincent Millay\footnote{Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950), poet.} came to campus the same year.

Eckis: She did. I had forgotten it was the same year. Yes, she came, and I remember was in our Residence Hall and reading her poetry. We [were] all sitting around on the floor and listening to her.
Morgan: She read to you?

Eckis: Yes. We had wonderful opportunities. And our Aesthetics class was taught by Henry Purmont Eames, who introduced us to Wagner. He loved Wagner, and he couldn’t sing, but he’d sort of hum, play the piano and sort of hum the themes and get us to know that this theme meant one person and this theme meant another so we’d know what to listen for. One of the nice things about that first year, and even the second year, was that if it rained the professors would come to us, instead of all of us having to go out and get our feet wet. They would just come over and teach the class in the living room. Which is a little unusual. You see, the first year we had just the one building, Toll Hall, and the next there was Clark, Grace Scripps Clark, and then Browning, and then Dorsey. And then somewhere along the line, I guess about the third year, we had the classroom, Balch Hall. But before that, our first year, they had just two little bungalows, one was the library and the other was the classroom and the professors’ offices. So it was a totally different experience than later classes would have.

Morgan: Your senior year ended up being pretty lonely, then?

Eckis: Yes, yes.

Morgan: With Roger off at Berkeley.

Eckis: Roger was at Berkeley. And people didn’t use the telephone quite as casually as they do now, and he wasn’t much of a writer. One time he called me up and read me a letter that one of his friends had written him. [The friend] had taken me out one night and he wrote Roger and said, “You know, you’ve got to pay attention to your gal. She’s lonely, and Manley Natland38 has been dating her. And you better watch out.” And so Roger called me up and read me the whole letter. Instead of just subtly changing, you know, and beginning to be more attentive, he said, “Yeah, I’m just a louse. I’ve been neglecting you, and I shouldn’t . . .” But I married him anyway.

Morgan: Your mother was always tremendously supportive, it seems.

Eckis: Yes. And she was wonderful when I was going to go to college only, whatever it is, thirty miles away. She said, “You can pretend you’re clear across the country. I’m not going to be popping in on you, and you know you can bring friends home anytime you want. I’m here if you want me, but I’m not going to be descending on you.” Which was great. It was a contrast. Caroline Comstock’s mother would call up if it rained in Pasadena to see if her two daughters had their galoshes on. Mother was never like that. So I did take friends home a whole lot.

Morgan: Well, she obviously approved of Roger.

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Eckis: No, not entirely. Because she noticed that he was very late when he was going to pick me up at home for events or some party in Pasadena. I would get all dressed except putting on my dress and then take a nap. And she’d say, “Well, shouldn’t you get ready?” and I’d say, “I’ll put my dress on when he gets here.” You know, when you’re all ready, it’s like a soufflé going down. And she said, “Well, if he’s like that now, what would he be when you’re married?” But she liked him. She certainly didn’t try to keep me from marrying him. But she was very aware of his disregard of time.

Morgan: And she was right.

Eckis: She was quite right. I can talk about my late late husband.

Morgan: You were married ten days after graduation? Did Roger come to your graduation?

Eckis: Yes, he managed to come down from Berkeley for it, and then he had to leave to catch a—it must have been a train. I don’t think it would have been a plane in ’31, would it? No. I think he probably took the train. So I couldn’t even say goodbye to him. I just kind of smiled as he went past. The class couldn’t decide whether to have an indoor or outdoor graduation so we compromised. The diplomas were given in Balch Auditorium, and then everybody, the class and the professors and the audience, all trooped out to the bowling green, and then speeches and things were out there. So it was while we were outside that he had to leave and without my being able to say goodbye properly.

Morgan: What were your expectations of married life? You were twenty years old, about to be twenty-one . . .

Eckis: Yes, I was twenty-one the next month.

Morgan: Were you a dreamer, “happily ever after,” or . . . ?

Eckis: Well, I guess it was that feeling in those days, Woman’s Home Journal stories. But I knew I wanted a family. I had always expected to have children. I hadn’t deliberately set out to have a family quite so fast, but [I] was delighted. And Roger was sort of scared about [having] a baby around. I remember shortly before Annie39 was born we were at a restaurant and he saw someone carrying a baby and he said, “Don’t expect me to be doing that.” And then very soon he was perfectly willing to carry Annie around, too, and was very, very devoted to her.

Morgan: Your honeymoon was postponed, however.

39Anne Elizabeth Revelle Beck (1932- ).
Eckis: Yes. We just drove right up to Berkeley, and he had gotten the worst sunburn that I’ve ever seen. The day of the bachelor party I think they had gone down to the beaches of Mexico where they didn’t have to wear a suit. And so he looked very healthy for the wedding, and then by the second day he was quite miserable and itchy, and then he began to peel. I began to realize what a lot there was of him as he peeled and peeled and peeled.

We had managed to find a little apartment in Berkeley where I boiled eggs by the Campanile clock because my watch broke. And then we drove up to Seattle after that, where his grandmother lived, and several uncles. He had an uncle and [Cockney] aunt in Victoria, and we went to see them. And I always remember dear little Aunt Lizzy. I was not very tall and she was even shorter. Aunt Lizzy was standing there to welcome her new great-niece, and she said, “Is it ‘Ellen’ with an ‘H’ or ‘Helen’ with an ‘E’?” How would you answer? I didn’t quite know what to say.

Morgan: You need pencil and paper at that point. ##

Eckis: ## Well, we had half of [the champagne] out on the dock.40 And then we drank some, but it didn’t have quite the result he expected. I just got sleepy. But it was a nice peaceful place to have a belated honeymoon. And I had my first Baked Alaska in Seattle, and I was very impressed with that. His Uncle Tom took us to dinner at a big hotel, and for a country girl from La Jolla and Pasadena, it was a very big experience.

Morgan: For someone who loved food.

Eckis: Yes, also.

Morgan: You moved to La Jolla then in late August of 1931?

Eckis: Yes. Yes.

Morgan: Roger was one of five research assistants?

Eckis: I think there were just about five. And we couldn’t get into our cottage right away on the campus. I forget if Mother was actually down here or not, or whether she was in Pasadena, but in any case we stayed here for a while in this house, never having any idea it would be our home later. Then [we] moved into Cottage #30, because an architect who was on the campus was in the one we were to have, which was

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40Revelle’s aunt let them use a cottage on the lake near Victoria.
Cottage #24. And I got up my nerve to go to Dr. Vaughan and ask him if this bachelor, it wouldn’t matter where he lived, couldn’t he move into #30 and let us go into the one that we were going to be living in. I said, “I want to make curtains and be sure they fit,” and as a clincher I said, “And Dr. Vaughan, there are even wedding presents I haven’t looked at.” He said, “Unpack ’em and look at ’em and pack ’em up again.” I got nowhere. So we stayed for about two months in the other one and then moved into #24 where we stayed until Annie was—just before her second birthday. We were living there when she was born.

Morgan: And Cottage #24 . . .

Eckis: Is no longer there.

Morgan: But it was known for skunks and gophers, among other things.

Eckis: Yes, we used to say it was a three-storey family affair. Skunks lived in the sort of tool shed, and then there was a one-bedroom apartment which, when we felt flush, we’d rent, and then there was a two-bedroom one that was our regular home. The only resident I remember in the apartment, the one-bedroom one, was a man called John Wells, who went on and became a famous authority on corals. And I remember our taking him up to the mountains and the desert. He was an Easterner, and he just wasn’t the least bit impressed with the desert. Then we went through Julian, and then he began to think, well, maybe there was something to this West after all, with trees and all like that. But he didn’t like the desert.

It was rather simple living [in Cottage #24]. We had an iceman, of course. We didn’t have electric refrigeration. And I had to learn to light a water heater to get hot water. I just thought [hot] water came out of taps. I was rather naive about it, but I learned how to do that. And I remember we—

Morgan: Was it a gas heater?

Eckis: Yes. And we had a real “Okie” at one point who worked for us when I had had Annie and needed some help. I saw her heating water on the stove one time, and I said to whatever-her-name-was, “Didn’t you understand about the heater?” And she said, “Oh, yes’m. I understand how to light that thing, but I don’t see how you get the water out of it.” She didn’t know how it worked. She had never been near a telephone and was terrified of it. So I would go to a neighbor’s and telephone back so she’d have to answer, trying to get her to learn.

41 Thomas Wayland Vaughan (1870-1952), director of Scripps Institution of Oceanography 1924-1936. His wife was Dorothy Quincy Upham Vaughan (1879-1949).

42 John West Wells (1907-1994), paleontologist.
It was a very small community and very neighborly. Except sometimes neighborliness could verge on nosiness. I mean sometimes, “I noticed that Roger left the porch light on again last night when he came home.” Everybody knew what time everybody came in, and there was one neighbor who was not a grad student. I guess he was an instructor, was a little bit higher up. And if we had guests, his wife was very likely to happen to come calling. It was very strange, but they could see our front steps, and everybody knew—. And of course we were all going through the Depression. We all were learning various ways of cooking kidney beans and serving them up on our best china. We played a lot of “Murder” and “Sardines” and Bridge, some Bridge.

Morgan: Sardines?

Eckis: Yes. That’s a hide-and-seek. When you find “it,” you don’t say so. Finally you just join “it.” And so pretty soon one forlorn person is going all around. Everybody else has been found and is all huddled together somewhere.

Morgan: That’s fun. What a great setting for that, with all the trees and—

Eckis: Oh, it was in the houses. Yes. And, of course, there were just about two styles of houses, so we all knew each other’s houses quite well. Because there were the two-bedrooms and the one-bedrooms.

Morgan: So the hiding places became known after a while.

Eckis: Oh yes, you’d know.

Morgan: What was the situation then as far as “town and gown,” or “village and station?”

Eckis: Well, I think that there was a sort of a feeling that we were a little odd out there. And Mrs. Vaughan, Dorothy Vaughan, the wife of the director, really tried hard to bring the two together. She had Sunday teas, I think, once a month, and she would invite mainly, it seemed to be, doctors. I remember meeting Eaton and Lois McKay. They were invited to one of her teas. And Dr. and Mrs. Smith. Do you remember Francis Smith? I met them that way. And I forget who else. But there wasn’t an awful lot of backing and forthing. We were pretty much by ourselves. I remember after we had moved into La Jolla and rented a house on Lookout Drive that I met a doctor who was an anesthesiologist, I think. We were dancing, and he said, “Have you just come to La Jolla?” And I said, “No, we’ve been here since ‘31.” “Where do you live? Why haven’t we met you?” And I said, well, we lived out on the campus at Scripps. And he practically stopped dancing with me. Really. So I think that sort of exemplifies, at least in one person’s mind, that we were considered to be kind of odd.
Morgan: You should have had a passport.

Eckis: Yes, yes. I don’t think that La Jolla Shores [Drive] was paved at that point. And of course most of us couldn’t afford much gas, so sometimes we were allowed to make a trip in when the car came in to pick up the mail for the campus. [We’d] quickly do some errands and then ride back again. Sometimes we walked into town. We didn’t go dashing off to go to restaurants and movies very often. And then one night [Roger and I] got stuck in the mud, the night before we were going to make this trip to Detroit for Christmas. We actually were going to come in and have dinner so I wouldn’t have to be doing dinner, get ready to leave. And then we just had to walk home and scramble up something to eat, because the car got stuck in the mud right on the campus. Once Dr. Vaughan’s car got stuck, and then the roads got paved.

Morgan: The station, biological station, now Scripps, seems in those years to have been very close knit, sort of a summer camp atmosphere.

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: Many of you just married and also bachelors and—

Eckis: Well, actually we were the only ones who were just married, and then Dick Fleming,43 who was a Canadian who had come down just two weeks before Roger, he got married after we did. But we were the only ones until the Flemings came, we were the only ones who had any children. And I remember when word got around that I was pregnant with Annie that one of the wives said, “Oh well, you know that you shouldn’t be doing this. You should wait until Roger has his degree and you’ve had a year of travel.” Well, they never did have children, and we had our year of travel with two children, when we went to Norway. And as far as I know, none of those other couples ever did. They were putting it off until the right moment. And during the Depression the professors’ salaries were cut, and it was very austere. I mentioned the [student] salary was $100, and we all thought, well, if they cut that, we wouldn’t be able to pay our—I think [the rent] was $18 a month. There was, at that time, just about where Walter [Munk’s] first building was, there was the Community House. There was a wooden bridge across a little canyon. It was on sort of a little peninsula. And we had just decided that well, okay, if they cut our salaries, the men’s salaries, we’d all move into that and, you know, mutually pay what we could pay for that, but then they didn’t cut the $100.

Morgan: I heard there was also some talk of you and Roger moving to some property your mother had near Riverside.

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Eckis: Mother had a lemon grove that had a house on it, and I remember this one couple and Roger and I drove up there. And we hadn’t arranged enough ahead. We couldn’t get in the house, but we sort of peered in the windows and everything. Mother was very much against it. She said, “You and Roger don’t know anything about raising lemons,” and I don’t know if the other man\textsuperscript{44} did either. It would have been a disaster, because this other man not only didn’t have any children, he didn’t like them very well, and Annie was a little rambunctious. I don’t know what—she might have ended up going through a window or something. So it was lucky that we didn’t try that.

Morgan: Roger does not seem to have been cut out to raise lemons.

Eckis: No, I don’t think so. But it was just one of those, you know, ideas out of desperation, when we thought that maybe their $100 a month stipend was going to be cut. Oh, that was another thing about Aunt Ellen. When she died, she died just three months before Annie was born, and when the will was read one of her very interesting arrangements was that the big bequests to the colleges and the hospitals and the zoo and all that, they could wait with probate and everything, but she felt that the smaller [bequests] should start having an income from them right away. And I don’t know that many people would have thought of that. So that, all of a sudden I was getting $25 a month. And added onto $100, that’s just great.

Morgan: Made a difference.

Eckis: It really did.

Morgan: A quarter of the Scripps salary, I mean Roger’s salary.

Eckis: Yes. And I don’t know how many other things there were like that, but that was one that of course I was aware of. And it did show a thoughtfulness of realizing that that would make a big difference, and the big [bequests] could wait.

Morgan: Tell me your first impressions of some people who were there [at SIO], starting with Alice and Richard Fleming.

Eckis: Well, we had gotten to know Dick very well before. Then he spent a semester at Berkeley and met Alice there, and then they came back and they lived just two doors from us. And we became very, very fast friends. During our year in Norway, Alice was one of these amazing letter-writing people, and so I really didn’t feel that I was losing out much, because she wrote such vivid letters about people in La Jolla.

\textsuperscript{44} Nelson Alfred Wells (1892-1961), PhD in biological oceanography, 1934, at UC Berkeley/Scripps Institution of Oceanography. He was married to Thelma Lasalle Keller Wells (1907- ), who was also a student at Scripps.
and people at the Institution. And I have those letters, and she kept my letters to her and then returned them to me.

Morgan: So you have your own letters from that.

Eckis: I have my own letters from Norway. I found them the other day.

Morgan: I look forward to seeing them.

Eckis: So by that time, I think, they had moved into La Jolla. I believe they had, because I remember [Alice] saying something or other about Betsy Stephen-Hassard: “Betsy has a new hat and she wears it in a defiant way, an ‘I’ve bought it and I’m going to like it’ hat.” And you could also see Betsy like that, with her new hat. And we’d had Annie and then they had Betsy, and we thought, you know, sometime we ought to be pregnant together, wouldn’t that be fun. Sure enough, Alice produced twin boys and ten days later I had Carolyn. So we were all in the hospital together. And another friend had [a baby] ten days later. In those days you stayed for two weeks, which was absurd. So I was there with two of my best friends. It was lovely.

Morgan: Tell me about Peter and Marston Sargent. What was your first impression? In the first place, the woman is Peter, is that right?

Eckis: Yes. And her name was really Grace Tompkins, and she grew up in Pasadena across the back fence from Roger. So when I first began talking about Peter he said, “Oh, that’s Grace, and I know her.” They were a very interesting couple. They never had children, but they adopted two children. The daughter lives in Maryland, and I see her when I go East, and I just had a note from her and answered her the other day. She’s going to be coming out soon. And Peter was a very, I would say, an environmentalist, ahead of her time. Very active in wanting to save nature. And Marston was very New England, and I always think of him with a pipe in his mouth. He had a wry sense of humor, and was just a delightful person. I remember when he stayed with us in Maryland during the war, he came to the head of the stairs with a pipe in his mouth and said, “Ellen, do you want me to strip this bed or are you going to give the next guest the same cock-and-bull story about it’s just been slept in by one little girl?” That turned out to be a classic in our family.

Morgan: I love it. So they were good neighbors, good friends.

45Carolyn Revelle Hufbauer (1939-).

Eckis: Yes. Well, they didn’t come until after we had moved into La Jolla, and I guess the Flemings were still living on the campus because I remember that Betsy Fleming had gone over and had seen the new baby, and went back and was telling the neighbors that Peter Sargent had a baby. And they said, “Well, she can’t have had a baby. She wasn’t pregnant.” Of course, it was adopted. And Betsy was so heartbroken that she wasn’t being believed.

Morgan: Tell me, when did you first see or meet Walter Munk?

Eckis: Oh, I guess we met him when he came here, came down as a grad student. So I’ve known him since he was a kid. And then we got to know him very well again during the war when he and Harald Sverdrup both went through a very difficult thing of not getting [security] clearance. And here was Harald, whose country was invaded, who couldn’t go back, and staying twelve years instead, it ended up, instead of five, and Walter who’d been in this country since he was about fifteen. It hurt both of them deeply. Walter had come east, and he stayed in a room we fixed up in our basement as a bedroom—the three bedrooms were all full of kids—and he was even working during Christmas at Hecht’s Department Store. It was just devastating to him that he didn’t get clearance. And he had served in the American Army. Not overseas or anything, but he had been in all kinds of marches and things. And then of course, both Walter and Sverdrup did so much to help with their wave predictions. Did you ever know his first wife, Martha?48

Morgan: I did not. No.

Eckis: He brought her east, and by that time we had moved, bought our own house in Washington. I met her and—

Morgan: Was she from San Diego?

Eckis: I think that they were from Pasadena. I don’t have any idea how Walter met her. And Judy [Munk] was from a Pasadena family, or Encino really, and her grandmother Kendall lived in an old house in Pacific Beach that she gave to the university [with] the salt marshes and all her wildlife preserve, which I think is called Kendall.49 But Judy had been working in the Aquarium-Museum with Sam Hinton.50 So I guess that’s where she and Walter had met. And I’m so glad they

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47 Harald Ulrik Sverdrup (1888-1957), director of Scripps Institution of Oceanography 1936-1948. His wife was Gudrun Bronn Vaumund Sverdrup.

48 Martha Fredin Chapin Munk.

49 The Kendall-Frost Mission Bay Marsh Reserve is now part of the UC Natural Reserve System.

met, because that’s been a wonderful and marvelous match. It’s been about forty-three years or something like that now.

Morgan: And in fact Walter has just done an oral history for Scripps, and he’s enjoying it, I’m told. What about Erik Moberg? I come across his name.

Eckis: He was Dick Fleming’s mentor, I guess, because it was in chemistry. But he also spent a lot of time with Roger. He was Swedish, and as I guess is often the case, someone who has learned English not as a first language is more precise with it. I remember he spent hours working with Roger on his thesis and correcting things and making revisions. And then he unfortunately became an alcoholic, and it was really heartbreaking to everybody who knew him, because he was a lovable man. We all really enjoyed him. The only thing was that when we played “Murder” he wouldn’t take it seriously. Nobody was supposed to lie except the one who had the Murder card, and he just felt he could make up any story he wanted, and we said, “Oh, you can’t do that, Mo!”

Morgan: Oh, he was called Mo.

Eckis: Yes, he was called Mo.

Morgan: He really believed in Roger, I gather.

Eckis: Yes, he did. And as I said, Roger wasn’t in his department or anything, but he somehow did do a lot of help. I remember going over to their house and chatting with Molly while Mo worked with Roger on his thesis. I had almost forgotten that.

Morgan: I think I read someplace, probably Roger in an oral history, saying that he just put off working on the muds from the Carnegie, and that was his thesis subject, and Dr. Vaughan was getting very upset and apparently Professor Moberg was the one who—

Eckis: Got him doing it? Oh really?

Morgan: Got Roger on the right track. At least I believe he gave him credit.

Eckis: Oh. Well, my one contribution to science was that I was allowed to do color testing. So they had the samples in little bottles and then you sort of analyzed them. One of

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52 Erik Gustaf Moberg (1891-1963), PhD in biochemistry 1925 at UC Berkeley/Scripps Institution of Oceanography. He was married to Marion Eva Wilcox Moberg (1902-1996), MA in earth sciences 1926 at Scripps.
the things was by the color, and I was good at color matching. So I got a credit line in his thesis, in the introduction part, you know, because I did that.

Morgan: This was the color of the mud?

Eckis: Yes, the different muds are different shades, and so you learn something about them. Roger would get me to learn things by saying, “Well, So-and-So...,” whom I knew was a kind of a dumb blonde secretary, [did it], and I thought, “Well if she can do it, I can do it with a Scripps education.” So he taught me to use a slide rule, and then one of the first complicated machines. But the only trouble was I’ve always had a deplorable difficulty with decimal points and I wouldn’t know when it was supposed to be changing. And this machine was in an office, the same building where Dick [Fleming] was, and so I’d be working away and then I’d say, “Dick, come and take a look at this.” “Oh yeah, I guess you better, I guess it’s gone into the next place.” Years later Roger would run across very odd figures, and then it would all go back to my decimal points. So I never had to do that anymore. But the night
before Annie was born we went down to the lab to work, and then the power went off, and I managed to stumble on the stairs and I thought, well that and the having to work by candlelight, maybe we won’t have to work so late tonight. It may have been why Annie was early, I don’t know. But I was kind of glad. It was, you know, companionable to be down there in the lab with him.

Morgan: Sure. Were any of the other wives?

Eckis: Well, yes. Earl Myer’s\textsuperscript{53} wife Ethel was just there with him all the time, and it seems to me that Thelma Wells was, too.

Morgan: With John Wells?

Eckis: No. This was Nelson Wells and Thelma, and Ethel and Earl Myers. And, at one point the way we were living in the houses after ZoBell\textsuperscript{54} came, was Wells-Revelles-Myers-ZoBells-Byers. Oh, I got ZoBells and Revelles mixed, but it was rather classic.

Morgan: Sounds like Gilbert and Sullivan.

Eckis: Yes, it does, doesn’t it.

Morgan: What was your first impression of Dr. Vaughan and Mrs. Vaughan?

Eckis: Well, he was kind of terrifying. She was very gentle, and it turned out she was really kind of shy and she hated these Sunday teas once a month, and when she got through one she was getting nervous about the next one. But I don’t know why, because she was used to entertaining. Apparently she just found it difficult. But I got over being afraid of him and he was, well, they were a very nice pair. They were really a very pleasant couple when you got acquainted.

Morgan: They were followed then by the Sverdrups as director?

Eckis: And Harald had expected to be here just five years, and then of course his country was invaded and so they ended up staying for twelve. I one time had a sudden visit of an FBI man who wanted to ask me some questions about Gudrun Sverdrup. And I was so indignant that anybody would question Gudrun’s loyalty that I was afraid I would maybe do some harm, because I spluttered so. And then the bell rang and I said, “Oh, this is probably Mrs. Sverdrup now. Would you like to meet her?” And he said, “Oh no! Can I go out the back door?” I said, “I don’t want the director’s

\textsuperscript{53} Earl Hamlet Myers (1898-1975), PhD in biological oceanography 1934 at UC Berkeley/Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

\textsuperscript{54} Claude Ephraim ZoBell (1904-1989), marine microbiologist, and Margaret Harding ZoBell (1908-1994).
wife seeing a man go out my back door, no!” I don’t remember whether they met out in front or what happened. She was afraid of liking it too much and staying and she wanted to go back to Norway, so she probably had said some things that were a bit negative, but it didn’t mean that she was disloyal in the least.

Morgan: Dr. Sverdrup’s style was very different from Vaughan’s, I gather.

Eckis: Yes. Much more easygoing and pleasant. And I always remember one episode when he came to see us in Washington. And of course he didn’t have clearance. Roger had brought home some Navy papers that he wanted to go over with Harald, and Harald knew that this was something probably he shouldn’t be seeing. The doorbell rang and I went to the door and it was someone from Woods Hole, and I just had a feeling it would be wise if he didn’t know what was going on. So luckily I remembered his name and kept saying it as I got his coat and hung it up and everything. And there was a curtain between the hall and the living room. And by the time we came in there wasn’t a paper in sight. They were all [gone], no papers. And they all chatted, and after Dick Seiwel left, Harald pulled them out from under the couch cushions.

Because he didn’t want to get Roger in any trouble. And he was always just a very, very sweet person. I guess the last time I saw him we’d been together at Brussels at meetings and we had been told he’d had a heart attack, so we were very surprised to see him. As soon as he saw us he said, “Oh, if I had known you were coming, Gudrun would have come.” And I didn’t like to say, “Well, we thought you weren’t going to come.” So he said, “You’ll have to come back with us. You and Mary Ellen come on back to Oslo.” And I said, “Will you make a hotel reservation?” He said, “No, you’ll stay at the house. There’s plenty of room.” When we got there it turned out that he slept in the living room and Mary and I had the bed. And I said, “Harald, you said that there’d be room. You said there was a couch in the living room.” He said, “Yes, but I didn’t say who was going to sleep on it, did I?”

He was a wonderful storyteller, and just charming, and she was very witty and fun. They came just two weeks before we left to go to Norway, and I was trying to find out everything I could in a very short time at a dinner party. And she said, “Well, two important things. It rains thirty-two days a month in Bergen.” She came from Oslo and she didn’t really like Bergen so much. “And everybody speaks English.” Well of course neither was true.

Morgan: Before we leave those first impressions, is there anything about Fran Shepard’s arrival or—

55 Harry Richard Seiwell (1904-1951), oceanographer.

56 Francis Parker Shepard (1897-1985), submarine geologist. He was married to Elizabeth Buchner Shepard
Eckis: Well, we got to know him before he really moved out here because he and Elizabeth used to come out in the summers and they had a house. I think it was before we moved into La Jolla, when we still lived up [in Cottage #24], which isn’t there anymore. So I had gotten to know both of them quite well. And then they finally bought a house and then built one up at SEA.57 So we knew them from quite far back. Elizabeth and I became very close friends, and in fact followed the ship one time down to Mexico, down to Guaymas for two weeks and had a lovely time.

Morgan: But [women] couldn’t set foot on the ship?

Eckis: Oh no. Absolutely. Wasn’t that ridiculous? Not even to have a cup of coffee when we were leaving. The coffee was handed to us on the dock. Really. And they put sugar in it.

Morgan: Well now, that’s unforgivable.

Eckis: It was, because I don’t like sugar in it.

Morgan: I read once about your attempt at an explanation of why it was probably better for women not to be around the men who were [on shipboard] because it was a filthy situation and smelly and crowded and profane.

Eckis: Well, of course Helen Raitt58 ended up coming all the way back from Tonga and taking her turns, not at the wheel, but taking hours on duty and stuff. And there was one young Frenchman on board, Henri Roche, who didn’t approve at all of having Helen there, so he delighted at embarrassing her by not zipping his zippers and being in his undershirts or underpants sometimes. He just couldn’t stand having her there.

Morgan: And that was twenty years after you and Elizabeth Shepard went to Mexico.

Eckis: Yes, yes.

Morgan: It still hadn’t completely changed.

Eckis: And now of course [women] go out as oceanographers.

Morgan: Your mother remarried a year after you did, is that right?

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(1895-1984).

57 Scripps Estates Associates

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: And that was a very happy—?

Eckis: Yes, it really was. She just blossomed, really.

Morgan: Captain Johanson?

Eckis: Mmm. He was, oh, at least eight years younger than Mother, but he just doted on her. And if you didn’t do things the way Mother did, he said, “Well, that’s not the way Gracie does it.” The only thing was that he wouldn’t stop smoking, and would smoke right by her when she was taking a rest in the afternoon, and he wouldn’t even sit in a different chair. He’d sit and smoke in the chair right beside her head. And she’d had lots of lung problems, and would cough and cough and cough. He wouldn’t [stop], that’s the one thing that he wouldn’t do. Otherwise he just—anything if it was for Mother. It was great. She really just blossomed with it.

Morgan: Did she keep the yacht and did he stay as captain?

Eckis: Oh no. The yacht went by the boards, oh, I guess about my junior year, maybe. No, I guess it’s later than that because Mother and I were up in Santa Barbara together for six weeks the summer of my junior year. I had been sick, [with] what finally turned out to have been polio and I didn’t know it. And Mother was having lots of letters from him about the boat. And I didn’t catch on for a long time. Finally I did. And then, Mother’s family were all just sure that he was marrying her for her money, as was my father. But I really don’t think it was the case. I really think it was a late life love story. It was really very touching.

Morgan: Seems to have been. When you and Roger were first at Scripps, that’s when you really learned more about his lack of sense of timing.

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: And how it affected your schedule and cooking habits.

Eckis: Well, I very soon realized that it was not a good idea to have him come home for lunch, because he didn’t want just a soup and sandwich or salad and sandwich. He wanted a good hearty lunch sometime between twelve and three. And before I’d even had a child I was beginning to find this was a bit disruptive. So I finally said I thought it would be better if he took a sandwich and ate [there]. I don’t think they had any place to get food at that point, so I think you had to take it with you, and it was a very good idea not to have him come home for lunch.

Morgan: It was three hours out of your day at least.
Eckis: Yes. I mean to try to keep a meal hot. Sometimes when I look back on it I realize his strange pronouncements of things. For instance, I had got caught by a super salesman who appeared one day and asked if I had by any chance a White Rotary sewing machine. And I had Mother’s portable, and I said, “Yes, I have this one.” “Well, that particular one has been declared not so good and we’re trading them in, and may we bring in the one that we’re showing instead?” So of course they brought in this gorgeous wood cabinet, one that opened up like this. And in our little apartment or house it just looked so gorgeous. And of course it took me a while to realize that it wasn’t for free, that it would be $10 a month for a while. And I signed. And then I got panicky and I called Roger and told him what I’d done, and said, “Can’t you get me out of this?” And he said very sagely, “No, it’s a good experience, and it will remind you not to ever get caught like that again.” So I don’t think I ever did.

But he got caught by someone who came around with grape juice that was going to turn into wine. And he fell for that. It was in a great big tin container, and of course the man never showed again. So we were out I don’t know how much, but that was probably almost as much as this sewing machine, and much less use, because it never did anything except turn to vinegar.

Morgan: Did [Roger] sit and watch it or—

Eckis: He did everything he was supposed to, but it just didn’t work.

Morgan: I bet you didn’t hear about the sewing machine after that.

Eckis: No, no.

Morgan: In the summer of, well in May of ’36, Roger received his Ph.D. Did you go to Berkeley for the ceremony?

Eckis: Oh yes.

Morgan: And it was conferred by President Sproul?59

Eckis: I think it probably was Sproul, yes. It was one of these huge [ceremonies]. His mother and father and sister60 [were there]. His sister may have been graduating from college that same year, I’m not quite sure.

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59 Robert Gordon Sproul (1891-1975), president of the University of California, 1930-1958. His wife was Ida Amelia Wittschen Sproul.

60 Roger’s parents were Ella Robena Dougan Revelle (1874-1938) and William Roger Revelle (1874-1960). His sister was Eleanor Aris Revelle Stackhouse (1914-1967).
Morgan: And that was the summer, two weeks after the Sverdrups arrived, that you took off for Norway.

Eckis: Because Dr. Helland-Hansen 61 had been here, I think in January, and talked to Dr. Vaughan about if he had anyone to recommend that might be good to come over for a year, and he recommended Roger. So Roger came home and told me. I was about that pregnant [gestures], and I said, “Well, what did you say?” And he said, “I said, yes, I’d be interested when the baby is old enough to travel.” I said, “How old is that?” and he said, well, he thought six months. So at six months—of course Annie was by then three, three-and-a-half, and we had moved up from Lookout Drive to the house we bought on Hillside [Drive]. We bought a house because all the vacant lots were getting full, and we didn’t think there would be any place to live when we came back. We didn’t know about earth moving equipment in those days. So I managed to move with this new baby and then get ready for this venture into the totally unknown, which turned out to be an absolutely wonderful year. I just loved it.

Morgan: You and the girls went ahead.

Eckis: Well, we all went together to London and Edinburgh, and my stepfather’s sister, who’d been over visiting for six months, went with us to help with the children, which was great. And then Roger had a meeting in England, and he said, “Well, why don’t you go on over and find us a place?” And so Anna and the children and I went on and stayed in a hotel and tried to, and I discovered that Norwegians don’t rent their houses very readily. Not until Roger got there, ten days after we’d been hunting and going through agents and things, and said, “Oh, I guess I forgot to tell you. Dr. Sverdrup arranged that his aunt would rent us her house for six months.” But no more, because she very wisely wanted her house back in the spring. It was out in the country. And so we had this very Victorian little house for six months, and then we had to find another, and of course by that time people knew that this American couple were there and prices kind of began to go up, but we finally did find one that was just across a dead-end street from the house that the Sverdrups owned. It was then lived in by Odd 62 and Vessa Dahl, who became very, very close friends, and they had just gone over six months before we did. She was Norwegian-American and he was Norwegian. And their little boy was just six months older than Annie and was told, “Remember what it was like when you first came. Now you look after Annie.” And so they were hand in hand the rest of the whole year. They were just very good friends.

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61Björn Helland-Hansen (1877-1957), Norwegian oceanographer.

62Odd Dahl (1898-1994), Norwegian engineer.
Morgan: Did you take Norwegian lessons, I mean language lessons?

Eckis: Yes. I soon discovered that Gudrun saying that everybody speaks English was not true. It was more true by summer [with tourists], but certainly not in the winter. And we had acquired a maid, Amanda, along with the house. But she had no English. And the wife of one of the professors, her name was also Ellen, said she’d be very happy to teach me. So I would take the train in to her house in the city. We were about, oh, half an hour out in, what was it, whatever the name of that community was. I had lessons, and I’d have to take Annie along with me, and Amanda would take care of the baby. And that was fun. Roger never studied, but he’d had German which gave him some help, and most of the scientists spoke English anyway. But many of the wives didn’t. Anyway it was much more fun. I can’t really imagine, except maybe in Russia or Japan, living in a country for a year and not trying to learn the language. Because you get so much more out of it. I’d get so pleased if someone thought I was maybe at least from Denmark.

Morgan: Did you ski?

Eckis: Yes. And I didn’t break anything. Sprained an ankle once, but we learned to ski right from our back door. We could ski down to the gate and then down the road to our friends, the Bjerkneses.\(^\text{63}\) And that winter we were very lucky, because Bergen often doesn’t have much snow, and that winter they had about three weeks of gorgeous snow. It was rare enough so that the schools would close, let the children out, and stores would let half their staff off one day and half the next, so everybody was just blissful about all this snow. And the fjord froze, too, so we had skating and skiing both and it was lovely. Then we had two or three mountain trips, went up to a place about halfway between Bergen and Oslo. And six of us went up there for a week. In fact, Hedvig Bjerknes and her son and Annie and I went up a week before the men could come, and I had learned very quickly that I hadn’t learned to stop.

Morgan: Oh, at skiing.

Eckis: At skiing. And I remember we’d gotten up beyond the timberline and then started back down the road and I shot past Hedvig, and she kept saying, “Stop, stop!” I said, “I can’t!” And I was just really going along, I thought I was snowplowing, but my skis were apart as if I were going to snowplow, but I wasn’t stopping, and I was going around curves somehow. Finally I remembered a large tree and [thought], “I don’t think I’d better hit that tree,” and I managed to make myself fall down. And then after that I took lessons for a while. Because [the Bjerkneses] thought they had taught us enough.

Morgan: And this was before ski runs—you were on roads or just cross country?

\(^\text{63}\)Jacob (Jack) Aall Bonnivie Bjerknes (1897-1975), meteorologist, and Hedvig Bjerknes.
Eckis: Well, we went off beyond the timber. No, there were no trails, no ski lifts of any kind. But of course it’s not as high as where people ski here, so the altitude wasn’t so bad. We stayed at a lovely hotel, and they’d pack a lunch and we’d go off with our knapsacks with our lunch, and sometimes it would be so sunny that you were just in shirt sleeves. And we’d go off, it would be through the trees on a road for a while, and then you’d get beyond the timberline and there would maybe be an outline of a trail with just some tall stakes here and there that you followed a bit. But it was really lots of fun. I just loved it.

Morgan: Roger said once that, was it Jack?

Eckis: Yes. Spelled Jack, but it’s pronounced “Yock.”

Morgan: That his great contribution to the picnics and to all this was that he was a predictor of when it was going to rain.

Eckis: Oh yes.

Morgan: And I gather it was very accurate as far as—

Eckis: Oh, it was. Hedvig would call him at the office and we’d want to go downtown together, and he’d say, “Well, there will be some shower-type precipitation until about 11:00, and then it’ll be nice.” So I soon learned the difference between rain and shower-type precipitation, because when it rained, it rained. And you didn’t want to go in to town. But shower-type was great. It would start to rain, you’d just duck in and have some chocolate with whipped cream on it and then go on again when it stopped. And we started out sometimes in rain for a picnic. He had a motorboat, and so we had lots of fun on the fjord with that. And then eventually this other couple, Odd and Vessa Dahl, bought a boat too. And people have to have a title. And Odd never had gotten a doctor’s degree, so he wasn’t Dr., but he had a car, so he was Herr Car Owner Dahl, until he bought a boat, and then he was Herr Boat Owner. I can’t remember the word for owner [in Norwegian]. Titles were very important. And I had to remember to answer the phone, “Fru Skolbestyrer Peter Grieg’s hus,” because her—

Morgan: What is that?

Eckis: Fru—now I’ve forgotten her name even. Peter Grieg. She was the widow of some relative of Grieg, and he had been a schoolmaster, so that was how you had to answer the phone, with this whole rig of things. Until we’d been there longer and could use our own names. But you really had to be careful not to insult people by not using titles. But they’re much more informal about it than they are in Sweden, at least. In Sweden even the chambermaid is Miss Chambermaid.
Morgan: Interesting. Roger said that Jack was rather smitten with you.

Eckis: Oh, he told you that?

Morgan: He did. And he said that he frankly feared that you would never come home again. You just might stay in Bergen.

Eckis: Well, I might have, but not quite. Well, he was smitten with Hedvig, too.

Morgan: It was a very magical year, I guess.

Eckis: Yes. It was wonderful. And it was one of the healthiest years I think we’ve ever had. I was still kind of plump from Mary. I think I weighed about 130 [lbs.] when we went over, and I came back 110. We didn’t have a car. And at first Roger thought we ought to get a car. And then I said, “I don’t think so. Let’s just see.” Because it was, oh maybe a fifteen minute walk to the little train station, and the train service was excellent, and you could get cabs in the city, and we really didn’t need it. So we walked a lot. And we ate tremendously. Just eat, and there’s another meal and another meal and then another, and then there’s a long period when it’s nothing. But you had the main meal about three in the afternoon, and the men would come home from work at that time, and then you had a rest after that midday meal. And I soon learned you weren’t supposed to call anybody at that time. The maid would say, “It’s nap time, and Fru Bjerknes is having her nap.” And I finally learned to understand that’s what was being said. And so then along about five o’clock things would stir up again and then there would be afterns, a little sort of snack thing. But if you got invited out in the evening, then it would be a bigger one, and so sometimes you might have your big meal and then have another big meal at eight o’clock.

Morgan: But the work day was over at three.

Eckis: Yes. They started pretty early, so that—

Morgan: And it was getting dark.

Eckis: Oh yes. When we, let’s see we got there in September, and so pretty soon Roger was leaving in the dark and coming home in the dark. But then when we had this glorious period of snow and ice, the women and children would go out on the ice and maybe have a little bonfire and have our skating, and then when the men got back from work they’d come out and join us. There was a lot of conviviality out on the ice, because there were quite a few [of us]. ##
INTERVIEW TWO: 3 AUGUST 1998

Morgan:  ## When we last spoke, we left you and Roger and the girls in Bergen, [Norway]. And before leaving there and coming back, we were talking about your “secretarial duties.”

Eckis:  Oh. Wearing a coat?

Morgan:  Wearing a coat and gloves, and Roger dictating. Would you just tell that for the record?

Eckis:  Well, I’m not sure if he was revising his thesis or what it was that he was writing, but I remember going into the office at the Geophysical Institute with him. Because he didn’t have a typewriter, but I had a portable at home. And sitting there in his office, I definitely had a polar coat on, because it was not overly heated, nor was our house—coal-burning stoves.

Morgan:  I remember that some of the letters to Alice and Dick Fleming, for example, after three single-spaced pages would have an insert that says, “Stenographer sends love.” You had your two daughters with you in Norway?

Eckis:  Yes. Annie and Mary Ellen. She was six months when we went over, and Annie was almost four.

Morgan:  I saw on a television interview that you did with Fred Lewis64 here that at the end he said, “Do you have any regrets in your life?” and the one that you mentioned interested me. You said that you changed your ideas about child rearing between your first daughter and your second daughter.

Eckis:  I certainly did.

Morgan:  And that you wished you had known about Dr. Spock. Tell me the difference.

Eckis:  Well, poor Annie! In spite of my having majored in child psychology, I wasn’t exposed to any children. We had received a government bulletin. The government somehow knew I was pregnant before I did, and a prenatal book arrived. And I thought, “How does Uncle Sam know this?” And then I got an infant and child care one. So of course I went by it. That was in the thirties. Babies were supposed to be fed every four hours regardless of size or shape. And Annie was 5 lbs. 14½ oz. and she couldn’t go four hours. So obviously she screamed bloody murder, and we’d sit there nervously looking at the watch and asking, “Isn’t it time yet?” And with this

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64Fred Lewis, The Heart of San Diego, Program #61: “Ellen Revelle Eckis” (Fred Lewis Productions, 1996), videorecording.
poor child screaming away, because she was living almost entirely on a little bit of supplemental, because I wasn’t even smart enough to realize I didn’t have enough milk for her. The screaming probably didn’t help it any. So life was much simpler with Mary Ellen. The doctor—I had a pediatrician by that time—pointed out that she could be fed more often. It was a silly, silly idea that babies could go that long. I didn’t know about Dr. Spock until I was helping with Mary Ellen’s first baby. I’d have the baby in one arm and Dr. Spock in the other. It even had a chapter for grandparents. And it was so much more sensible than that stupid [pamphlet].

So Annie had a tough time, I think, all around. And then because I had majored in child psychology, I was so afraid I would do something wrong, like having a shade go up suddenly and she’d see a puppy at the same time and be afraid of dogs, and just all kinds of weird, weird worries. So she had problems. But she turned out all right in spite of it.

Morgan: Were you influenced at all by Mary Eyre? I was reading that during your college years, among other things, she expressed great interest and curiosity in knowing what your children—

Eckis: Oh, she did. I remember her sitting—we were sitting on opposite sides of Dr. Ament, a very, very shy professor at Scripps, and she’d lean across him. She knew Roger and I were going to get married and said, “Oh, I can’t wait to see what kind of children you’ll have, you and Roger.” And then she’d talk about the mysteries of the birth process and go into some detail about it, which was horribly embarrassing to poor Dr. Ament. And a bit to me, too. I didn’t know anything about it, either.

Morgan: What was he a professor of?

Eckis: English. Known as Uncle Billy to almost everybody. He was the uncle of one member of the second class, and so he became Uncle Billy to everybody.

Morgan: When you were in Bergen and on the way over, in Edinburgh, you met most of the leading oceanographers of the time. For one thing there weren’t too many. And I would like to ask you [about] a few, and have you tell your first impressions or memories or what stands out anecdotaly.

Eckis: Well, one thing I definitely remember was I had worked with Roger on his bibliography for his thesis, that and color matchings of sediments, and it was so interesting to me to meet some of the people who were listed in his biography. Do I

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65Mary B. Eyre, professor of psychology at Scripps College.

66William Sheffield Ament (1887-1951), professor of English literature at Scripps College.
mean biography? No, I mean bibliography, excuse me. And to find that they were just human beings and nice people. It was quite interesting to meet them. I do remember one horrible incident in Edinburgh when I was asked if I waltzed by a very, very distinguished Scotch geologist. And I said, “Oh yes.” After about three steps, he decided I didn’t, and marched me back. And we sat there in stony silence for a long, long time. I was getting bright red, and horribly embarrassed. And when I got back to La Jolla a friend of Mother’s, who had the dance classes in Pasadena, said, “Had he just given you a few more chances! Europeans start on a different foot than Americans do. And you would have been all right, if he just had not been so quick to abandon it.” But in those days they posted a waltz, a fox trot, or whatever it was, and everybody danced what it was. And obviously I did not waltz according to whatever this man’s name was.

Morgan: Did you meet Iselin, Columbus Iselin?67

Eckis: I don’t remember if we met him there. He became a quite close friend, and he probably would have been there. I know we did meet Jack Bjerknes from Bergen, so we already knew him before we got to Bergen, which was nice, and then met his wife and family shortly after.

Morgan: What was her name, please?

Eckis: Her name is Hedvig. She’s still alive and lives in Santa Monica now.

Morgan: What about Björn Helland-Hansen, he was there probably.

Eckis: Yes, well we had met him here and that was why Roger went. In fact Björn had been over here at the Oceanographic and had asked Dr. Vaughan if he had anyone whom he would suggest going over [to Norway] and studying, and Dr. Vaughan suggested Roger. Björn was an amazing man. He had been on expeditions in the ice, in the frozen north, and had lost most of his fingers down to here [to the end of the knuckles]. But he had the warmest handshake that I’ve ever known. And he could light his own cigarette, and he’d light someone else’s. You were never aware of any loss at all. He was a wonderful, wonderful person.

Morgan: He was the one who later wrote Vaughan. I remember a wonderful quote from the letter, “Amongst the young oceanographers, I have especially noted Mr. Roger Revelle, whom I regard as a coming man. But he is probably too young for such a position now.”68

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67Columbus O’Donnell Iselin II (1904-1971), oceanographer.

Eckis:    That’s interesting. What year was that, do you know?

Morgan:   That was 1935, so Roger would have been twenty-six.

Eckis:    That was while we were there, then. Because we went over in the fall of ’36 and came back in the fall of ’37.

Morgan:   Were you aware of that letter?

Eckis:    I wasn’t then, no. And then there was a very unhumorous professor, I think he was a mathematician, Jonas Fjeldstad. I remember he tried helping us learn to ski, and I kept thinking if he just had a little sense of humor it would be easier, because I can remember emerging from a snow bank one time and having him say, “The next time, Fru Revelle, if so-and-so—.” I’d think, if he could just laugh and say, “What idiots you looked going head first into a snow bank.”

Morgan:   There was a German oceanographer I read about named Georg Wüst? Was he anyone that—?

Eckis:    I don’t seem to remember him.

Morgan:   How about George Deacon?

Eckis:    Well, he’s English. Yes, we knew him. And his daughter is still active and was over here, I think, just about a year ago and gave a lecture at the Oceanographic. And then one of our best friends was a Norwegian whose wife was Norwegian-American, Odd and—oh, what on earth is her name? How silly that I’d forget it. Odd Dahl. There were two Dahls, actually, at the Oceanographic, and the one we knew the best—Vessa was his wife. When Norway was occupied by the Germans, Odd didn’t come home one day, and his wife had no idea what had happened to him. He didn’t come home for several days, and then finally he was able to communicate with her, and he had said he couldn’t do this work they wanted—I think it was on heavy water or something, which I don’t understand in the least—that he needed his helper. And managed to get her then to come, so they were able to communicate. The other Dahl managed to escape to England. He was a meteorologist and so he aided the British war effort by being a meteorologist in England.

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69Jonas Ekman Fjeldstad (1894–1985), oceanographer.

70Georg Adolf Otto Wüst (1890-1977), oceanographer.

71Sir George Edward Raven Deacon (1906-1984), oceanographer. His daughter, Margaret Deacon, was Ritter Fellow in 1997 at Scripps Institution of Oceanography.
Morgan: And did the first Dahl’s wife actually help him, or was just that a great way of [getting her out]?

Eckis: Yes, she was able to help him, and they were then able to be together. Their little boy was just six months older than our Annie, and they were hand-in-hand the whole year. And the other Dahl—we saw them all when we were there in ’48, I think it was, sometime after the war—and he told us they had had to leave their house as if they were just going down to the pediatrician’s with just the bag with the baby’s things in it, and then they were rowed out to a boat and then taken to England. And she said she knew when they came back that of course their house had been occupied all that time. But she said the thing that made her the crossest was that some of her favorite kitchen things had been ruined.

Morgan: The appliances?

Eckis: No, no, utensils. Here she was knowing that they had survived with their children, but the little things could be so irritating.

Morgan: I read a letter also in July of ’37 to you from Alice Fleming that said, “Just to give Roger a mild case of apoplexy, I must add that Anna Sverdrup, Harald Sverdrup’s daughter, said the other day, ‘Dr. Revelle is going to be the director when my father goes, isn’t he?’” And Alice wrote, “I tried not to sound too approving.”

Eckis: I don’t remember that.

Morgan: Again, Roger was twenty-six . . .

Eckis: Well, it did take some time. And of course there was the opposition to it.

Morgan: I want to get into that as a matter of fact later, but I would like to get you back to America first. Sailing in the autumn of ’37. What physical changes did you find at the campus, at Scripps or in La Jolla? Was the land still empty between the station and the village?

Eckis: I think it was still pretty empty, Judith. We had bought a house up on Hillside Drive, just way up Hillside, before we went, because I may have mentioned Roger thought there wouldn’t be any vacant lots left when we came back. And the Flemings had meanwhile moved onto Draper [Street] near the [La Jolla] Woman’s Club. But I don’t believe that Kellogg had developed all that property in La Jolla Shores. I don’t think that would have all happened in that one year.

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Morgan: I read that some of it was cultivated for a while in strawberries or something.

Eckis: Yes, I believe it was. I think there were Japanese, what do you call them, truck farmers? Is that what they are? I always wondered why.

Morgan: It’s hard to believe it now.

Eckis: I know. Well of course there used to be a riding stable on Pearl Street, too. Between Girard and the boulevard.

Morgan: Then Carolyn was born in 1939.

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: Just after you returned, you said, from the Gulf of California expedition?

Eckis: No, that was after she was born. Elizabeth Shepard and I went down in 1940 and had a splendid two weeks there, even though our suitcases never got there. Shows you don’t really need everything you think you need when you travel. Because [the suitcases] were supposed to be going down with a grad student, and the back of Elizabeth’s car was all filled up with equipment that Harald Sverdrup wanted to get down to the boat—ship, rather. So we luckily each had a bathing cap but no bathing suit, I have no idea why, and our toilet cases. Elizabeth had one of winter clothes, because she was going on to visit her family in Milwaukee or somewhere. Why she took that in the car of course I’ll never know, but she did. So she had a sewing kit, and we made extraordinary clothing. Neither of us wanted to buy anything, because we kept thinking that the suitcases would arrive any day. But this stubborn grad student didn’t want to say [at the border] that he was a tourist. He said he was an oceanographer. And all of a sudden the Mexicans didn’t want to let any more scientists in. So there he sat at Nogales, I guess, for two weeks.

Morgan: And did you drive in?

Eckis: Yes, we drove down. We were going to take the train, and then Dr. Sverdrup, Harald, had asked us if we’d mind driving down. He wanted a chance to send Johnson, it was Earl Johnson I think, I forget his name. Carl Johnson,73 rather, who had been at Scripps for a long time and in charge of the grounds, in charge of everything. He had made so much of the equipment, and he had never had a chance to be on one of the ships. Harald couldn’t afford to buy transportation for him to fly down or anything, but thought, well, if he could ride down with us, then they could send some more equipment down. And then Claude ZoBell was also wanting to get down there and join the ship. So it was a rather strange combination.

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73 Carl I. Johnson (1903-1998), superintendent of grounds at Scripps Institution of Oceanography.
Morgan: So there were four of you?

Eckis: Four of us in the car, and Elizabeth’s dog, which was, I guess was boarded in—where would it have been at the border? Some border town while she was in Mexico. And then we picked him up on the way back.

Morgan: And where did you drive to and from?

Eckis: Well, we were going to, goodness, the place where we were going, oh, Guaymas. And we stayed at a little Mexican sort of a motel right on Bocochibampo Bay. There was a great big luxury hotel that hadn’t yet opened at one end of it, but we were right in the middle of this lovely curving beach, at a very, very informal motel. We’d know when meals were when the waiter would come out of the water.

Morgan: Carrying them? I mean, was it fish or was he swimming?

Eckis: No, he was just having his swim. There was one couple, in particular, of Americans who thought we were very odd because we had these strange outfits of blouses and skirts we’d made from Mexican material. We didn’t want to waste too much time, so they just sort of wrapped around, and we made buttons out of shells. And we made bathing suits out of bandana handkerchiefs.

Morgan: You must have been very proud of yourselves.

Eckis: Oh, yes. The bathing suits left something to be desired when wet, but they were kind of cute when dry. And then [the American couple] finally discovered that we had a reason, that we’d had trouble with our luggage, and then [they were] very sympathetic. The men would row ashore at night, most nights, because the ship was anchored. It would go out for the day, out from the harbor. And then our husbands would row ashore and spend the night with us, and we felt so sort of illicit. It was fun.

Morgan: The prewar years at Scripps sounded, from my reading, very, very happy, very carefree. I kept reading about beach picnics and a lot of events for everyone.

Eckis: Yes, it was a good group. And I’m trying to think of who, just who was still there by then. Of course the Flemings both were, and the Myers and the Wells. There was one—Roger shared a lab with one bachelor who never did get his doctorate, and even I could realize that it was a little dumb. He couldn’t get his thesis written because he couldn’t think of the first sentence! I definitely remember that, and his name was Thorp.\textsuperscript{74} And he would be struggling, and he couldn’t get it written. He just could not get it started. I don’t know whatever happened to him.

\textsuperscript{74}Eldon Marion Thorp (1907-1977). He earned his PhD in 1934 in geological oceanography at UC Berkeley/Scripps Institution of Oceanography.
Elizabeth Shepard and Ellen Revelle in Guaymas, Mexico, 1940. Scripps Institution of Oceanography Archives, UC San Diego Libraries.
I guess I mentioned that one of the delightful graduate students was John Wells. He went on and became a leading authority in corals, which was also Dr. Vaughan’s specialty. Dr. Vaughan was an avid collector of Japanese prints, and had a very good collection of them. And Alice Fleming remembered that when she and Dick were first married and they were there for dinner, he said she could choose one as a wedding present, and so she did. He kind of winced, and he said, “Well, you chose one of my best. But I said you could have any one you wanted,” and so he gave it to her. Which was sweet.

Morgan: So he learned a lesson.

Eckis: Yes. Don’t be quite so generous. And he had a dog, a big German police dog, and my Annie had the temerity at the time—I think this was before we went to Norway because we were living on the campus—to scold [Vaughan] because he talked so crossly to the dog. And everybody thought, “Oh, lightning’s going to strike the Revelle family,” because here was Annie saying, “You shouldn’t talk to your dog like that!”

Morgan: There were also square dances in those years, I read.

Eckis: I don’t remember that actually, but I’ll believe it. I remember that we had Christmas parties in the building that, of course, has been torn down since, right across from the original Scripps building that was preserved. And [the party] was in the library upstairs. And I always wanted to sometime have all the children at one end and make all the bachelors try to match up the children with the parents, but I never succeeded. I thought it would have been kind of fun.

Morgan: Well, Mary Eyre would have loved it.

Eckis: Yes, of course! Yes.

Morgan: Let’s move on to February of 1941, when Lt. (jg) Roger [Revelle] was called for Naval Reserve training as a sonar officer aboard the Rathburne.

Eckis: Aboard what?

Morgan: The Rathburne, I believe, was the name of the ship.

Eckis: His first service on a ship in the Navy was before he became a reserve. It was going from the Aleutian Islands to Hawaii on a destroyer, I think it was. And he realized during that episode that it would be much better to be in a position where he could give an order. Because as it was, as a civilian oceanographer, he’d maybe want to make a sounding or something, but it all had to go through channels, and by that
time he’d be past where he wanted to do it. He became very well acquainted with two of the—Bushnell was the ship he was on. And it was the flagship of the submarine fleet. Preston Mercer and Leo Bachman75 were two of the Navy people that we became very good friends with. Because then I went over and had two weeks with him in the islands. And they both recommended that it would be good for him to get Naval training, to get a reserve commission. And so he did. Actually I have a feeling that he had gotten it just before we went to Norway.

I think he had, because it was when we had only the one child that we went to Hawaii. Typical of Roger, as he got on the train in Los Angeles he turned back to me and said, “Why don’t you meet me in Hawaii?” No discussion beforehand of where we would meet or anything. I came back and told one of my good friends about it, and she said, “I think you should. I’ll take care of Annie.” And so I did go. And that was a nice fun trip, too. But he always had felt kind of that it was wrong that he never served on a ship, and he kept applying for sea duty after we went to Washington. But he was always told he was more valuable on land.

Morgan: Now that I think of it, this Rathburne that I was reading about did not go to sea. It was a former ship that they were using for training down at what was the Naval Electronics Lab [at Point Loma, San Diego].

Eckis: Yes, that’s where he served.

Morgan: It was a teaching ship.

Eckis: It’s the only time in our married life that I ever knew when he’d be home for dinner. Because of the gas shortage he was in a car pool, and so he’d be picked up and brought back. He had a commanding officer, oh dear, what was his name?76 He was famous for being perfectly awful. In fact, someone with the same name told me, when he was here in La Jolla, that he had thought he was getting unusually bad treatment when he was going through Naval training. And finally someone said, “Well your name is—,” whatever, and he said, “Yes.” And they said, “Well then you deserve it.” And then he said, “But I’m no relation at all.” Oh dear. My names are slipping away today.

But this [officer] took sheer delight in dressing down Roger, who had a doctor’s degree, in front of enlisted men. And Roger didn’t like it terribly much, and he’d come home feeling quite unhappy. He realized that for quite a long time his capacities and abilities weren’t being used at all. He was being sent to pick up train tickets and things like that. And here he was itching to do more for the war effort.


76 Captain Wilbur (Red) J. Ruble.
Then when he was asked to teach sonar, that he didn’t know anything about at all, he had to learn quickly, to be ahead of the people he was teaching. So I think it was quite a relief when he was sent to Washington.

When his orders came, he was off somewhere, I think in Alaska, and I got first one and then a second letter from Mrs. Vaughan (they had retired to Washington), telling me she was so glad we were coming to Washington. And the first letter asked could she help me find a house. Well, I didn’t know anything about it so I just sort of ignored it, and then I got another one saying that the Admiral was getting very anxious to know when [Roger] was coming. And so then I got up my nerve to call—not this nasty man, but someone else down there. And he hesitated, then he said, “Well, I can’t really tell you Roger’s orders, but if you have a chance for a house in Washington you better take it.” So I had gone ahead and arranged to rent a house in Washington before Roger got back. And then he finally got his orders. He was at the Hydrographic Office at first. And our house was in Silver Spring, Maryland, which turned out to be as far apart in Maryland as you can get. I didn’t realize it.

Morgan: As far from Washington?

Eckis: No. The Hydrographic Office was over here, and Silver Spring, Maryland, was over here. Opposite sides of the district. But he managed somehow to get himself changed from Suitland, Maryland to right in Washington, to the Office of Naval Research. No, that wasn’t even started quite yet, I guess. But, in any case he was somewhere in Washington in a temporary building, and he didn’t have to drive out to Suitland, Maryland anymore.

Morgan: Perhaps it was the Bureau of Ships then?

Eckis: Bureau of Ships. Yes, of course. How nice of you to know.

Morgan: I remember [reading] that was sort of the first time he’d been happy since he joined.

Eckis: Yes. He really felt that he was much more useful.

Morgan: About that time, I believe, he met Jeff Holter, Norman Jefferis.77

Eckis: Well no, we knew him here in La Jolla first, and then Roger persuaded him to come to Washington and work for him there. And then also Marston Sargent. They both were in Roger’s office. Marston was in a naval uniform I think, but Jeff wasn’t.

Morgan: Jeff was a physicist, I believe.

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77Norman Jefferis Holter (1914-1983), senior physicist at US Navy Bureau of Ships. He invented the Holter monitor, which is a portable electrocardiography monitor.
Eckis: Yes. The Holter monitor is his invention.

Morgan: Where were you on Pearl Harbor Day?

Eckis: Right here [in La Jolla].

Morgan: Was Roger here?

Eckis: Roger was here, and we were listening to the radio. And I remember Carolyn was just a little girl. She heard us all talking, and she heard “Manila” as “vanilla.” She was wanting to join the conversation and said, “I like vanilla, too.” We all remember Roger saying, “I guess I ought to report to duty” and going up and putting on his full uniform and his sword. The only time I ever saw him with the sword. Which is now on the Revelle. But he somehow felt that it was appropriate for that day.

Morgan: Oh, on the ship, yes.

Eckis: Yes. And so then he went on down—

Morgan: On that Sunday morning?

Eckis: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. And there was one [period of] time when he had all night duty about every third or fourth night, and sometimes the children and I would go down and have dinner with him at the officers’ mess. I don’t know if Admiral Kidd Club existed then. I guess maybe it did, because we were someplace that we could go and have dinner. But one time I had the children down at the [La Jolla] Beach Club, and I was called to the phone. And Roger said, “I would like you to go home and practice air raid shelter games with the children. That’s all I can tell you.” So I got those reluctant children out of the water and came home and suggested we play air raid shelter, and they didn’t want to. And of course I had no idea what it was all about. And he couldn’t tell me ’til when he came home the next day that an erroneous spotting of the Japanese Navy had occurred about 500 miles off the coast. And that was why he couldn’t tell me anything more than that, but he just wanted to be sure I might be where I’d be safe.

Morgan: There was a lot of tension in San Diego, wasn’t there?

Eckis: Yes, yes, there was. We used to look out on typically foggy mornings and see the ships, our ships fortunately, doing practice beach landings. Especially down on the [La Jolla] Shores. They didn’t choose this beach. And we’d think, “Of course it’s our guys, of course it’s our guys,” but what if it weren’t? Because you know you

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78 R/V Roger Revelle, built in 1996, is owned by the US Navy and operated by Scripps Institution of Oceanography.
really couldn’t see. You just knew that people were coming ashore and coming ashore. And it was scary.

Morgan: Especially if you were alone, I would imagine. You seemed to be over your shyness pretty much by then, because you had made all these moves on your own, and you were handling a lot of the financial—

Eckis: I certainly had to. It just got to be typical that [with each] “home” I was there first and then Roger would have to find out how to get there. He always managed not to move when I did. We were making the move to Washington and renting this house. And so I was told to call the Navy and arrange about it, and I was asked by a very brisk person, “How many crates and barrels do your household possessions go in?” Of course I hadn’t the vaguest idea, because I had always just been moved locally. So I had to sort of make a wild guess. And I thought it would be nice if Roger would help a little bit. He finally did arrange one day that he would stay home and help. I had sent him down to the basement to get some newspapers, and realized he never had come back. And eventually I went down. Of course he was reading them in the basement.

Morgan: Were they current newspapers or—?

Eckis: Oh no, oh no. They didn’t have to be. I don’t know why they had been taken down there. But I decided I might as well do it myself. Mother went east with me and the three little girls on the train, and Roger came about ten days later, after we’d gotten in our house and pretty much settled.

Morgan: When you then were back at Scripps, there were some other people coming onto the stage of your life that I’d love to mention and see if—

Eckis: If I remember them?

Morgan: Any special memories. John Isaacs for example.

Eckis: Oh, yes. Mary Carol and I were together the other day, and we were trying to think when we had first met. And I have already forgotten it from Friday, when it was that we did first meet. They came down from Berkeley.

Morgan: During the war, was it?

Eckis: In spite of having just been with Mary Carol, I have already forgotten. Did you ever run across Bill Bascom, Willard Bascom? Because he’s the one who brought

79 John Dove Isaacs (1913-1980), oceanographer. His wife was Mary Carol Zander Isaacs (1917- ).

80 Willard Newell Bascom (1916- ), oceanographer.
John down here. On a rather strange circumstance. They were having dinner at a restaurant in Berkeley, and the Isaacs’ first daughter waved her arms around to a certain point and tipped a glass of wine, and John reached out and grabbed it. And so Willard immediately said, “You’re just the guy I want. Will you work for me in La Jolla? You’re so quick and adept.”

Morgan: He was quite an inventor, John Isaacs.

Eckis: Oh, yes. Roger used to say as director one of his jobs was to listen to all these ideas that John had, many of which were excellent, and try to decide which ones were possible. One of the famous ones was to solve the water crisis problems by towing icebergs down from Alaska, coated with something that would keep them from melting. But I don’t think it was ever tried.

Morgan: Did that make Roger’s short list of possibles?

Eckis: I’m not sure that one did. But John really was an absolute original. And—you’ve probably heard about the little submarine, the *Alvin*, at Woods Hole? That was named for an equally eccentric scientist there, Al Vine. He was the one who invented that little, I think, two-person submarine that was useful in finding the *Titanic*. One time we were up at the cabin [in Julian], and I had called up and suggested the Issacses come up and bring their children, because it was snowing and I said I’m sure they’d love it. You’d have to walk in, because you couldn’t get past the gate with the car. So I went down on skis to meet them, and here they were, children on their shoulders and all, and here was Al Vine in tennis shoes. He and John had met up in Dallas Airport or somewhere and then it was time for Al to take his plane east but they were still talking, so John said, “Oh, well, come on out to California. We’ve got to finish this.” So of course he brought him up to the cabin in tennis shoes.

Morgan: That’s a wonderful “intense scientist” story.

Eckis: Yes, they both were. No, I really can’t remember what year John came. Now a building is going to be named for him on the campus.

Morgan: That’s good. What about Dr. Eckart, Carl Eckart?

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81 Allyn Collins Vine (1914-1994), physicist and oceanographer at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

82 John Dove Isaacs joined the staff at SIO in 1948. NORPAX Building was renamed John Dove Isaacs Hall in his honor on September 10, 1998.

Eckis: Well, he came during the war. He was down at the Naval Electronics Lab. And then he very reluctantly became director, with Roger as associate director. He really wasn’t at all interested in administration, but he was essentially keeping the seat warm for Roger.

Morgan: I remember him as a very distinguished looking man.

Eckis: He was a wonderful person.

Morgan: Sort of [a] Ronald Coleman?84

Eckis: Well, no, I wouldn’t think that, but a very quiet person and very lonely. His wife was an alcoholic and spent a lot of time in sanitariums and things. And he never knew what he was going to find when he’d get home. He had a sad life. But a wonderful, wonderful friend. The children all loved him. He unfortunately would not give up smoking. I’m sure that’s one thing that did him in. But I guess he finally just did not want to continue [as director], and there was no chance, no sign yet of Roger being able to cross the hurdles and become director, so [Eckart] resigned and Roger was then acting director for a while. And then I remember [Roger] called me. I was in Woods Hole, after our first daughter was married in Wellesley and I was staying at a good friend’s, an oceanographer’s naturally, Mary Sears.85 And the phone rang in the middle of the night, and I was sure it would be Roger, because nobody else would call. I went rushing upstairs to the phone. And he said, “Well, we’re not going to be together on our anniversary, but I have a present for you. I made it.” And I caught on right away, [Roger] not being the kind who would have whittled or done anything like that. And I said, “You mean you lost the adjective?” And he said, “Yes, I’m going to be director.” It was a great excitement, and I guess that was in ’51, I think.

Morgan: I wanted to back up to his problem with becoming director. Because we now know that there had been suggestions since he was twenty-six years old that he was the man for the job.

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: And that Harald Sverdrup wanted him to succeed him.

Eckis: Yes.

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84Ronald Coleman (1891-1958), English actor.

85Mary Sears (1905-1997), head of US Navy Hydrographic Office Oceanographic Unit 1943-1946 and oceanographer at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.
Morgan: Which apparently he mentioned in a letter. But there were these [written] protests against Roger by four of the senior scientists.

Eckis: [Claude] ZoBell and [Fran] Shepard and I forget who the other two were.

Morgan: I believe it was Denis Fox —

Eckis: Oh yes.

Morgan: And Carl Hubbs.

Eckis: Yes, that’s right. And Roger was the first to agree that he was not a good administrator. I don’t know if any one of the four had secretly hoped to be able to be director, whether that colored this antipathy, or if it was the good of the institution. I have no idea. Have you any idea?

Morgan: I really don’t. Except that I wondered if because they were senior and maybe they were set in their ways, and Roger would certainly change the pace, I would think. But they did end up all working together.

Eckis: Yes. Well of course, none of them, when I think of it, were ever seagoing. I don’t know that Hubbs was. Fran Shepard was on that trip down to Guaymas, but wasn’t on long expeditions, and I don’t think that Denis ever even was on board a ship.

Morgan: Did that affect your relationship with their wives, such as Elizabeth Shepard, or was it not a problem for you?

Eckis: No. Elizabeth and I were very close friends. Of course I didn’t know about it anyway.

Morgan: Oh. That letter was not [public]?

Eckis: No. I’m not even sure if Roger knew about it. But no, we were still friends. In fact, Elizabeth, it seems to me, stayed here with us. I’m quite sure she was staying here with me and the children before we went down to Mexico. Because I remember saying, “Isn’t it nice that there’s this downstairs guest room apart from everything

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86Sverdrup’s support of Revelle is mentioned in a letter dated 25 September 1947, SIO Office of the Director (Sverdrup), box 1, folder 35. Scripps Institution of Oceanography Archives, UC San Diego Libraries.

87Dayton E. Carritt et al., to President Robert G. Sproul, 24 September 1947. Carl Leavitt Hubbs Papers, MC5, box 33, folder 44, Scripps Institution of Oceanography Archives, UC San Diego Libraries.

88Denis Llewellyn Fox (1901-1983), marine biochemist.

89Carl Leavitt Hubbs (1894-1979), marine biologist. He was married to Laura Cornelia Clark Hubbs (1893-1988).
else?” And she hesitated a minute and then said, “Well, it would be nicer if the children weren’t right overhead.”

Morgan: You had moved back to La Jolla Labor Day weekend, I think you said, of 1947.

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: But in those last years in Washington, in ’45, Roger was off for the Operation Crossroads and the Bikini mission.

Eckis: Yes. But luckily that summer I had brought the children out here. Washington is no place to be with small children in the summer. It’s awful. And one summer, the summer that Bill was a baby, I had rented a house in Woods Hole and we had gone there, and then the next summer I had turned down taking that house again because I thought I had made an arrangement with a friend who was moving to Washington that we would trade houses, and we’d occupy hers on Virginia Way [in La Jolla] until it sold, and she’d be in our house. And too late to do anything about the Woods Hole house, she wrote me that she was afraid it would jeopardize our friendship to do this. And luckily Mother was able to get the use of the house across the street from hers on Virginia Way, which had been Mother’s house originally and belonged to an old friend. And so we had the summer there. I was out here with the four children for four months. It was one time when I did know enough ahead of what Roger was going to do.

Morgan: So it stands out.

Eckis: I think he was just here for maybe a weekend. I remember driving the children up to see Lake Hodges with water in it. Did you ever see it dry?

Morgan: No, but I’ve never seen it with much water, either.

Eckis: Oh really? Oh, it’s often had water lately. But at that time there were cows grazing down at the bottom, and it was so ironic, because there were these cows and there were still signs, “No Fishing from Bridge.” And we went up to let the children see what the lake looked like with water in [it].

Morgan: Obviously Roger could not write [home] from Operation Crossroads.

Eckis: I had one letter. I can’t think how he sent it. But I remember being very distressed at the—I had a call from someone at the San Diego Union, probably, asking if I had any word, and I said, “I just happened to have had a letter,” and [Roger] described the color of the cloud as it went up as being the color of [face] powder. And this came out that “the domesticated Dr. Revelle—.” And I thought, “Oh, he’s going to kill me when he gets back.” Because it sounded so unlike Roger. Luckily he didn’t take it amiss.
Roger Revelle presented with a commendation from the Secretary of the Navy for his work on Operation Crossroads by Admiral Paul Lee, chief of the U.S. Office of Naval Research, 1947. Ellen Revelle is on the right. Scripps Institution of Oceanography Archives, UC San Diego Libraries.
I went up to meet him in San Francisco, and of course when he left, my left leg was still all done up from the first ski break, so here I had all these pins sticking out. I was so excited that I was going to meet him not having that, and then he got off the ship, and he had fallen and cut his chin badly, and they had thought that he had broken his jaw, so he almost had pins in his jaw. But fortunately they didn’t, but he had this still very sore face. But it was exciting to see him again.

Morgan: Did you know, in the early days, Admiral Nimitz?\(^90\)

Eckis: Nimitz? Oh yes.

Morgan: Roger met him during the war and—

Eckis: Yes, and so we did. And then of course when Roger was director, and this was the whole campus, southern campus, Nimitz was on the Board of Regents. When we’d go to meetings we’d see them. And there’s a wonderful story about Mrs. Nimitz and the dedication of Nimitz Boulevard [in San Diego]. ##

## [Admiral Nimitz suddenly] had to go to the hospital. So Mrs. Nimitz had to be the one who took part in all the ceremonies of Nimitz Boulevard. She told me the next time I saw her at a Regents meeting, “I wasn’t very impressed with the wife of your mayor.” And I can’t remember the name of who was mayor then, so I’m not slandering anyone. I asked her, “Why?” She said, “Do you know, all through that whole ceremony she called me Mrs. Halsey?” And Nimitz and [Admiral] Halsey were not very good friends. They didn’t happen to like each other very much, so it made it even worse. But I always liked that tale.

Morgan: Did Roger ever consider politics?

Eckis: You mean running for something? I don’t think he ever did, Judith. Thank goodness.

Morgan: As far as being away, he was gone wartime of course, and also then later, on expeditions. It must have been tough.

Eckis: Yes. I certainly hadn’t realized it was going to be that way. When I married him he was going to be a geologist, and geologists stayed on land. But I did get used to it fairly soon. I may have already mentioned that I’d felt as director’s wife that one of my duties was to get other young wives to realize that this was part of being an oceanographer. Because Roger felt very strongly that any of them who were going to really develop into good oceanographers had to go to sea and that it was very important. But of course it wasn’t as bad as Navy wives who maybe wouldn’t see

\(^{90}\)Admiral Chester William Nimitz (1885-1966).
their husbands for a year. I think the longest he was ever gone was four months. But one’s whole life pattern does change when there are children. Meals were earlier and more regular, you might say. And it always amused me that he got taller and taller the longer he was away. The children would say, “Daddy wouldn’t fit through that door, would he?” And then there was kind of a problem when he’d return, the adjustment back again to the fact that they were not the center, that he was. And that was always a bit of adjustment.

Morgan: And possibly the fact that you’d been making all the decisions.

Eckis: Well yes, yes. Other wives have mentioned too that you do get used to it, to doing it all, and I don’t think Roger really minded, because he didn’t want to be bothered about many details anyway. I used to feel, for instance, with getting new carpeting or anything that I had to get him to approve, and that was usually the hardest part, and I finally just discovered he always liked it when I did it. It was easier to just go ahead and do it.

But during the war years when we were in Washington, it wasn’t that he was gone long times, but he wasn’t home either. I mean, he’d come home very late. And so the children were really cheated a lot. Mary Ellen, the middle one, I remember kind of crying one time and I said, “What’s the matter?” She said, “Daddy’s so busy that Carolyn’s never going to be able to sit in his lap and be read to.” She was just realizing that his life was different. And I think he changed. He had always been the very even-tempered one, and I was the one with the quick temper. And then I had discovered with a child that I had better calm down. It didn’t work. One of us had to try to be calm. And he—I guess the strain during the war did change him. He was not getting enough sleep, probably, and a lot of tension, even though he wasn’t at sea, but responsibility and all. And he became quicker tempered. He didn’t used to be that way. And he unfortunately got so that he was. The children had an expression, “Look out—Daddy’s shaking his keys.” And that meant, “Look out!”

Morgan: The temper was coming.

Eckis: Yes. And he could be quite unreasonable.

Morgan: Did that last a long time?

Eckis: Unfortunately, I think it did. He got calmer more in his last years, but he developed a habit of, maybe alcohol had something to do with it, of just taking off on some one individual, maybe at a dinner party. And it would be very embarrassing. He would just start arguing and being quite unreasonable about it. And suddenly, if you’re both guests at someone else’s house and he starts doing it, it was awkward.

Morgan: How do you handle it?
Eckis: Well, I’d kick him under the table. I know one time he did it with my best friend Georgeanna Lipe’s brother. They got talking about India, and Roger, of course—nobody knew as much about India as he did. Well, her brother had also spent a lot of time in India, but in a different way because he was in a business connection and he saw things quite differently. And I thought Roger was so rude that I told him afterward, and he wrote a letter to Georgeanna and apologized. I think she still has the letter.

Morgan: Let’s move on to 1950, which was a big year. In February there was the fateful Regents meeting. I was interested to learn that it was at that meeting, February 24, 1950, that President Sproul proposed Roger as acting director until the search committee could find a successor. And that went sweeping through easily. And at the same meeting the loyalty oath came up.

Eckis: I didn’t know. Is that so?

Morgan: February of 1950. Talk about a full agenda.

Eckis: Yes. I should say.

Morgan: The loyalty oath—they voted at that meeting to order the dismissal without a hearing of faculty members who refused to sign, disavowing membership in the communist party. And they gave an April 30 deadline for this to happen.

Eckis: And it was in February you say?

Morgan: That was February of 1950. Roger just went wild in protest and organized you and lots of professors. There were committees, weren’t there?

Eckis: And Roger would talk about it anywhere that would have him, because he felt so strongly about it. I’m sure you know the famous “Howling Mad” Smith story about that. Do you remember the General? He at first had sided with the Regents’ attitude, and then Roger talked to him and convinced him of the professors’ side and why they didn’t want to [sign], and the story was that at some party a La Jolla dowager came up and said, “Can you understand why these professors won’t sign a statement saying they’re not communists if they’re not?” to which “Howling Mad” Smith said, “Madam, would you sign a paper saying you are not a prostitute?” End of friendship, but he made his point. Because he got Roger’s picture. And we lost, the university did lose, I don’t know the names, but they lost quite a few very good faculty members at that point. I’m not sure if they lost any from our campus, but certainly Berkeley did lose.

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91Georgeanna Lipe, La Jolla artist.

Morgan: Were you there at the Regents’ meeting in April when the compromise was reached?

Eckis: No, the only one I ever attended was the one when they finally voted to have this campus, [UCSD]. And that was a very dramatic one. Judy and Walter [Munk] and I were all there [at] Davis. Roger managed to get hold of a letter from the architect who had built the new Scripps Hospital [in La Jolla], who had said they were not going to have to have double glaze [on windows] or any extra expense. And of course [the hospital] was even closer to the airport than the proposed campus. So Roger had already had lots of material to present at that meeting. He had overlays showing this university is this far from an airport, and this [university] is this [far], and he had statements from professors that they were maybe interrupted for [only] thirty seconds or something during a lecture. It really wasn’t any great problem.

Then the letter was read out loud by President Kerr, and everybody heard it and was sort of astonished. [Regent Edwin Pauley] turned to the architect and said, “Did you write that letter?” and he said, “Yes.” Then one of the Regents—I’ve always wished I could remember which one—said, “Those people down there have been waiting long enough. I move that we go ahead and vote to have the campus.” And it carried. But of course Pauley and somebody else voted against it. As we went out of the meeting, Walter said, “Well, you’ve won the battle, but you know Pauley will always be against you.” And of course we knew he would be. But at least we got the campus. Because [Pauley’s] idea was that he’d wanted to have it in Balboa Park. Pauley knew that the people wouldn’t vote for that. It was just a way of trying not to have it out here. He really didn’t want any campus. He believed in just enlarging Berkeley and UCLA, and so to propose that it could be in Balboa Park was just ridiculous.

Morgan: In the 1950s there was a lot of turmoil and Roger decided to go to sea with the first [Scripps expedition].

Eckis: To get away from it.

Morgan: It must have been quite a flurry at Scripps, with so many of the men going off on the MidPac expedition.95

Eckis: Well, they were doing important things at sea.

93 Clark Kerr (1911- ), University of California president 1958-1967. His wife is Catherine (Kay) Spaulding Kerr.


95 MidPac (1950) was the first Scripps expedition after World War II. The next was Capricorn (1952-1953).
Morgan: Did you have any communication, radio or—?

Eckis: I think by that time, Judith, we had ship-to-shore. We’d have an occasional telephone call.

Morgan: Did you worry about it at all as far as—?

Eckis: Well, yes, because very often before Roger left on an expedition he’d tell me how he was always so worried that somebody might fall overboard at night. And knowing that he wasn’t exactly an agile soft shoe dancer or anything, I had visions of him being the one, knowing that he might wander around at night. I always was afraid that I’d find that he had fallen off. But it was something that always worried him, that somebody might fall overboard and not be found.

Morgan: And he was not a great swimmer, I gather.

Eckis: Well, he could swim. Not an elegant swimmer. He could have probably kept up for a while, but if you lose someone overboard at night, it’s not a good idea.

Morgan: Especially if no one knows it.

Eckis: That’s right. Exactly. But I think the falling overboard was probably my worst worry about him.

Morgan: Was it on that expedition, or Capricorn, where they had that terrible incident with the winch unwinding?

Eckis: Oh, a terrible thing going across the deck. Yes, that was a real scare.

Morgan: Amazing no one was hurt then.

Eckis: It was.

Morgan: And still there were no women on the ships.

Eckis: No, not until Capricorn. I think that was the one, that’s the one that went to Tonga, wasn’t it? And Helen Raitt flew down to have Christmas with them, and then came back on the ship. Roger had tried to get Rachel Carson\textsuperscript{96} to go along to write about the trip, and I think she was interested, but she couldn’t do it. And then there was a chance for a while that one of my cousins, Peggy Scripps,\textsuperscript{97} was going to go. But

\textsuperscript{96} Rachel Carson (1907-1964), marine biologist and writer.

\textsuperscript{97} Margaret Scripps Buzzelli (1922- ).
she didn’t. And so they hadn’t had anybody. And then it was decided that Helen would come back on the ship. She took her duties seriously and kept a journal and of course published a book when she got back.

Morgan: How did the other women here feel about that?

Eckis: I don’t know. Personally I had never wanted to go, because I knew how, when he got back, all his clothes smelled so oily. So I was surprised how much I enjoyed the new ship when I had the ten days on it. Of course that was a far cry from what those earlier ships were like. Because we had our own shower, Mary and I and—

Morgan: That’s on the *Revelle* [in 1996].

Eckis: That’s on the *Revelle*, yes.

Morgan: In the modern world. It’s a beautiful ship.

Eckis: Oh, it is. We joined it in Pascagoula, Mississippi, where it was built and launched, and got off on this side of the [Panama] Canal. My daughter Mary and I really had a wonderful time. The men were so excited about this nice new ship, and they were like kids with a new toy. They wanted to show us everything. We thought we would just sit quietly and not get in their way, and then they’d come say, “Oh, come and watch this. We’re going to try the new XBT, the expendable bathythermograph.” I thought that I had absorbed more than I had ever realized, because I knew about bathythermographs. It used to be if you lost one of those it was a big loss.

Morgan: You knew the vocabulary.

Eckis: I did know about a lot of it. I was surprised. But it was wonderful. The crew and scientists were all just so nice to us. We had a lovely time. There I am jumping way ahead again.

Morgan: But you came through the Panama Canal, obviously.

Eckis: Yes. And I couldn’t stay awake to stay up and watch the whole thing. I just had to go to bed.

Morgan: You were speaking of Rachel Carson and writing an account of that trip. Let’s talk about newspapering a little bit. In your blood. I was thinking of the *Detroit Evening News* and your grandfather James Scripps, and obviously Ellen Browning

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99James Edmund Scripps (1835-1906).
Eckis: Well, that was really because my son Bill had been on the board of the Detroit News, the one that my grandfather founded and Aunt Ellen worked on. And Bill was on the board for nine years, and he got quite interested in it. Also my nephew, Peter Clark, my older brother’s only child, was president and publisher. I finally got so that I was going to the annual meeting. Grandfather died four years before I was born, so I never knew him, obviously. But I guess because, really because of Bill getting to be so interested in the paper that the idea of keeping it going after the [Detroit] paper was sold kind of appealed to me, and it did to most of the children. We didn’t set out to buy a legal paper by any means. It was just trying to find what was available. We were interested in the La Jolla Light, for instance, but it wasn’t available at that time. I don’t know how many times it’s been sold since then. But Bill has continued to be extremely interested in the [San Diego Daily Transcript], and I am to some extent. I mean I read it faithfully. Not all of it, but the editorial page, and look through and—

Morgan: And you are the publisher [of the Daily Transcript]. Is that right?

Eckis: Yes. That was because the only way we could get the one from whom we bought it to retire, was that the family was going to take over the more active things. Bill came home from one meeting and said, “Guess what? You’re the publisher.” So if I have a brilliant idea, they’d double my nonexistent salary, and if I do something stupid, they cut it. So I do save them money. But it is interesting. We would be willing to sell it if a lovely great big offer came along, probably, but it brings Bill out once a month, which I love, that and the San Dieguito Valley company.

Morgan: What’s your involvement with the other paper? Was that in Ohio?

Eckis: Not any, personally. Oh, I beg your pardon. You’re right. I was thinking of Cincinnati and the family interest there. No, we have one in Columbus, Ohio, too [The Daily Reporter], and that has a separate little publication, The Tavern News, and that delighted Roger that he had a publication about—

Morgan: What is The Tavern News?

Eckis: Well, I guess it’s reports about liquor stores and bars and things. I don’t know if I have ever seen it. But I did go and see the [main] paper before we bought it. And we had looked at a paper in, up around Oceanside or somewhere, and then were driven up to the Temecula area to see how tremendously that area was developing, and that this paper served that area. So we had looked at quite a few papers before, or at the time of getting the Transcript. And then of course I had a period being the editor of
a paper on the [UCSD] campus for three years, the *Bear Facts*.

B-e-a-r, not b-a-r-e. And I found that I really enjoyed that.

**Morgan:** You wrote for it and edited?

**Eckis:** I was editor, yes. I had had articles in it before then, but I did edit it for about three years and then had a co-editor too, and that was helpful.

**Morgan:** Is that still going?

**Eckis:** Oh yes. Now of course it’s all on computers, not quite as homey as it was.

**Morgan:** How would you describe yourself politically?

**Eckis:** Well, I have always voted Democrat. I guess the most active I’ve ever been was while we were in Cambridge and I was a member of the League of Women Voters. I would work in registering voters. But I’ve never been out pounding the pavements for anybody.

**Morgan:** I think that that is probably a good place for us to stop this tape, and then start afresh with the University of California at San Diego. ##

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*Bear Facts* is the newsletter of the Oceanids, a service and social organization at Scripps Institution of Oceanography and UC San Diego.
INTERVIEW THREE: 10 AUGUST 1998

Morgan:  ## It is Monday, August 10, three o’clock p.m. Before we move on to talk about the mid- to late 1950s and the stirrings of the dream for a University of California campus here in San Diego, I’d like to ask you a couple of things about your years in Washington during the war and prior to your return to La Jolla in 1947. There were a couple of people with whom Roger worked I’d like to know more about. First, the very brilliant, I’m told, astronomer Lyman Spitzer,\(^{101}\) with whom Roger set up the Navy’s Office of Research and Inventions. Did you see him socially?

Eckis: Yes. The four of us became very close friends. Lyman and his wife, Doreen. Lyman unfortunately has died, I just discovered, when I talked to Doreen recently. He was a faculty member at Princeton. But then, as I remember, they were living in Washington some of the time during the war. Did he just come down [to Washington] occasionally? Because I do remember them in an apartment in New York. But somehow we did, the four of us, get acquainted. He came from a fairly large and boisterous family, and he used to say that when they had a family reunion the hotel knew them well enough to put them in a room quite far off from everybody else because you could hear the Spitzer family all over the place otherwise. They had one son, Nick, who is a professor at UCSD now, and two daughters with very strange names I forget.

And we visited them, I remember, once in Princeton, and had a very pleasant time. And then after the war we used to see them out here about every two years because he would come out to Caltech. At one point we had a wonderful excursion with them. I think all three of our little girls were with us when we went up to Mt. Wilson Observatory. And I like to think that Carolyn’s rag doll was the only rag doll that has looked through the big telescope. Because if she was going to look, she wanted her doll to look, too. Lyman was very sweet about taking her seriously and letting the rag doll look through also. It’s the only time I’ve ever been up there to the observatory. But we used to sometimes get them to come down at the times that they were in Pasadena. Sometimes we’d go up and see them.

I’m pretty sure they’ve been up to the cabin with us, too, in Julian. We did finally catch on that to our Eastern friends it wasn’t all that exciting when they’d be out in the winter and we’d say, “Oh, there’s snow in the mountains and we thought we’d go up,” and they would say, “Oh, we don’t have any proper clothes.” “Oh, we’ve got plenty up there.” Finally we realized that they really didn’t want to go, and were too polite to say. They were here for the beach and the sunshine and they didn’t care about snow. But [Lyman] was a very, very interesting man, full of fun and very entertaining to be with, and very, very bright.

\(^{101}\)Lyman Strong Spitzer, Jr. (1914-1997). He was married to archaeologist Doreen Canaday Spitzer. Their son Nicholas Canaday Spitzer (1942-) is professor of biology at UC San Diego. Their daughters are Dionis Spitzer Griffin, Sarah Spitzer Saul, and Lydia S. Spitzer.
Morgan: And he and Roger worked very well together.

Eckis: Yes, they did. They got on splendidly.

Morgan: What about Mary Sears? I was reading that they worked together.

Eckis: That was while Roger was in the Navy. And Mary, who had been at Woods Hole [Oceanographic Institution] for some time by then as an oceanographer, had become a WAVE\textsuperscript{102} and she was assigned to Roger. At our first meeting, the two of us, it turns out, were both waiting for the same person—Roger—[while] sitting in the Hay-Adams Hotel. And we finally discovered after we’d each been getting up and asking at the desk if they’re sure this person hadn’t arrived, that we were waiting for the same man. And of course we became acquainted. And then we were also waiting for Robert Cushman Murphy,\textsuperscript{103} a famous ornithologist at the Natural History Museum. The four of us were going to have dinner. Mary became a very, very close friend. So much so that when I went off skiing and the first time I broke a leg, she stayed at the house with the children, not realizing it was going to be more extensive than she had expected. We had domestic help, but needed someone in as a mother figure, so here was this spinster being the mother figure for the four children. They all liked her a lot and she was very nice. She had come from Woods Hole and was staying in Washington for the duration, and she had quite a responsibility of taking care of “her” officer. She’d usually remember to call me and say, “It’s time to change to summer hat tops. Be sure he comes in with his white top on, tomorrow.” But one time she was very embarrassed by him, because she suddenly looked over and he had on new khakis, and they hadn’t been hemmed.

Morgan: Roger had not noticed?

Eckis: No, he hadn’t noticed, and I hadn’t noticed when he left in the morning. And of course he’d cross his legs, and it would be very obvious. So she was trying to get his attention. She also learned that when he dozed off she could take a pencil and kind of tap it on the table and get him to wake up that way. She was very, very patient with him, very long suffering.

Morgan: I gather she was as organized as he was not.

Eckis: Yes, she was a very, very organized person. And very nice. And she didn’t expect to ever marry. Her sister, who was almost as old, was still kind of hoping, but Mary said, “She ought to realize that we are spinsters and we might as well face it. We’re not going to get married.” She died just a few years ago. I always tried to see

\textsuperscript{102}Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service, US Navy.

\textsuperscript{103}Robert Cushman Murphy (1887-1973).
her in Woods Hole. She stayed on in her little house in Woods Hole and was active for quite a long time at the Oceanographic there. [Roger] had been originally assinged to the Hydrographic Office in Suitland, Maryland, but quickly had managed to get himself transferred to the Bureau of Ships in downtown Washington, which was much more convenient. And I guess he got Mary Sears to be out there. She did such a good job that she did end up being the Hydrographer of the Navy, I think thanks to Roger.

Morgan: After the two big seagoing expeditions that Roger went on in the 1950s, MidPac and Capricorn, he began luring staff and celebrities to come and visit La Jolla and hear the dream of his campus. And around 1956-1957, among the people whom I gather came, I found a letter from Jacques-Yves Cousteau. I believe there was a reference to a luncheon that was given for him at the Village Cupboard in La Jolla?

Eckis: Really? I don’t remember the luncheon. I remember Roger calling me up and saying, “Go over to the Cove [Theater]. They are going to have a special matinee.” Not the Cove, the Granada. The movie theater that used to be almost at Wall Street. And he said, “Cousteau is giving a special showing of a film of his,” and so Roger was phoning all over the place to build up an audience for him. That was my first meeting with Cousteau. He showed a fascinating film that was taken underwater, of course, with the tuna in the Mediterranean, and watching the tuna. Apparently they navigated so skillfully that they never ran into the cameramen or each other. They were fascinating pictures. And Cousteau in his fascinating accent spoke to the audience, too. But I don’t remember the lunch. I won’t deny it, but maybe I didn’t get asked to lunch.

Morgan: Did you talk to him afterwards?

Eckis: Yes. And then in fact, some years later when we were at a meeting in Monaco, we had lunch on the famous Calypso. That was really fun. He gave Roger an amphora, which is out there on the deck, and he gave me personally a little bowl. Both of them, of course, hundreds of years old and from the bottom of the Mediterranean. He shipped the amphora [to our] home. We weren’t supposed to carry that. But they entrusted the little bowl to us. And that has quite a story. Shall I tell you that?

Morgan: Absolutely.

Eckis: Because Roger was coming home after just five days, and I thought that was dumb to go to Europe for five days, I decided I would visit friends in England, and I went to Italy, too, before coming back. So I wrapped this precious little [bowl] up in his pajamas, which I knew he wouldn’t wear, and packed it in his suitcase. And then when I got home in about two weeks, I said, “Well, where is my little piece of antiquity?” He said, “Don’t worry, don’t worry. I’ll get it the next time I go to the

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Cosmos Club.” Two trips later, he opened his suitcase, typically, in the middle of the airport and produced it. And then told me the story. Apparently he had taken it out to show people [at the Cosmos Club], put it on the dresser, probably used it as an ashtray. And it does look kind of cruddy. I’ll show it to you. And then he left it. And so I’m sure the cleaning woman picked it up and put it in the garbage. He made such a fuss about it. Fortunately, the Cosmos Club doesn’t empty its trash all that often and it was found. I’ll show it to you. It has this added history of surviving a trip with Roger.

Morgan: Did Roger and Cousteau have much in common, other than oceanography?

Eckis: I don’t think so, and I have a feeling that Roger was under-impressed. He liked Jacques, but I think he felt that it was publicity more than serious science. I may be quoting out of turn. But he liked him as a person. I don’t know how many other times he saw him. I don’t think I saw him again.

Morgan: Also, after the Capricorn Expedition in which the Scripps group ended up having Christmas at Tonga, the prince (was it Prince Tungi?)

Eckis: Yes. Roger came home and told me about it, said he went in his office, which at that point was upstairs in the Vaughan Aquarium, which was of course then the new Aquarium, and here was this large, dark shape in his chair, or another chair. And he realized, of course, it was Prince Tungi. He was glad to see him. Seems that he was on a round-the-world trip and was in Los Angeles and said, “Well, I’ll just take the bus down to San Diego-La Jolla and see my friends there.” He hadn’t let anybody know, he just came down on his own. Of course we wanted to entertain him, and Helen Raitt, who really knew him better, of course, because she had been there, arranged a party at her house, and we persuaded him to spend the night here. Roger said, “I’d be glad to loan you a shirt.” Tungi laughed and he said, “I don’t think your shirt would do me much good.” He has a size 18 or 20 or something collar! But he had no baggage, of course, except this pair of swim fins that had been given him, the biggest pair they could find.

And as luck would have it, when we were taking him to the train the next morning, we had forgotten to take a copy of the [San Diego] Union that had an interview with him and a picture. We meant to give it to him and forgot. So we were going to get it at the Del Mar train station. But that didn’t work out, because [this was] the only time I had ever seen the immigration people on the mesa between La Jolla and Del Mar. I had never ever seen them there before. They took one look at this dark figure in our car and motioned me over. Roger got out, his tall 6 feet 4 inches, and said, “I am Dr. Revelle, director of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, and this is Prince Tungi of Tonga.” And you could see the official thinking, “Yeah, and I’m the Queen of Sheba.” But he said, “Well I’m sorry, sir, I’ll believe you, but I

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105 Crown Prince Tungi (Siaosi Taufa'ahau Tupouli, 1918 - ), who later became King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV of Tonga.
have to have some identification.” It turns out that royalty doesn’t carry identification. [Prince Tungi] had nothing. He said, “My passport is at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles.” He had nothing at all. And finally, before we got into really serious trouble, he did find that he had a bill from the Biltmore that said “P. Tungi,” and that was sufficient, fortunately. But he was admonished not to do this again. They said, “While you are in our country, you really should carry your passport.” And he said, with great princely dignity, “I am leaving your country this afternoon.” Now I don’t think he knew exactly what the effrontery was, but he did know that he was not being treated too well or too royally.

Morgan: About the same time, in 1957, Roger was elected to the National Academy of Sciences. Do you recall any reaction on his part? Did you go to any meetings with him?

Eckis: Yes, I went to quite a few. The reason I chuckled is that at my very first meeting, because I had come from so far, I had been asked if I would pour coffee at the reception after the meeting. And as I was going through the great central hall something seemed wrong and my petticoat was falling off. It was in the days when we had a kind of buckram, not really buckram but you know those sort of stiff petticoats, and I had actually stopped and sewn it that morning instead of pinning it. But the stitch in time had not prevented it, so there was nothing I could do but just step out of it and go on without. And I asked Roger to put it in the coat room. But word got around and people would come up to me as I poured coffee and say, “I understand you have to stay here, that you can’t get up.” So I remember that episode very clearly.

We got in the habit of always going to the spring meeting where they’d do great things for the ladies. They have a very, very good and varied program for the wives or what are they called now, associates? When they’re not spouses what are they called? “Significant others” or something. But in those days I guess they were usually spouses. There was always a lunch and some kind of a little field trip, and they were always very interesting and lovely things. It all started on Sunday afternoon with a garden party and then a concert, an excellent concert, maybe chamber music or something, in the auditorium. Then the men would be having their meetings, and it would culminate with—originally it was a big dinner and speeches. And finally one wonderful president decided they had enough talking, it should be a dance. And from then on as far as I know it’s always been a dance after the dinner. That’s always very nice.

Morgan: Is it always in Washington?

Eckis: Yes. Because that’s where the home of the National Academy is. They do have some western meetings now. I think they have a center on the Irvine campus. I’ve never been to any of those meetings. I’m not sure Roger ever did. But he was very
active and on many committees of the Academy, and we had many close friends there.

Morgan: Speaking of travels and meetings, the first Pugwash\textsuperscript{106} meeting was also in 1957. I wondered if you had attended some of those meetings.

Eckis: I went to some of them, Judith, but I don’t think the first one. I remember one that was actually in Pugwash, and it was interesting to go there where it had been founded. I think it was in the home of the man who started it. Then I remember going to one in Varna, Bulgaria. The only time I was behind the Iron Curtain was that one. And I think maybe there was one in London. I’m not sure. But I really enjoyed going to those. I thought it was a wonderful organization, non-governmental scientists getting together and trying to see if they couldn’t solve some of the world’s problems, such as trying to keep peace.

Morgan: Did you sit in on sessions?

Eckis: Some.

Morgan: Was there a meeting in Italy that you attended?

Eckis: If there was one in Italy, I feel sure I would have gone to it, because I love going to Italy.

Morgan: What about India? Wasn’t there a Pugwash in India, maybe in the 1960s?

Eckis: If there was, I didn’t go to that one. I went to India with [Roger] three times, and the first two were when he was on the Commission to study Indian education, and the next one was when he was lecturing at Ahmedabad for two or three weeks. So he may very well have gone to one.

Morgan: I read that Roger went to his first Pugwash at the invitation of Leo Szilard,\textsuperscript{107} and I wondered if you had known Dr. Szilard well.

Eckis: Oh yes, and his wife.

Morgan: And what were your impressions when you met them?

\textsuperscript{106} The Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs are international meetings of scholars and public figures working towards reducing the danger of armed conflict and to seeking solutions to global security threats. The first meeting was held in 1957 in Pugwash, Nova Scotia, Canada.

\textsuperscript{107} Leó Szilárd (1898-1964), physicist and biologist. He was married to physician Gertrude Weiss Szilárd.
Eckis: Well, he was interesting. He didn’t want to live in an apartment or a house because he wanted to see more people, and so they lived in the DuPont Hotel [in Washington, D.C.], and he spent a lot of his time in the lobby. It was sort of his living room. He just expected to have people come and see him there. And of course eventually they did move out to La Jolla. They lived at Del Charro [Hotel], and he died out here. They never had children, and I guess neither of them drove. But they always got places.

Morgan: Did they ever buy a house?

Eckis: I don’t think so. I think they just rented at Del Charro. Maybe Trudy did move to a house in the Shores. I remember going there after her memorial service. She may have bought a house. But they were both very, very lively people, and hard to keep up with. Trudy was a great photographer, and I remember taking her to one of the famous Washington botanical gardens, to Dumbarton Oaks, because she really loved to take pictures and was very good at it.

Morgan: When Roger turned fifty, back here in La Jolla, there was a surprise party, I gather.

Eckis: Yes, there was indeed.

Morgan: Tell me about that event.

Eckis: Well, he was a little bit upset that apparently all we were doing to celebrate this was to have dinner up at SEA with his daughter and son-in-law and the children. So he fortified himself with a couple of martinis before we left, and then his son-in-law had made martinis, knowing that’s what Roger liked. So he had had quite a few. And he was a little annoyed at his daughter, who seemed to be kind of rushing through dinner. I mean, “If we’re going to be there, we might as well relax and have dinner,” but of course she knew what was going to happen and it was important to get him fed. And all of a sudden the doorbell rang and she went to the door and said, “Daddy, it’s someone who wants to see you.” And these people came in and put a laurel wreath on his head and put him in a palanquin—is that the word? The thing that they carry. Anyway, there he was, and he was handed a bottle. And carried in great style along Ellentown Road to the Knauss’s108 house. They had gotten a calliope, so there was the music of a calliope, and Roger being carried and everybody going along. The instructions for this party had been that no gifts were to be given except homemade. So there were some fascinating and original gifts, really, including one that really wasn’t homemade. It was a great big picture of Hirohito. But I guess they’d framed it.

Morgan: Who was that from, do you remember?

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Eckis: I don’t remember, actually. But Roger managed to stand on the hearth at the Knauss’s. I’ve been there many times since, and the hearth is about that high, and how he didn’t fall off I’ll never know, because he was sort of teetering. [He] read all these cards, and was very enthusiastic about everything he was given. I said something the next day about it was nice of the Knausses to have so much food. And he said, “Food? Was there food?” Oh, but of course the highlight was that fairly late in the evening—they had hoped that by that time maybe Harold and Frieda Urey\(^\text{109}\) might have left, and maybe the Hubbs and a few others—and they carried in a huge, big carton, just tremendous, out of which stepped “Texas Bobbi,” the stripper.

Morgan: “Texas Bobbi” Roberts?\(^\text{110}\)

Eckis: Yes, who just died recently. And Roger looked a bit aghast. I have one wonderful picture of him going, “Ah!” looking at her. And he was told to get in the box, and the box was carried off somewhere. She was reported to have said that she hadn’t known there was so much to learn about oceanography! Because I guess he just started giving a lecture in embarrassment or something.

Morgan: So Harold Urey and Frieda were in the more proper group that might have—

Eckis: I’m not sure if they had left or not. But one of the big problems had been that that very day there was a young man here from Caltech whom Roger was trying to get to come [to UCSD]. And I knew he was going to say that we should have him over for dinner. And so I had arranged ahead with Carl and Klari Eckart, so that when Roger did indeed say, “What do we do,” I said, “Oh well, he’s going to be with the Eckarts tonight. Klari and Carl are taking care of him.” I had called this man up before he ever came down here because I knew that Roger would want to show him SEA. And so this man must have been slightly astonished [when] an unknown woman calls up and says, “I’m Roger Revelle’s wife. Roger is probably going to want to show you SEA, but you mustn’t let him.” “Oh?” And I said, “No, because they’re getting ready for his birthday party. You can come to the birthday party, but they don’t want him up on the campus at all, because they are doing all this decorating and everything.” So he had to be fortified with excuses why he couldn’t do that, and Carl and Klari, as I said, had arranged also to keep him quite busy. So that device worked, and he didn’t let on that he knew that anything was going to happen. But the party was such that Bill—I don’t know why Bill hadn’t been at Annie’s for dinner, but he hadn’t been. Our son, fairly young. And so he was taking


a taxi up, and the driver wasn’t quite sure where this place was, and he called the
dispatcher and he said, “Well, get to such and such a corner, and then you will hear
it.” And they did. So Bill came, and I think he had maybe been brought home
before the Texas Bobbi act.

Morgan: I imagine he’d remember it.

Eckis: I’ll have to ask him.

Morgan: About that time there was the great performance, I believe here in your home, of the
one time of—

Eckis: Oh, of *Endless Holiday*. Yes. That John Knauss wrote.

Morgan: The same man who was host for the party.

Eckis: Yes, yes.

Morgan: Tell me about that evening.

Eckis: Well it was great fun, and Harold Urey starred in it. He had a part. Roger was
supposed to be Roger, but in as much as he couldn’t sing, they had Bill Van
Dorn, who has a nice voice, kind of crouched behind him doing the singing. And
Helen Raitt and I were among the wives. They had a Regents meeting at which they
were voting for various things on various campuses and deciding things by tossing
a dollar. It was not very respectful of the Regents, any of it, and it was a little
embarrassing. Later Kay Kerr had heard that there was this thing and said she’d
love to hear some of the songs, some of which Helen and I had written up at the
cabin one time. I managed not to show it to her. But the theme was that the ship had
gone off to sea and Roger had forgotten to get permission from the Regents. And so
because he hadn’t gotten permission to go, it couldn’t come back. And the wives
began to get highly suspicious because the men were having much too good a time.
They kept saying that something was wrong. And it turned out that mermaids had
accosted them and said they were spoiling underwater property rates, by dropping
all these things into the water, and they were going to suggest they could do better.
They said, “You come underwater with us, and you can do your oceanography that
way and not have to drop all this stuff in and pollute the neighborhood.” So they’re
all outfitted to go down with the mermaids, and they’re having a very good time,
and they don’t really want to come home. There are scenes on the ship and

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111 John A. Knauss, *Endless Holiday*, SIO Biographical Files (AC5), box 10, folder 311, Scripps Institution of
Oceanography Archives, UC San Diego Libraries.

112 William George van Dorn (1920- ), PhD in oceanography at UC Los Angeles/Scripps Institution of Oceanography,
1953.
underwater and scenes of the Regents meeting and all. And Harold at one point was ogling one of the young student wives who was a little bit terrified because he was getting into his role thoroughly. One picture of this girl looking kind of scared.

Morgan: And Harold Urey was [playing] a Regent.

Eckis: He was a Regent, yes. And it was fun. We’ve often said that it ought to be done again somewhere. But the trouble is that it wouldn’t mean anything now because most of the people are gone and the situation is so different than it was then when it was just a little cozy place. But it was a very clever thing. John [Knauss] wrote the script, and then he’d say there should be a song here, and so it was up to us to provide the songs.

Morgan: It’s nice that the script exists in the Archives.

Eckis: I think I have a copy upstairs.

Morgan: Also about that time, speaking of your home and the neighborhood, the mystery novelist Raymond Chandler113 moved to La Jolla and bought a home down here on Camino de la Costa.

Eckis: That was not close enough to our neighborhood. I never did know him.

Morgan: He was said to be a rather difficult person.

Eckis: Yes, that’s what I’ve read recently. No, I went to one of the parties at the library that was kind of fun when they dramatized one of his books, and that was sort of fun. But I never did meet him.

Morgan: What about Helen and Ted Geisel114 in the fifties? Did you see—?

Eckis: Yes, we did see quite a bit of them socially. I was very fond of both of them. I remember Ted one night when he was trying to find the bathroom off the hall down there. He opened the door into the office and he came in and said, “Ellen, sometime tell me about that room that starts out with a bicycle and goes on from there.” Because Bill didn’t want to leave his precious bike in the garage so he insisted on bringing it in the house and stabling it there. One of Ted’s things that I always remember was that you’d be hanging on his every word, if you were lucky enough to have him as a dinner partner. And then he’d suddenly say, “I’m boring you,

113 Raymond Thornton Chandler (1888-1959), writer.

114 Theodor Seuss Geisel (1904-1991, pseudonym Dr. Seuss) and Helen Palmer Geisel (1899-1967).
aren’t I?” You had to realize finally it was just a ploy, because obviously he was not
boring anybody.

Morgan: But he wanted encouragement.

Eckis: Oh yes. And after Helen had that dreadful illness and was making such a valiant
recovery, various ones of us who were very close friends would take turns taking
her walking in the sand, because the doctor had said that walking in the sand would
help strengthen the muscles in her legs. And she was just so wonderfully patient
and determined that she was not going to be a drag on Ted. I remember when I had
my broken leg and was at the old Scripps [Hospital] that she came in to see me one
time and she said, “The important thing is to get well. You’re going to get lots of
flowers and all sorts of things, but don’t feel you’ve got to write a note to every
single person. You’ll tell them thank you the next time you see them. The main
thing is for you to get well.” And she’d of course gone through this much more
serious thing herself, and it was so thoughtful of her to come and tell me that.

Morgan: She was very important to the care and feeding of Dr. Seuss.

Eckis: Oh, I should say she was. I think she could have had a career of her own if she
hadn’t have joined him and been so helpful to him.

Morgan: What do you remember of the early days of La Jolla Playhouse, by the way, in the
fifties? Did you go in there at the beginning?

Eckis: Oh, of course. Oh, yes. I don’t think we missed a play.

Morgan: Tell me some of your favorite stars.

Eckis: Well, I loved Dorothy McGuire,115 and I remember Sylvia, Sylvia Sydney116 [who]
seems to have dropped out of sight, but I remember her in one that I think was
called Kind Lady, where she has befriended someone and then the whole family
moves in on her and she’s a prisoner in her own house. She was excellent in that.
And one of the things that was kind of fun was the Musical Arts Society, run by
Sokoloff,117 also played at the La Jolla High School. So if it was not an orchestra—
in which case they had to strike the set and rebuild it again on Monday or the next
performance—if it was chamber music they would do it with the background up.
Arsenic and Old Lace was one that, during this wonderful chamber music
performance on Sunday, you could just see Teddy Roosevelt charging up the steps,

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115Dorothy Hackett McGuire (1916- ), actress and one of the founders of the La Jolla Playhouse.

116Sylvia Sydney (1910- ), actress.

117Nikolai Sokoloff (1886-1976), conductor and violinist.
and the dear little ladies poisoning the elderly men in the basement. Roger spent a
great deal of time on [La Jolla Playhouse]. I remember dear Marian Longstreth,\textsuperscript{118} who was so gentle and so sweet, telling me once, “Ellen, you’ve got to do
something about Roger. He’s getting so tired.” And I had to count to ten not to say,
“Marian, one reason is because you’re after him all the time.” Because she was. She
always had something where no one could help this situation except Roger.

Morgan: He was on the board?

Eckis: He was on the board, yes. But it was fun. It was exciting to have these people that
we had seen on the silver screen, to see them right there.

Morgan: And that was summer theater.

Eckis: That was just summer theater. Our youngest daughter, Carolyn, had a non-speaking
part in \textit{Miss Julie}. She was part of the crowd and even had a mention in the paper in
their review that this one had obviously stayed in character the whole time. She was
so stage struck. We had to go to it twice, of course.

Morgan: That’s lovely. How old was she then?

Eckis: Oh, she was still in maybe about ninth or tenth grade.

Morgan: In the early 1950s with the university concept taking form, Roger went to the La
Jolla Real Estate Brokers Association to challenge their property deed restriction,
which was against selling to any person whose blood was, “not entirely that of the
Caucasian race.”

Eckis: Is that how they worded it? They didn’t come out and say Jewish.

Morgan: No, I looked that up.

Eckis: That’s interesting. I didn’t know he’d gone to the agents about it.

Morgan: He told them to make up their minds whether they wanted a great university or an
anti-Semitic covenant, and said “You cannot have both.” And then I gather that a
lot of people, including you, were involved in phone calls and press attention or
speeches. Do you recall?

Eckis: I know, but I didn’t make any speeches. I was still speechless at that period. But
certainly I was backing Roger on it, and I felt very strongly on the subject.
Especially when we lost one absolutely charming couple, Aaron Novick\textsuperscript{119} and his

\textsuperscript{118}Marian Jones Longstreth (1906-1997), president of La Jolla-San Diego County Theatre and Arts Foundation.
\textsuperscript{119}Aaron Novick (1919- ) and Jane Graham Novick.
wife. Aaron Novick, a chemist. And they were staying with us, and they really wanted to come [to UCSD], but they had two little boys and Aaron said, “I could face this for myself and Jane could, but we can’t do it for our boys.” Apparently Goldberg had told them what it was like.

Morgan: Ed Goldberg.¹²⁰

Eckis: Ed Goldberg. And so they went to Oregon. So it was a loss in that case of a really wonderful person who would have come. I hadn’t really been aware of the prejudice. I guess I did know that the Beach Club was prejudiced, because for instance Wangenheim’s¹²¹ daughter had moved away and then come back, and they had been members, and then when they came back and wanted to rejoin the Beach Club they were not allowed to. And so at least one couple, the McKays, resigned because of it. And I guess that was about the first time that I really was aware of the fact that there was this prejudice. It hadn’t happened to hit me and—

Morgan: And they had been members before?

Eckis: They had been members before, but maybe they didn’t realize that Heyneman was a Jewish name.

Morgan: It seems that you and Roger and others perhaps, Ed Goldberg or Jeff Frautschy,¹²² I’m not sure, took this matter into your own hands and proceeded to purchase forty-two acres on the mesa?

Eckis: Ed Goldberg was not involved in that, in the purchasing part, I don’t think. In fact I don’t believe he had a lot there. I beg your pardon, I take it back. He moved to Del Mar, after he was divorced, and Betty continued to live there [at SEA]. Helen Raitt was one of the ones who was very active, and John, the late John Isaacs and [Carl] Hubbs. And they had worked and worked and worked to have a fair scheme so that everybody would be treated equally. So people were assigned, I think we drew numbers at random. We had numbers, maybe in the order in which we purchased lots. I don’t remember. Then we had a potluck supper down here the big night when it was going to be decided which lot would be for whom, and just at random drew numbers. It happened that Helen Raitt and Russ drew number one. And she was rather embarrassed, because she’d had a lot to do with all the work and everything, and thought it wasn’t fair. But we all said, “It’s luck. You’ve got it.” I think Walter Munk had the last one, and we were about the third from the end. But magically, almost everyone got either their first or second choice. Because the lots are just

¹²⁰Edward D. Goldberg (1921- ), professor of chemistry at Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

¹²¹Julius Wangenheim (1866-1942), San Diego businessman and the first UC Regent from southern California. His daughter is Alice Wangenheim Heyneman.

enough different. Some were more interested in a flat lot where they could have a
garden and a vegetable garden, some were more interested in the view and wanted a
canyon lot and a view of the ocean. Each person could have taken twenty-four
hours to decide, but I think almost everyone made a decision right away that night.
Meanwhile we had taken a number, a lot, for Annie and one for Mary through their
guardianships and one for us, and by the time this happened Annie was married and
had at least one child, and they were East for a wedding. So she called at one point
and I had the permission to draw for her, and she wanted to know how it was going
and who would be their neighbors before deciding. But we had no idea that one of
our children would ever be living there. Mary still owns a lot up there but hasn’t
ever built.

Morgan: And it was called SEA?

Eckis: Scripps Estates Associates. And it was interesting, Judith, that it had originally
been offered to anyone at Scripps who would want it by Uncle Ed Scripps. He had
said this was a wonderful place, and wouldn’t some of the professors like to live
there. Well, it was so far out from town that I think only two people took him up
on it. Or maybe only one built a little house up there. Meanwhile, Uncle Ed had
died and his attorney was kind of huffy about, “Well, you had a chance to have it
before and you didn’t take it.” Roger and Russ Raitt went up to Santa Monica or
wherever the man was who had bought it, and managed to persuade him to sell the
property back at the same price he paid for it, for this wonderful idea of a group of
scientists having homes. He wasn’t quite completely magnanimous because he kept
the ocean bluff part where Fargo built all those houses, you know, where there’s a
curve—what is it called? It was Biological Grade. La Jolla Shores [Drive]. It used
to go up, and then they changed the road and made that just kind of a cul-de-sac.
He kept that part, saying he was going to build for himself there. But he never did,
and he sold it. But it made a tremendous difference to these people to be able to
have their own houses.

Morgan: So all forty-two acres went to Scripps.

Eckis: No. There weren’t that many people, unfortunately, from Scripps. There were only
nineteen, originally, who signed up, and those weren’t all from Scripps. That’s why
we took several lots, to get more into it, more money into it. But at first it was kind
of funny, the local [real estate] agents were sort of laughing up their sleeves about
these scientists trying to be businessmen. And one year when I was secretary I had
the fun of reading a letter from Walter Rocky, one of the agents, asking if he could
be put on the waiting list.

Morgan: Nice justice.

Eckis: But it was very, very carefully protected that people weren’t going to buy lots and
profit, so they had this extremely complicated system that if the person wanted to
sell his or her lot it had first to be offered with a very mild profit to anyone who had had it on his or her list and hadn’t had a chance because it was already gone. I think it was called the “Isaacs-Hubbs Maximum Happiness System” or something. It had some marvelous name. So that for instance when Fargo, years back, wanted to buy Mary’s lot, and both Mary and I had answered the phone at the same time, and I answered for Mary and said, “Well she can’t sell it, Mr. Fargo. There’s this very complicated system for it.” And he said, “Oh, you don’t ever have to worry about things like that.” I thought, I’ve got his number, you know, that he’s not a very honest man.

Morgan: Jeff Frautschy, I gather, carried the day-to-day responsibility.

Eckis: He was marvelous, and did a lot of arranging about the engineering and all. We had tried to get advice from two different architects. One was Neutra, and he came down and was entertained, and talked to the group. He would have been happy to have given advice if he had been able to plan everything, including each person’s house. But he didn’t realize the scientists aren’t like that. And so we didn’t go on with him. But a wonderful man, Bill Wooster, from Berkeley campus, came down and he was just the opposite. He was very generous, he wanted to share any ideas that would help, and he had ideas about how the roads should be, and stressed that each house have a place for disorganized mess to be put. Because you’ve got to have someplace with a house where you can just dump things. So we got a lot of help from him.

Morgan: Let’s talk about the early days now of the campus itself. In an earlier tape, we were talking about 1956 when the Regents voted to build a full campus in San Diego because the population of California was growing so much. And President Sproul of Berkeley named Roger to head the planning committee. And you were saying that Roger said it took most of his attention from then on, even though he was still head of Scripps. You were recalling the famous meeting of the Regents in Davis, California in October of ’59. And Edwin Pauley and the sound barrier.

Eckis: Yes. That was a very exciting meeting.

Morgan: It was victorious, obviously, for you and Roger and the university. Do you remember who else was there from Scripps?

Eckis: Judy and Walter [Munk] were, I know. I think we were the only four that went up. But I always wished I could remember which Regent it was who finally made the motion that, “Those people down there have been waiting long enough and let’s get on with it, I move that we vote to have the campus.” I wish I remembered who he

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123 Richard Joseph Neutra (1892-1970), architect.
was, but I never did. I didn’t know terribly many of them. But I always admired him.

Morgan: It would be interesting to look it up in the minutes.

Eckis: Yes, it must be available. And of course we knew that Ed Pauley would vote against it, and Ed Carter, who always voted with Ed Pauley, voted against it, and I think everybody else voted for it.

Morgan: Do you remember how you celebrated, the four of you?

Eckis: No, I don’t. I think we must have done something.

Morgan: Do you remember if you came home or stayed in Davis? ##

## During this time of getting the land together for UCSD there was frustration and, I gather, some disagreement between Roger and Jonas Salk, who wanted the city to give him some land on Torrey Pines Mesa for his institute.

Eckis: Yes, that was a bit unpleasant, because I personally had driven [Salk] all around and shown him just exactly what property the city had promised Roger, so he knew.

Morgan: You took Dr. Salk around.

Eckis: Yes. He was staying with us, I think, one of the times that he was here. He knew very well that the part that he asked for had been promised to the university. But it was like saying “no” to Apple Pie and Motherhood to say “no” to Jonas Salk. Roger came home. Roger hadn’t wanted me to go to the meeting down at the city. I had a broken leg. And he had a feeling it was going to be a bit unpleasant, and it was. Because at one point the Mayor actually said, “You’re not in your classroom now. You’re in the Mayor’s Chambers, and don’t interrupt.” Actually, he had interrupted Roger. But Roger hushed up. When Jonas said this is what he’d like, they voted to give it to him.

Morgan: This was Mayor Charles Dail, I believe?

Eckis: I can’t remember who would have been mayor at that point, Judith.

Morgan: I’ll double-check.


Eckis: But I think that Jonas very definitely knew that he had done something a little shady, because he called up that afternoon to say goodbye. Mary was out in the patio with me and was amazed that I was keeping my cool. Because I had already heard from Roger what had happened. And I remember [Salk] saying, “Well, I hope what happened today isn’t going to spoil our friendship.” So he knew that it might. I guess the university has gotten along all right without having that right on to the ocean, but it would have been very nice to have had it.

Morgan: Your son Bill said, “Of my father’s five children, one was a university. It was always strange to have a university for a sibling.”

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: Was this “sibling,” the university, talked about around the dinner table a lot in those years?

Eckis: Well, no, most of the children were gone by that time, of course—married and parents, most of them. But Roger was so often introduced as the father of the university, that that’s what led Bill to make that comment.

Morgan: What about the recruiting of this dream faculty? You did entertain a lot?

Eckis: Oh, yes. In those days faculty wives did. Times have changed. They don’t do it anymore. Because usually the wives are off and working, too. Yes, I did a lot of entertaining, and other people did, too. There were lots of parties. We used to take people up to the Munks’ house, a typical faculty house, and we had parties here. And we used to call them “seduction parties,” but then after Brueckner fell in love with a wife we stopped using that term, because it broke up two families.

Morgan: Well, I was going to ask your impressions of Keith Brueckner when he came from the University of Pennsylvania. Anything else you want to add?

Eckis: Well, I did feel that he might have left his wife and little boys where they were instead of bringing them out here and then dumping them. I thought that was anything but gentlemanly. It didn’t endear any women to him, I don’t think.

Morgan: Who else was involved?

Eckis: Oh, the one he married, Ilsa, she’s Dutch and she was married to a Dutchman, and they had about four children, I think. And Keith had two boys. It was strange. There was a small real estate enterprise that Klari Eckart and Roger and I had that we called Academic Rentals. Because we realized that it was hard for people to come

127Keith Allan Brueckner (1924- ), professor of physics at UC San Diego.
out and then get settled quickly, and we didn’t want people to have to buy hastily. So we finally had three houses, including my “shrine,” as Caroline used to call it, on the campus of SEA and one somewhere near the Country Club off Pearl [Street], and one on Abalone that were just small, maybe two- or three-bedroom houses that we rented furnished for a very nominal rent. It was supposed to be for a year or two, to give incoming faculty an opportunity to size up the area and decide where they wanted to live and the proximity of the schools and all. But it turned out that Brueckner was one of the ones that rented one of these. Of course, we just didn’t have the heart to put his wife out, so she stayed in it quite a while, because we couldn’t bear to uproot her again. We finally parted with all of [the houses]. No, I still have the one at SEA. But that was one effort to try to make the transition a little easier. Because people would often be surprised to find that what they had sold their much larger house for in the East wasn’t going to buy much out here. It was a big blow.

Morgan: What about Harold Urey and Frieda? What were your first impressions of these two?

Eckis: Oh, I liked them right away. They were so wonderful. Roger had gone to Chicago and talked to them. I can’t think where they lived when they first came out, but we became friends very quickly, and they were one of the ones that went up to the cabin for New Year’s with us once. They were very pleased because their car was the only one that didn’t get stuck in the snow on the way in, and they were very excited. Harold was so sweet. The custom then was that a new faculty member would give a faculty lecture. Of course we didn’t have any place on campus, and so it was often in La Jolla High School. The night of Harold’s lecture, he very quickly realized that they had an overflow crowd. The firemen were turning people away. So Harold got to the podium and he said, “Why don’t all of you who can’t get in go off and have an ice cream and coffee or something and come back and I’ll do it again.” And so he did. He did the whole lecture a second time.

Morgan: That’s very special.

Eckis: Very special. Yes.

Morgan: Good community involvement from the start, really.

Eckis: Yes. He was very definitely an “absentminded professor.” Bill came home very amused one evening because he had gone up and asked him a question after the lecture. And said Harold looked at him and said, “I think I know you, don’t I?” And Bill said, “Well, yeah, Harold. You’ve been up to our cabin with us and been to the house for dinner.” Once, when they moved, the tale was that Frieda had posted one of the children at the gate, and he came along and said, “Tell me, little girl, can you tell me where the Ureys live?” And she said, “Right here, Daddy.”
Morgan: That’s lovely.

Eckis: Well, I think he was the most absentminded professor I’ve ever known. But he and Frieda were absolutely special and a great addition to the campus. Frieda became the first lady of the campus, and everybody just adored her. Each organization that she was in celebrated her birthday, and they had to try to think up something different. And it would be something happening at the Oceanids board meeting, always. One birthday the meeting was here, and the doorbell rang and in came a young man in a trench coat and he was a flasher. Of course he had on pants. But Frieda got a kick out of it. And another time one of the group had given her a “Being Happy is Being 80 Years Old” [t-shirt] at a party up at the chancellor’s. The night that she’d gotten that t-shirt, she was at the front of the room being introduced and everything at this party, and she had on a very pretty skirt and jeweled sweater. And she had a kind of a sly smile, and she was unbuttoning, and she had this t-shirt underneath. And then one birthday someone remembered that she had said that she had always wanted to go up in a balloon, so a balloon trip was arranged for her. She had a balloon trip from the Del Mar area. She was a very unusual lady and a wonderful person.

Morgan: What about David Bonner, \(^\text{128}\) [the geneticist], who left Yale and came here in 1960?

Eckis: Yes. I didn’t know them very well. I had met them both, though, when he was at Yale. When Roger had a meeting there once, I had gone and called on her. I think her name was Jane, but I may be making that up. She was what you might call a little eccentric. I remember that she was sitting at the end of the driveway so that I would be sure and spot her, and she had a feather in her hair, sticking straight up. Just happened to want to wear a feather that day. I didn’t really see very much of them. I guess for one thing we moved to Cambridge. That’s probably one reason. And then he, of course, became ill and died, and I guess she went back. I don’t know if she went back to New Haven or where she went.

Morgan: What were your early impressions of Joseph and Maria Mayer?\(^\text{129}\)

Eckis: Oh, I liked them both very much. I was always intrigued with the fact that she’d gotten the phone call that she was getting the Nobel Laureate Prize at about two o’clock in the morning. We said, “Well, what did you do, Maria?” [She] said, “Well, of course we had champagne. Then about five o’clock I called our hairdresser and said ‘I think I’m going to be having my picture taken today. Can

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128David Mahlon Bonner (1916-1964), professor of biology at UC San Diego. He was married to Miriam Thatcher Bonner.

you do my hair?’’ And I just love that, to think that this famous, famous woman scientist was a woman who wanted to be sure her hair looked all right. And it was very sad when she became ill. I don’t know what she had that she became less and less with it, whether it was Alzheimer’s or—she did drink quite a bit—but I don’t think I ever knew just what it was. But it got so that you could hardly—. Well, she had a stroke. I guess I’d forgotten that. She had a stroke and that affected her speech. But she became less and less intelligible.

Morgan: Did you entertain them here as part of the recruitment?

Eckis: Oh yes, they’ve been here fairly often. And of course Roger delighted in the fact that he was able to offer a professorship to both of them, because in Chicago they wouldn’t give her one. It was just to men. I’m sure that’s one reason they were glad to come out here, where she could be recognized, too.

Morgan: And she won the [Nobel] Prize shortly after arriving.

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: Nice for UCSD. What about Hugh Bradner and Marge?130 When did you become friends with them?

Eckis: Well, they originally came down from Berkeley and spent summers here. And I’m not sure just when that started, but it seems to me I’ve known them forever. And we visited them sometimes in Berkeley. Then they finally moved down. And I guess they made the move down here about the same time that we moved East. Whether it was when we moved to Washington for the year and a half or to Cambridge, I forget. But we have remained very close friends. And I’m very fond of their daughter Bari, about Bill’s age.

Morgan: I noticed that in 1960 the campus was still called UCL131 in headlines.

Eckis: Yes, yes. And we used to have a little saying, “Ucl Jay, Ucl Jay, All The Way,” and there was letterhead for it and everything. But apparently the citizens of San Diego were the reason it had to be changed, because they said that it was part of San Diego and it had to have San Diego in the name. Which is really confusing. I have heard of people driving into San Diego and saying, “Where is the University of California?” “Well, go back this way.” And with USD132 and SDSU133 and UCSD, it is confusing.

130 Hugh Bradner (1915- ), physicist, and Marjorie Hall Bradner. Their daughter is Barbara (Bari) Bradner Cornet.

131 University of California, La Jolla

132 University of San Diego
Morgan: University of California, La Jolla, would have been more distinctive.

Eckis: Yes, but that was apparently elitist.

Morgan: In 1960, in March also, Eleanor Roosevelt\textsuperscript{134} came to San Diego.

Eckis: Yes. That was a very big event.

Morgan: Tell me about that. She was in your home? Is that right?

Eckis: She was delivered here when she arrived in the area. I don’t know if someone drove her down or how she got here, but she had a press conference out in the patio. The main thing I remember about that was the way she snapped at the reporter who asked her something about her age and whether it was holding her back or something. That was just such a non-consequential, inconsequential question. Let’s get on to things. She didn’t stay here. She was staying with the—is it Salaman or Solomon?

Morgan: [Colonel] Irving Salomon,\textsuperscript{135} yes.

Eckis: I think they were Republicans. But for some reason they were very close friends. And we had a dinner. Remember the Sky Room of the El Cortez [Hotel]? It was the place to go, and we had a dinner there. And it happened that [Mrs. Roosevelt] had agreed to speak at Charter Day, and she had also agreed to speak at San Diego State, and so we had to merge the two events. That’s why it was held at Russ Auditorium, the only auditorium in the area. She gave a very good speech, but she was not used to using a mike, and you know she had a rather high voice, and it was sort of agony to hear her speak. You thought, oh, if she just would not put the mike right up to her face it would be better. But Roger felt that in walking in the procession, walking in through the crowd, that you could feel surges of affection for her. She was just such a warm individual and he said it was palpable, the reaction of the crowd. My mother-in-law, or stepmother-in-law,\textsuperscript{136} was here and she got to meet her, and Carolyn was still at home, and they were both very, very excited to have met her. She was wonderful.

\textsuperscript{133}San Diego State University

\textsuperscript{134}Anna Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962), First Lady from 1933-1945.

\textsuperscript{135}Colonel Irving Salomon (1897-1979), US delegate to the United Nations.

\textsuperscript{136}Mildred Yockey Keene Revelle (1884-1975).
Morgan: Did you meet JFK, John Kennedy,\textsuperscript{137} when Roger was working for Stewart Udall?\textsuperscript{138}

Eckis: No. The only time I actually heard him speak, you know, live, was at a National Academy meeting in Washington. His science advisor, Jerry Wiesner,\textsuperscript{139} had asked him if he would speak to the Academy. Apparently he had said, “Well, I don’t know what to talk to a bunch of scientists about,” and Jerry said, “Well, will you do it if I write the speech?” He said, “Well, all right.” Jerry and Roger had written it together. And it was really funny to watch, because as he was giving it you’d see there’s Jerry beaming, and then Roger beaming, you’d know when he’d get to parts that they’d written. And then actually he finished up completely on his own. They felt that was the best part of the speech. He was dynamic. It was at Constitution Hall. I’m pretty sure that’s where it was.

Morgan: As long as we’re speaking of Presidents, did you meet LBJ?\textsuperscript{140}

Eckis: Yes, briefly. One of the functions that the National Academy of Sciences had for the wives was that every now and then they’d arrange to have tea at the White House. And so Lady Bird Johnson had a tea, and LBJ just happened along, and so he had a chance to put a few plugs for things he wanted. Actually, we had met them before because he was Charter Day Speaker [at UCSD], I guess, when he was vice president, and we’d gone up for that event. And I had to buy a hat, because it was announced that “hats will be worn.” They had the heads of the various campuses—instead of having a long receiving line, they had hosts here and there, and people would come up. When I went to the White House for the tea I felt like saying, “Same hat I had to buy for you,” because I don’t like hats. I never have. But I had to buy one. I found [Lady Bird Johnson] just a very warm and wonderful person. I don’t know if I ever got around to writing her and thanking her for what she did to Washington, because she certainly did beautify it with all her tulips. I love to go there in spring and see it.

Morgan: Did you meet President Nixon and Mrs. Nixon?\textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{137}John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917-1963), US President 1961-1963.


\textsuperscript{139}Jerome Bert Wiesner (1915-1994), science advisor to President John F. Kennedy, 1961-1963.

\textsuperscript{140}Lyndon Baines Johnson (1908-1973), US President 1963-1969. He was married to Claudia (Lady Bird) Alta Taylor Johnson (1912- ).

Eckis: I met Nixon when he was running for Congressman in California, when Helen Gahagan Douglas was the—? He was speaking at the Woman’s Club. I wasn’t a member, but Mother was, and she wanted me to go.

Morgan: Here in La Jolla.

Eckis: Here in La Jolla. The Woman’s Club. He was quite late, and then when he appeared he quoted that song of the day, “If I’d have known you were coming I’d have baked a cake,” which I thought was sort of crummy. The cake was, too. I was not impressed with him. But we met the Eisenhowers because we were invited to dinner [at the White House]. We had no idea why, but Eileen Jackson solved it. She delved into the matter and found out that someone had told Ike that he should do something about the military and scientists. And so this letter from the White House came one time, and I was opening the mail and chatting with a house guest, and I thought, “How did I get on that mailing list?” Because there was a store in San Francisco called The White House. And I almost threw it away. And didn’t. Then opened it, and discovered what it was. Roger was in the clinic because his doctors knew that they’d never get him on time to a lot of appointments unless they had him [stay] there. So I took this up, and I said, “Can you imagine why we’d be invited to the White House?” And he said, “No, but I guess if we are, we should go.” And so we accepted and went.

Morgan: The Eisenhowers—that was the first trip to the White House that you made?

Eckis: Yes, yes. And we met, oh dear, what’s her name? That wonderful woman singer who did the Wagnerian songs, made parodies of—what was her name? She had her own Gilbert and Sullivan that she did. If you haven’t heard her, I’ll have to find my record and loan it to you, because she’s hilarious. And we had gotten talking to her in the receiving line because she seemed to be all alone, and then discovered that she was the entertainment. She’s a very, very witty person. She puts on her own Wagner. She tells you the plot, and at intervals will say, “I’m not making this up. This is the way it really is. He doesn’t know she’s his mother.”

Morgan: Make a note of that name when you think of it.

Eckis: Anna Russell. She’s probably no longer in existence, but she was a very clever person.

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142 Helen Gahagan Douglas (1900-1980), actress and politician.


144 Eileen Jackson was society columnist for the *San Diego Union Tribune*.

145 Anna Russell (1911- ), *Anna Russell Sings! Again?* (Columbia Masterworks, 1953).
Morgan: Did you meet President Truman or Mrs. Truman?\textsuperscript{146}

Eckis: No. And I didn’t meet Bush,\textsuperscript{147} even though we went [to the White House], when Roger got the National Medal.\textsuperscript{148} When Walter [Munk] got it, they got punch and cookies and met the President and his wife, but when Roger got it, we didn’t. We were allowed half an hour to explore around and then whisked out. And I thought it was odd really that they didn’t let the families meet the President and his wife.

Morgan: So you didn’t meet Mrs. Bush either.

Eckis: [No]. I was impressed with her, because one of the recipients was in a wheelchair and so the President had gone down, of course, to give the medal to him, and then she went down from the stage, too, to congratulate him. Whether it was scheduled or just a natural warm thing to do, I don’t know, but she did it in any case.

Morgan: So you met him at that point?

Eckis: No. I never did meet him. Each recipient was just called on and introduced, given the medal and then returned to their seat. And then the platform party walked off, and as I say, it was made very clear that in about half an hour to three quarters of an hour another group was coming in, and we’d better get out. So that was too bad.

Morgan: Did you meet President Reagan\textsuperscript{149} or Jimmy Carter?\textsuperscript{150} Gerald Ford?\textsuperscript{151}

Eckis: No. And I always thought Gerald Ford looked like Rollin, my present husband. And so I thought he must be a nice man, he looks like Rollin.

Morgan: In February of 1961 came the news from [UC President] Clark Kerr that Roger would not, in fact, after all this, be named UCSD’s first chancellor. Do you recall how you learned that news?

\textsuperscript{146}Harry S. Truman (1884-1972), US President 1945-1953, and Elizabeth (Bess) Virginia Wallace Truman (1885-1982).


\textsuperscript{148}Roger Revelle received the National Medal of Science in 1990.


Eckis: I definitely do, Judith. I was coming down the stairs in the afternoon and saw Clark’s wife, Dorothy. I mean—Dorothy was the Regent’s wife with her. I’m having trouble with names.

Morgan: I think you said Kay Kerr.

Eckis: Kay. I saw Kay and Dorothy coming in. So I came down and greeted them, and she sent Dorothy out to the car for something and sat down beside me and said, “I don’t know if you know why Clark’s in town today.” And I said, “No.” She said, “Well, I know you’ll be glad to know that Herb York has agreed to be chancellor.” That’s exactly what happened. And I didn’t know if I turned white or red. I felt my face going all sort of prickly. And I managed to say, “Does he have a family?” and “Where is he from?” and she told me. And then she said, “I hope when he comes you’ll show him around, and things.” And I said, “Yes, of course.” And then she said, “I understand you’re going to drive me to the airport.” [I said,] “Fine.” And then we sort of sat there and made conversation, and Dorothy came back in, and then eventually the car drove up. They had arranged for someone else to take them. And Roger got out of the car. And the only thing was that then he didn’t have to tell me himself. So as soon as they drove off, I said, “I know.”

I told Ida Sproul one time when we were in Berkeley and we were out walking, and she sort of asked me how it had happened. And I told her. She just stopped dead in her trail and asked me to repeat it. [She] said, “I just can’t believe it. If I had had some good news that I could tell a faculty wife, I would, but I can’t imagine doing that and giving you that blow.” And I said, “Well, the only thing I could think of was that she may have thought it was that I didn’t want him to be chancellor, because I had said in one letter that I was a little concerned about his being three things.” He was planning the new campus, and he was still director, and something else. And he was head of the nonexistent—what was it?—it was going to be a graduate school that never really existed. So she may have thought, well I’ll be so glad to know that he’s not going to have this job.

Morgan: And Clark Kerr had told Roger at the same time?

Eckis: He’d gone out to the office and told Roger.

Morgan: Do you know how he said it? Did Roger tell you?

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153 The School of Science and Engineering.
Eckis: I don’t recall. That was the first time around. I think the Regents were really kind of upset when they found that Roger was going to be going to Harvard, that they were losing him. We went first to Washington, where Roger was science advisor to Udall, and then we came back. York had resigned and they were talking about Galbraith. Clark called Roger in and talked to him when we were living in Berkeley, asked him how he would feel about being chancellor with someone like John Galbraith as an associate chancellor. And Roger said, “Well that would be fine.” Meanwhile the offer had come to head up this new thing at Harvard, and we hadn’t heard a thing. We had gone over to the hospital to see McLaughlin, Don McLaughlin, who was a very good friend and a Regent, to ask him what he thought. He was just having tests in a hospital. And he said, “Well, if you have a chance to go to Harvard, I can’t see why you’d even hesitate.” Roger looked at him and said, “Don, would you want to put your baby up for adoption?” And Don said, “Well, if Clark really wholeheartedly wanted you, he could push it through. But you know that Pauley is completely, implacably, objecting.” This is all on that tape that was in Roger Revelle, Statesman. And I was a little worried about having that on tape.

So we’d had that advice, that he ought to go to Harvard. And then the day came that Roger had to make up his mind. He had to say. He called Kay and tried to reach Clark on a Saturday morning, and she said, “He’s out in the garden.” And he said, “Well, Kay, it’s really quite important. Would you ask Clark to call me?” He never called. Never called him back. I called Roger at the office about four o’clock and I said, “Have you heard anything yet?” and he said, “No.” I said, “Go ahead and call Jack.” Obviously it was the thing to do.

Morgan: That was at Harvard.

Eckis: Yes. So I don’t know if eventually he ever would have [been chancellor] or not. But I really thought it was kind of cruel to sort of dangle it a second time in front of him.

Morgan: I gather that the second time was harder than the first.

Eckis: I think the impact was pretty bad, pretty hard. I think it was very wise that we made the decision to make the move and go away. Roger later admitted that he wouldn’t have been a good chancellor. He knew he had his limitations, especially as an


administrator. And he had this whole new life that opened up by going to Harvard, and all his international work that he did that probably wouldn’t have happened.

Morgan: The first time, in February of ’61 when Roger was not named, and when the Kerrs left [La Jolla], was he mainly angry or depressed or shocked?

Eckis: I think shocked. There was one meeting at Riverside that had a lot to do with this, too, and I can’t recall. It obviously must have been before that day. I didn’t go to the meeting, but I was in Riverside with him, and I think at that point there was still the possibility, but he didn’t feel very hopeful.

But I don’t know if you knew that he was under great pressure at the time, right after he didn’t get it in ’61, before we went to Washington. He was under great pressure to become chancellor of Washington University in St. Louis. And he had been invited there to help them, to be on a search committee for a new chancellor. He had recommended Elliot, Tom Elliot¹⁵⁸ maybe, who was a professor already there, and Roger was very impressed with him. He said, “You’ve got a fine guy right here.” But Roger came home quite interested in the place, with lots of pictures of it and everything—beautiful campus—and then he finally decided that no, he was going to take this offer in Washington instead. Then they came back again [to La Jolla] about four days before our daughter’s wedding, and I fed them dinner. Four charming men. Mr. May¹⁵⁹ of the May Company was one of the Regents. I don’t remember who the others were, but they were all very nice. And telling me how lovely life was there, and showing me pictures of the house and everything. And wanting Roger to reconsider—even if he wouldn’t do it then, as he had already agreed to go to Washington—if he would agree to do it in a year. He was supposed to be in Washington only one year. But let them announce it.

So there we were, having to make the decision all over again. The first decision had been made right after Carolyn’s graduation. He had called them up and said no; he had called and said he wouldn’t. This was just before her wedding. And so we had to wrestle with this whole problem all over again. And I didn’t normally try to influence him, but this was one time when I did, because I felt that he was really in shock, and it was not a time to make a very drastic change like that and take on another big, big project. Well, I guess that was the first time he refused it, that I had persuaded him not to. But then we did decide not to go the second time. And I must admit I didn’t want to go to St. Louis. One side of the country or the other, but not the middle.


¹⁵⁹Morton D. May (1914-1983), Washington University board of trustees and CEO of May Department Stores Company.
Morgan: About the same time of the news about not becoming chancellor, about the time that was breaking, the media in San Diego was involved on all sides. That same month, I read, there was a debate with Jim Archer\textsuperscript{160} over the nature of this future university and whether or not it would be political.

Eckis: The episode that I remember was when Roger had been asked to speak. They were trying to get backing of local alums of University of California and they had a meeting at Sumner Auditorium. Roger had been asked to address the group, and he gave a very, very good talk, making it very clear that he knew there was worry whether there would be Jewish people and that there would be this and that, and he said, “If you want a campus of any caliber, there has to be a variety. The students have to be exposed to a wide variety of experiences and professors of various kinds.” Then the chairman thanked him and said, “I know that Dr. Revelle and Mrs. Revelle have another engagement and have to leave.” So we were essentially told to leave. So we did. And while he was talking, Jim Archer and Barbara had walked in right in front of me and sat down. So the story came out in the paper the next day that Jim Archer had saved the campus from this radical communist Revelle, and the story that Roger had walked out while [Archer] was talking.\textsuperscript{161} It was so absolutely untrue. And Bill came running up with a paper and said, “What have you done now, Dad? And we told him what had really happened. And then Walter Munk called. This was a named article, and Walter happened to know the young man who wrote it, because he had married an Austrian girl who was working for them and they had given them the wedding. So he got on the phone immediately and called him. And this young man said, “Well, it made a better story that way.”

Morgan: The reporter said this?

Eckis: Yes! And I wanted to try to have a clarification, but Roger said, “Oh well, nobody will remember it.” But of course it was brought up years later, and it did have an effect.

Morgan: And that was in the San Diego Union.

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: The morning paper.

Eckis: Yes.

\textsuperscript{160}James Whitehead Archer (1908–), president of UC Alumni Association 1960-1962.

Morgan:   Roger was very loyal. He [was] supported, I know, by the *El Cajon Valley News* and Sy Casady.

Eckis:   Yes.

Morgan:   And also *San Diego Magazine*.

Eckis:   Yes. Mary Hall was a staunch supporter and wrote maybe too much about him—a couple of articles in *San Diego Magazine* that she may have pushed a little too hard—but she was very sincere and she really felt he was the one who should be [chancellor].

Morgan:   You said she lived in your little home, right?

Eckis:   Yes, she did. It sits up there at SEA. She loved it.

Morgan:   Ellentown Road.

Eckis:   A very nice house there.

Morgan:   Did you see her socially, or Ed Self?

Eckis:   Yes, we did. We saw her quite a bit.

Morgan:   And the Selfs? Ed and Gloria Self?\(^{162}\)

Eckis:   We didn’t know them anywhere near as well as we knew Mary. We’d been at her house only, oh, I think a night or two before she took her life. And the Bradners were there, and she took Marge and me up and showed us the dress she was going to wear. She was just so happy.

Morgan:   Oh, she was about to be married.

Eckis:   Yes.

Morgan:   To Dr. Mazzanti?\(^{163}\)

Eckis:   Yes. And it was just so awful.

\(^{162}\)Ed Self and Gloria Winke Self founded *San Diego Magazine* in 1948.

\(^{163}\)Vincent Mazzanti (1917- ).
Morgan: One thing that Roger did after this episode of not getting the chancellorship was take off with Walter Munk to go to Baja California for the Mohole Project.

Eckis: Oh yes. On the CUSS.

Morgan: On the drilling barge CUSS I.

Eckis: Yes, yes.

Morgan: Your teenaged son Bill went along, I believe.

Eckis: Yes. We were talking about that Saturday. My nephew was here for lunch, and we were telling him about it. And I pointed out that in the picture on the cover of Life I recognized my son’s elbow. I mean, I knew he was there, and his face didn’t show, but there was one extra elbow, and I knew it had to be Bill’s.

Morgan: What did he tell you about that when he came home?

Eckis: Well it was quite fun, because through that trip we got acquainted with John Steinbeck. And somewhere I have a charming picture of him in his long johns. He didn’t have a bathing suit, so I said he could go in in his long johns, and he’s sitting on the edge of the pool. And they each had a hard hat, of course, with their name on it, and he and Roger traded hard hats. So as our grandsons were growing up and they would go to the wine cellar with Nonno to get the wine, they would say, “Well, this hat says John Steinbeck on it!” And he’d say, “Oh yes, we traded.” And these kids got a big kick out of that. It was fun.

Morgan: Do you still have it?

Eckis: Oh yes. I don’t need it to go down, because I’m short.

Morgan: Oh, that’s why it was—

Eckis: Yes, because really it was to protect Roger’s head so he wouldn’t bang his head [on the low ceiling].

Morgan: From the wine cellar.

Eckis: I think Bill sort of uses it as part of a ritual when he goes down.

Morgan: Was John Steinbeck here then, in your home?
Eckis: I can’t tell you whether he stayed with us or whether he stayed with Bill Bascom, who was a longtime friend. I’m not quite sure.

Morgan: He was covering the Mohole Project for *Life* magazine.\(^{165}\)

Eckis: Yes, yes. And then a wonderful photographer—Fritz Goro, I think it was—was the photographer for the trip. And I was thinking that they were there for several days, but Bill said no, it was just fairly brief.

Morgan: So the long john swimming episode—

Eckis: Was in our pool. So it may be that he was staying with us. Many people have.

Morgan: After turning down the Washington University in St. Louis offer and going to Washington, [D.C.], Roger took off for Pakistan.

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: Pretty suddenly.

Eckis: So it was the usual thing, that I found us a home in Washington before he had seen it. Yes, that was because Senator Kennedy\(^{166}\) had been asked by the head of Pakistan for some military help, and he didn’t want to give it. And so Jerry Wiesner, whom we knew very well and was a charming man and science advisor to the President, had suggested that instead maybe they could give him some help with their problems with agriculture and said, “Why don’t you get this man Revelle to do it? Because he’s an oceanographer, he knows about salt water.” Of course he didn’t know a thing about agriculture, as he would be the first to admit. But Roger was very good at being able to find the people who did know. And so he had gathered a group of people, the late John Isaacs and several people from Harvard. And I have a feeling that Rollin, my present husband, having been a water geologist, I think he was in the group. I don’t think he went to Pakistan, but I think he was on the committee. And [Roger] had that commitment to do it, so he had to do that before he could start the job in Washington. And then of course he made several more trips back and eventually got the Star of Imtiaz Award\(^{167}\) for that, for his work there.

\(^{164}\)Willard Newell Bascom (1916–), oceanographer.


\(^{166}\)John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917-1963); served on US Senate 1953-1960; US President 1961-1963.

\(^{167}\)Order of the Sitara-I-Imtiaz (Star of Excellence), medal awarded by Pakistan for conspicuous scientific contributions. It was awarded to Roger Revelle in 1964.
Morgan: How do you spell that? Or say it again and I’ll look it up.

Eckis: I-m-t-i-a-z, I think it is. I could go up in the drawer and get you the medal and show it to you, maybe. I’m not positive I know where it is. But it was quite impressive that he received that. I never went with him to Pakistan. I went to Pakistan when our daughter was living there, but not [with Roger].

Morgan: Which daughter was that?
Eckis: Carolyn. She and Gary168 lived there for about three years. He was part of Harvard’s Development Advisory Service, and they lived in Lahore for about three years.

Morgan: What do you remember of that trip?
Eckis: Well, poverty, and the contrast. I guess maybe not quite as much in Pakistan as in India, actually. I was there only about ten days. But the variety of [transportation] that would go by her door was fascinating. Everything from rickshaws to bicycles, cars, camels, everything. And of course there was a tremendous amount of household help. Carolyn had thought she would be getting involved with working with women, getting acquainted and maybe teaching. She finally did do some teaching. But she found that a great deal of her time was spent in organizing, because she had something like twelve household staff, and she tried to see if she couldn’t narrow it down. So she asked the bearer if maybe they couldn’t merge a few jobs, and he said, “Madam, I do not sweep.” The bearer served, and he was the general factotum. He did the marketing, but he did not sweep. So there was no way of getting rid of any of them. And the ayah took care of the little boy. Each one had his own job to do. She was very distressed at the way many of the other people, one Dutch couple in particular, treated the lower class Pakistani as if they weren’t human. For instance they found out that Gary had gotten their watchman an overcoat. It was cold. And she said, “Oh, they don’t feel the cold. They don’t need it. That was just throwing your money away. He’ll probably just sell it.” But Carolyn and Gary didn’t feel that way. They felt they were people.

Morgan: In 1963, Roger came back to Scripps as director. He had been on leave of absence during the first Washington—

Eckis: Yes, yes.

Morgan: And so when he came back, Herb York was chancellor but not happy with the job.

168Gary Clyde Hufbauer
Eckis: Yes. [York] had taken the job in the first place, Judith, because he had had a heart attack, and so it was one man’s health recovery was another man’s sorrow. But then I think his heart flared up again and they felt it was too much. And he did not have academic experience. He hadn’t been an administrator. He had less experience than Roger had, in a way. And so John Galbraith was the next one chosen.

Morgan: Did you see Herb and Sybil socially?

Eckis: Yes, we used to see them. I didn’t feel I should hold it against them. I don’t think they had any idea of the background of this. I can’t say we’ve ever been really very close friends, [because] we haven’t seen each other except official things, but we like each other. I mean, I like them.

Morgan: In September of ’64 you went to Harvard, and Roger was head of this new Center for Population Studies.

Eckis: Studies, yes. I’m glad you know it’s studies. They used to say if there was population control, why didn’t we control our own family? And I said, “We were part of the experiment.”

Morgan: And again Roger was not there when you moved to Cambridge, I gather.

Eckis: Well, at least that time he had seen the house before we bought it. I was so surprised to find that Roger would worry about what people think. But this house was not a typical Eastern house. It was built by an Italian portrait painter, and it had a flat roof. It would have looked much better in California or in Italy, but Mary and I had seen it and we loved it and we knew it was just perfect for us. But [Roger] just wasn’t sure. After we’d been entertained at dinner by the dean, who was a classmate of mine at high school, whose wife was very New England, I said, “Would you have time to go by after dinner and just look at this house that we’re looking at?” And we stood there quietly looking at it. It was set way back. Ginty said, “Oh, Ellen, if you don’t get it, I will.” That was perfect, if a New Englander thought it was all right. And then Roger said, “All right, as long as we check the engineering.” So an engineer friend checked it and said it was very, very [well built]. ##
INTERVIEW FOUR: 13 AUGUST 1998

Morgan:  ## Our fourth interview, and it’s August 13, 1998. Before we go on to the Harvard years, I wanted to ask about some other oceanographer friends from your years at Scripps, starting perhaps with Giff Ewing.\(^{169}\)

Eckis: You may know what year he came. I don’t know. But one thing I remember loving about him was that he claimed the reason he bought the Valencia—he was one of the major owners, at least—was so he could put his occupation down as saloon keeper. Because it had a bar.

Morgan: That’s the La Valencia Hotel.

Eckis: Yes. I don’t know what Giff had done in the past, where he made his money, but he got interested somehow in oceanography and took courses here. And Roger said his PhD examination was one of the most brilliant he’d ever gone through. He realized it was going to be, because Giff was such a witty person. So he had an open invitational thing and people could come and enjoy it, because he was so good. He got his doctor’s degree at Scripps. And he had a plane, and one thing he did was to study, I think it was, shiny surfaces in the ocean, something that he could observe from his plane. And I know Fred Phleger,\(^{170}\) the late Fred Phleger, was one of the people who worked with him. They used to fly a lot and take observations. I don’t know what they were finding, but the plane was very useful.

Morgan: And that was a hobby of his, flying.

Eckis: Yes. I remember he flew Judy Munk across the country one time and gave her about ten minutes’ notice. “Would you like to come? Well get packed, come on.” And his older daughter was a good friend of my daughter Mary’s, and they were both at Pomona. One time he called Mary, or I guess he just turned up at the dorm, and said, “Why don’t you fly down to La Jolla? I’m going to take Jane down.” And Mary said, “Oh Giff, I can’t. I have a terrible exam on Monday.” And he said, “Mary, one of the first things you have to learn is not to worry about Monday’s exam on Friday. Come on.” So all of a sudden there is Mary calling up from Del Mar and saying, “I’m here. Do you want to come and get me?” And she thoroughly enjoyed it, and thought it was an interesting policy. I don’t know what year it was that he came. You probably could find that out. But he was one of the livelier, most interesting people here, and very much an original and charming man and a very interesting family.

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\(^{169}\) Gifford Cochrane Ewing (1904-1986), PhD from UC Los Angeles/Scripps Institution of Oceanography, 1950. He was married to Alice R. Jones Ewing from 1934-1964. His daughter is Jane Ewing Bailey.

\(^{170}\) Fred B. Phleger (1903-1993), oceanographer. He was married to Marjorie M. Temple Phleger (1908-1986).
Morgan: Did you travel together?

Eckis: No. Unfortunately, he never asked me to fly with him. I wish he had, because I love small planes. I would have liked to. But the Phlegers did a lot. Alice was famous for her beautiful garden, and I asked her once if she could give me just offhand any tips. [She] said, “Well, first of all shoot your gardener. Go on from there.” And she was a great believer in doing, getting out there and doing it herself. And she had talents I didn’t have.

Morgan: So they were both outspoken.

Eckis: Very.

Morgan: What about Gustaf Arrhenius, the Swedish oceanographer?

Eckis: We knew them when they first came. They lived at first in a little house just over on Westbourne or somewhere in this area, and we used to see this charming blonde couple with, at that point, just one little blonde girl, Susie. And we’ve been good friends with them all through the years. They’re one of the couples that often went to the cabin at Julian with us. And now Jenny and I see each other because they’re involved also in the San Dieguito business, landholding thing. She’s down as secretary. They eventually built a lovely house up near the university, on one of those little streets that winds off to the left of Torrey Pines. So they have a gorgeous view of the ocean. And they have one girl and two boys, and I had the fun of going down with Jenny with the youngest child to get his passport. I drove her down, and I was so annoyed at authority and the way that authority can be so stuffy. Because we’d gotten the baby’s picture taken, and Jenny had written on it. The woman at the office watched Jenny do it and then said, “You weren’t supposed to have done that until after I had stamped it.” I mean it was so thoughtless, so needless. And then we had to go back and get another picture, another print of the same picture, and then she could stamp it and then Jenny could sign it for the baby.

Morgan: Another name I came across was Morrough O’Brien.

Eckis: Known as Mike. Mike O’Brien.

Morgan: He was a friend from the Berkeley days?

Eckis: Yes. He was at Berkeley. We knew him before the brief time that we lived in Berkeley. He must have come down here, I guess. We stayed with them once or twice in Berkeley. And his wife succeeded with something that I had not been able

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171 Gustaf Olof Svante Arrhenius (1922 - ). His wife is Eugenie (Jenny) de Hevesy Arrhenius (1926 - ).

to do. I always felt that Roger left his slides on too long. He’d get sort of intrigued with a slide and keep looking at it and it would stay [on the screen]. I’d say, “I think you lose your audience when you leave your slides on too long.” But it didn’t make any impression. And then one night Roberta and Mike had been [at his talk], too, and afterward when we were all together, he said, “Roberta, Ellen thinks I leave my slides on too long. Do you think so?” And Roberta said, “Oh no. After a while [staring] at one of them, I began to see all kinds of interesting things in it, like a little dog and things.” After that Roger didn’t show his slides as long. She was forthright, too.

Morgan: That’s lovely. Like reading clouds. Were these family slides or scientific slides?

Eckis: Oh no, they were scientific. We didn’t go into having slide shows of our family.

Morgan: I gather that Mike O’Brien worked with Roger during the war, in Washington.

Eckis: Yes. I can’t remember what. I really don’t remember, except seeing him back there. I don’t think Roberta came back with him. But I do remember—I went out for dinner with him once and had my very first, and perhaps last, mint julep with Mike O’Brien. I discovered they are very, very potent.

Morgan: What about James Arnold, the chemist, who was an early recruit, I gather, for the university.

Eckis: Yes, he was. And he put me at ease as a hostess. I was a little abashed at having a male houseguest, as Roger couldn’t be here when Jim got here. So very quickly at breakfast Jim said, “I don’t happen to like to talk at breakfast. So don’t try to make conversation.” Or something calming like that. So we went ahead and ate our breakfast. I didn’t meet his wife, Louise, until after they came. I’ve always liked them both. They’re a very nice couple. I guess Jim was one of the very early recruits. I think he and Harold Urey came at about the same time.

Morgan: I understood that perhaps Harold Urey was influential in [recruiting Arnold].

Eckis: I think he was. He may have been one of [Urey’s] students or young professors or something. They built up at SEA, still live there.

Morgan: Are there any other Scripps colleagues or friends that you can think of that we haven’t touched that you would like to—for example, Fred and Sally Spiess?

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173 James Richard Arnold (1923- ), professor of chemistry at UC San Diego.

174 Fred Noel Spiess (1919- ) and Sarah (Sally) Whitton Spiess (1923- ). The Spiesses moved to La Jolla in 1952.
Eckis: Yes. I can’t remember when I didn’t know them somehow. I’ve known them for so long I don’t remember when they came. I’m not sure if they were one of the ones who came during the war. Of course, many came during the war and the men were at the Naval Electronics Lab. And that was when the Raitts came, for instance, Russell and Helen Raitt. And I may have mentioned that the local wives felt that they should do something to make these strangers in town feel good. So we had weekly or monthly luncheons to try to get them acquainted. And it turned out that a great many of them were—not Seventh Day Adventists—Mormons. Many of them were Mormons, and don’t drink anything, even coffee. So Gudrun Sverdrup, I remember, was the only one, because she was Norwegian, who would be given a cup of coffee if we were meeting at one of the Mormon ladies’ houses. The rest of us had to make do with tomato juice. But there was this effort. We used to call ourselves the “Secret Wives,” because the men’s work was so secret that we didn’t know anything about what they were doing. A fair number of those people, those scientists and their families, stayed in the area after the war. It may be the Spiesses came at that time, but I don’t really know. Of course we moved east in ’42, let’s see, December ’42, to Washington.

Morgan: What about Charles David Keeling? Was he a personal friend?

Eckis: He and Roger worked very closely together, yes.

Morgan: And he played the calliope, I read.

Eckis: Oh, at the famous birthday party. Yes.

Morgan: Famous fiftieth.

Eckis: Yes. Well they didn’t live in La Jolla. I think they lived in Del Mar somewhere. And I really didn’t know them as a couple as well, but Roger talked about Charles David Keeling so much, and of course they worked a great deal together.

Morgan: What about Jim Copley, who was the San Diego newspaper publisher? I know he stood with Roger in this matter of locating the campus in La Jolla. Did you see him socially?

Eckis: Occasionally we went to parties up there [at the Copleys’ home, Fox Hill]. And I remember their being here at a party we had when Jonas Salk first came to town. I had drawn the line at having great packets of information put at each place. I said, “You can talk after dinner, but this is a dinner party, and I’m not going to have

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175 Charles David Keeling (1928- ), professor of oceanography at Scripps Institution of Oceanography. His wife is Louise Barthold Keeling.

advertising at the dinner table.” And that was the famous time when Jean Copley, after dinner, said, “Well, why are we here? There’s obviously some reason.” And Jonas was sort of taken aback at having this direct approach. It was quite obvious that there was some reason. He wanted financial backing of the community. We weren’t, I wouldn’t say, intimate friends, but went to biggish parties at each other’s houses.

Morgan: So the packets were about the new Salk Institute.

Eckis: Yes. And what was the name of his money raiser?

Morgan: The March of Dimes?

Eckis: Yes. That man. I can’t think of his name. He was quite sure he was going to have something at each place, but I said no.

Morgan: I think the name of the March of Dimes president may have been Basil O’Connor. Is that right?

Eckis: You’re quite right.

Morgan: And he was present at that dinner?

Eckis: Yes, with his material. He was able to distribute it later in the evening, at least.

Morgan: I was thinking of the differences in the town and gown relationship here in La Jolla-San Diego between the 1950s and the 1960s. In the fifties you had Joe McCarthy and obvious problems in the loyalty oath issue. But in the sixties all hell broke loose. I just wondered how you would characterize the community—your community relationships or outreach [in the] fifties and sixties.

Eckis: That’s a little hard to remember, Judith. I remember so vividly the total separation of town and gown. Of course there wasn’t much gown when we first came, in those early days when we were considered kind of queer people out there in that little place. But it seems to me that we all had friends, and that it was friendly. There were certainly people who were very upset with us because they thought we must be communists, that we would support the non-signing of the loyalty oath. And then a fair number of people who thought that having a campus here and having the place swarming with students was going to completely ruin our little town. Many Texans used to come [each summer], and I was always afraid [Roger] was going to get thrown out of a party when he would say, “Well, do you want a town of Texans, or do you want a college town, a university town?” I’d kind of give him a little kick. But I don’t remember too much animosity. Of course there were the ones whom we

177 Basil O’Connor (1892-1972), founded the March of Dimes with Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1938.
mentioned in previous discussions who were dismayed that there might be Jewish people coming to town. I know one or two couples who actually left when the university came because they thought it was going to change [La Jolla] so completely they didn’t want to be here.

Morgan: What do you remember, speaking of great organizations, of the American Miscellaneous Society, a group I read described as “loony,” among other things.

Eckis: Oh yes, well. Well, that was a lot of fun, the American Miscellaneous Society. They somewhere along the line decided that nobody was going to give anybody in that group an award. They weren’t going to get the National Medal of Science or anything. So they developed their own award, which was a stuffed seagull—no, an albatross. They acquired that one, as I recall, through Sam Hinton at the Aquarium, the old Aquarium-Museum. I believe that’s where it came from. The two who organized the idea of the prize gave it to themselves the first year. It was given whenever they happened to think about it—it wasn’t necessarily an annual thing—to someone for the most obscure contribution to oceanography. When Roger finally got it, it was for having coveted it above all other awards. He had gotten a very prestigious, I think Swedish, award called the Agassiz Medal or something. But he said the only other one he really wished he could have was the Albatross. So he finally got it in Mexico City. And one of the provisos was that the person who got it then had to carry it to the next place. The next time it was going to be given was in Edinburgh. And so Roger tried to pass the buck to me, because he was going to be going to Germany or somewhere before. It did end up that I was to carry it in a very nice carrying case that Walter Munk had made by someone on the campus. But then I managed to pass it off to one of the young graduate students who was going, because I was going somewhere before I got to Edinburgh, too. So it got there safely. I think Teddy Bullard received it.

It was great fun. They kept an album of pictures and stories about Albie, as he was known. When Roger had it and we were living in Cambridge, I couldn’t wait for the first snowstorm, because there hadn’t been any pictures of Albie in the snow. So I made Roger put on his nice bright red ski jacket and be out on the porch with it, and then Albie alone posed in the snow. It used to sit by the hearth at the end of our living room. Then I realized that I’d noticed tea guests would be sort of looking at it and then looking away and wondering if it was alive or not. Because the cage wasn’t really that much bigger than the bird. So finally I used to put it in the closet during tea parties. But the men had a lot of fun with this.

Morgan: And Roger and Walter Munk were among the founders?

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178 Revelle received the Alexander Agassiz Medal from the National Academy of Sciences in 1963.

Yes, they were. And the famous deep sea drilling done from the *CUSS*—the first proposal [for that project] was made by the American Miscellaneous Society but was turned down because it sounded like such a silly outfit. So then they made the same proposal, but through the National Academy of Sciences, and then it was accepted.

I think Albie is now in Europe. I remember I asked Walter Munk lately where it was. I had a wonderful letter when Roger had it. Albie had actually been on the cover of *Science* magazine180 with a nice little article about him, and I was quoted, something about taking care of him. Roger got a letter saying that this woman understood that the bird was a lot of trouble, and that his wife didn’t like taking care of it. As she didn’t know what to get her husband for Christmas, maybe she could get Albie for a Christmas present. Of course, Roger wasn’t going to get around to answering it, so I wrote and told her she had misunderstood entirely, that actually Albie was very much of a conversation piece in our living room and I would miss him when he finally had to be given up. She’d have to think of something else for her husband for Christmas—we weren’t going to part with him. He was not ours to give anyway, of course. He was something that you got quite happy having in your house. I remember Giff Ewing, I believe he must have had it one time, and he said, “You know, you have to be sure and clean his teeth and take good care of him.” He said, “I’m not sure that you have been taking good enough care. You really must be a little more precise in your care of Albie.”

When we had to bring him back from Mexico City, we were a little bit worried about how this was going to go. When we got to the airport, we had carefully kept out the album that had the story of Albie and all the pictures. We’d explained to this very nice young man at the counter that pretty soon Roger’s secretary, Martha, was going to appear with this bird and we just wanted to let him know. So he got intrigued with it too. So when Martha appeared, this man put his hand in [the cage]. Oh, and for Roger’s sake they had planted an egg. Because of Roger and the population studies. So they had given Albie, who had always been male up to that point, they gave him an egg.

Morgan: Did Albie travel in the plane or did he travel in baggage?

Eckis: No, coming back from Mexico he traveled with us in the plane. But I believe when he went to Europe that his cage was enclosed in a packing case so that he could be checked.

Morgan: Speaking of “serious” science, Roger said several times, “I was not a very good scientist, but I had a lot of imagination.”

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Eckis: Very true.

Morgan: I wondered what you thought of that assessment.

Eckis: Well I wouldn’t be one to gauge his science, but he did say that. He used to say that what he was good at was starting things, having ideas and finding the people to work on them. And that was actually how he happened to go to Harvard, because Jerry Wiesner, President Kennedy’s science advisor, had seen how skillful he had been in putting together a team to work on the problems of Pakistan. I guess, either he had suggested him to Harvard or some of the Harvard people had suggested at least talking to Roger. So Roger went to Cambridge one time and said, “I’m supposed to go and give them some ideas. They’re starting some new thing there and they want me to come and have some ideas.” He came back and said, “Guess what? They’ve asked me to head it.” Of course he was not a population person, nor had he been an agricultural person. He used to say he knew daisies and non-daisies and roses. But he did have this ability to see a problem and analyze it and figure out who would be the best people to work on it. And so I certainly wouldn’t say he was not a successful scientist.

Morgan: Do you remember where you were—now we’re in the 1960s—when President Kennedy was assassinated?

Eckis: Yes. I was here, up in my bedroom, working on international student problems [at UCSD], and Roger was not here. He was, I think, maybe in Russia. He was away somewhere, and I didn’t know whether he would have gotten the news or not. But it was our son’s birthday and so I was in communication with Bill. He was at Pomona. And I remember that Marge Bradner and I felt we wanted to get together and just be together. Terrible day.

Morgan: Yes, it certainly was. . . Back to Harvard. Those years were pleasant ones for you? Did you enjoy it?

Eckis: I loved it, I really did. I had heard that it was hard to make friends in New England, and it might be if you went just sort of on your own. But going as the wife of a full professor and head of a department, of course, there was a great deal done to make you feel at home. I found people very friendly and came away having very, very good friends there, some of whom I still count as good friends. People were surprised that, being a Southern Californian, I would adjust so easily to the life in New England. But I guess it must have been that my grandmother from Peru, Vermont had strong genes, because I didn’t mind the cold as much as I would have hated St. Louis and the heat. I find it much harder to cope with heat. And I found it really pretty when it snowed. Roger just thought it looked awfully cold. He never did really like it as much as I did, the life there. But it’s a fascinating place to be, really. There is so much going on. I regret that I didn’t have the sense to audit classes and do things like that, the way some of my friends still do. And I have
since, with my daughter, gone to four or five classes of one course that was extremely interesting, and I would go with her when I was there. I did go to one lecture series, and heard lectures in various clubs that I belong to. But didn’t take advantage of being [there]. I could have audited classes, and maybe I would have become fluent in Italian.

Morgan: What were some of the clubs that you joined?

Eckis: Well, I belonged to the garden club, the Cambridge Garden Club, and one pleasant thing with that was that the club helped to restore Longfellow House garden. And we’d go, actually in the spring when it came time for cleaning up the garden and doing new planting, the Cambridge Garden Club would go and do that. They had done lots of research in how the garden had been, what the plants had been, everything. It was fun to feel that we were reconstructing it the way it was in Longfellow’s time. We’d be fed sandwiches in the big kitchen of the house, and go back and work some more. Then there was one—apparently a lot of these clubs must have been formed when there were young mothers who felt they had to keep their minds active because most of them had “Mother” in it. And there was the “Mothers’ Thursday Club,” with invited speakers. I think once in a while a member gave a paper. And then there’s the “Tuesday Study Club.” That did not have “Mother” in it. And that was entirely member papers. And I was quite terrified when I was invited to join that, because I knew they had to give papers, and I thought I couldn’t do it. But the elderly lady who had sponsored me said, “Of course you can, my dear. You can.” And so I did. I talked about Norway.

And then there’s one that is not Cambridge, that is Boston, called “The Saturday Morning Club,” which is, I think, a completely New England organization. It meets on almost every Saturday during the season from eleven to twelve, precisely. Roll is called first, and then the minutes of the previous meeting, which are sort of a précis of the papers from the previous meeting, and then the papers are given. And they are either two eighteen-minute papers or three twelve-minute papers. This is true! The whole thing is done in an hour. It allows a little time for memories that pop up because of the papers. Oh, and they’re assigned topics. The little book comes out early in May, with the dates of the topics and the titles the committee has chosen, and then you write quickly and sign up your first three choices and hope you’ll get one you really could write something about. And it’s always been fascinating to me the way two or three women could go in completely different directions with a title. I remember I had “mail order” once. It was m-a-i-l, but when I told Roger he said, “Oh, are you going to write about how messy I am?” And I said, “No dear, it’s m-a-i-l.” Some gave histories of the big mail order companies, and I had done mine in a much more frivolous way. And did you ever happen to see a takeoff on the L.L. Bean catalog?

Morgan: Recently, yes. The little book?
Eckis: Yes. It had “Camping Equipment: condensed water,” and things like that. Well, I had just seen that, and so I used some of that material and had a lot of fun with it. But I finally resigned. I stayed a member for a long time after I came back here, and would get to a meeting if I could, and would otherwise mail in a paper. But I finally decided that was really just getting a little silly. But they still let me come if I’m there. Roger belonged to various men’s clubs. Quite often he’d tell me about some wonderful man he’d met, and I’d say, “Oh yes, I know [his] wife in the study club.” Many of them, just by chance perhaps, were in equivalent clubs.

Morgan: Did you entertain much in your Harvard time? Did you have students in your home?

Eckis: Oh yes. We did. Well, one [type of] entertaining was that they had a very interesting program to try to get newcomer wives oriented to living in Cambridge. You’re put on a committee for two years, during which time you have to give either a tea or a supper or something, and you’re given a list of the newcomers to the university, whom you’re supposed to invite. Anne Pusey, who was the president’s wife, went to every one of these and was absolutely marvelous. We’d have tea and then be sitting around the living room, and then either she or someone else would start it off. She never said, “I’m the president’s wife.” She’d say, “Well, my husband is connected with the administration,” or something like that. And it would go around, and each woman would say where she had come from and what her interests were, and then quite often one woman across the room from another would find, “Oh, she likes to play tennis. I’ll go over and talk to her later.” It was a very nice way of getting newcomers acquainted. I was involved with that for a couple of years.

They also did a lot with international students, through the School of Public Health. Of course Roger’s appointment was actually through the School of Public Health, but he had insisted on having an office in Cambridge, so that the center could be really integrated into life there. He wanted to be a wider ranging thing, get many different interests in. But through the School of Public Health I was involved with the women’s committee there. They were very fortunate that a very generous man had bought not one but two apartment houses not very far from the medical school, which of course is in Boston, not in Cambridge. This consisted of various size apartments. So when [foreign] students were accepted they were supposed to write and tell the size of their family and what their requirements would be, and then the attempt would be made to have the appropriate housing available. These were housekeeping apartments, and the buildings also had public rooms for parties. It was really a wonderful thing. It’s too bad we haven’t been able to do that here. And there was a wonderful woman whom I had known at Scripps College—she’d been there actually when I was there—who was in charge, sort of the “mother hen” of it all for many years. And in some situations, maybe the women didn’t speak

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181 Anne Woodward Pusey (1914- ), wife of Harvard University president Nathan Marsh Pusey (1907- ).
much English, and were so far away from home, with maybe two small children. So we tried to help them get acclimated to the area, and where to shop and all. And then there were parties for them, and I think they had classes in English. It was a very interesting project, and some very interesting situations.

I always remember one young African who gave birth to her first child after she came over here. When the baby was about three or four weeks old, the husband took the baby back to Africa, traveled alone with this baby, and then the grandparents would be taking care of the child. [The mother] wouldn’t see that baby for the two years she was here. But she was so determined to get her training and get her Public Health Certificate. The mother was the student in that case. Usually it was the man, but there were quite a few women, too. And they were of course a very bright lot, or they wouldn’t have the chance to come. It was a very interesting experience to meet these young people.

Morgan: I would imagine your Bergen years, and not speaking the language, might have added to your sympathy.

Eckis: Sensitized me. Yes, it probably did, because it was a really funny feeling, queer feeling, at first.

Morgan: How did you feel about the student unrest of the 1960s, the Vietnam years?

Eckis: It was very distressing. I was really glad, Judith, that we weren’t here [at UCSD]. I think that had Roger been made chancellor and seen it happening on his campus, I think it would have been even more difficult than it was back there. But it was frightening. I remember one night we were at a party at Adams House, one of the various Harvard houses. He was associated with Adams, which was right next to his little wooden building, the Center for Populations Studies. It was one of the evenings when there was a lot of student unrest. And it wasn’t just students, but townspeople were joining in with the students and having a chance to express some their rage, town and gown feelings. I remember that they had sort of runners coming in and briefing the group as to how things were going in the Square. Roger left and went next door, because he was teaching a class. And then finally we were all told we better go home, that it was getting a little too much. So I was escorted to my car, which was in the parking lot back of Roger’s little place, and started to go down Bow Street and turn right, but couldn’t do it. An armed guard, armed policeman there, and I had to go another way. I had trouble getting home. They had cordoned off Harvard Square where all the windows in one of the banks were broken that night. So much was going on that they wouldn’t let traffic in. And so I had a little trouble getting home, because we lived in the opposite direction, and I had to get past the Square, so I almost had to go over the river and back. I’m not sure if I had to go quite that far, but I couldn’t go my usual route. And then I got worried about Roger getting home, and called him and asked what the situation was, and he said, “Well, I’ve sent the students home.”
Another night he and one of his graduate students, who was a very tall, strong, young man, spent the whole night there. Because it was a wooden building, and they were really so afraid of fire, that someone might just torch the building. But as it happened, nothing did happen. But at Commencement that year, there had been a great deal of hassle about whether [to have] a student speaker beside the assigned one, who would speak in Latin, and another one who would speak in English, and there was one of the protesting ones who wanted to speak. Finally Pusey had decided to let him speak. He hadn’t wanted to, but he finally did. And it backfired on the students, because this guy was so dull that he just went on and on, really just sort of ranting. Finally his associates were saying, “Oh come on, stop, and get off the stage.” So it really turned out to be wise that they had let him do it, because it had such a reaction against their group.

Morgan: John Crayton Snyder was your Pasadena High School classmate?

Eckis: Oh, yes. He and I graduated together, Pasadena High, in 1927. And then he was the Dean of the School of Public Health when Roger was there. So he is the one who invited Roger to come.

Morgan: I gather he had ideas of Roger being a fund raiser to help his school, and Roger had ideas of going off to India instead, shortly after arriving.

Eckis: Well, Roger had already made the commitment for one or two more trips to India, and so Jack knew that. Because Roger had been asked to be the American member of a commission to study Indian education. And he wanted me to go with him. I remember John’s wife, Ginty. She is very much a New Englander. She said, “You probably won’t like it. You probably will be just as horrified at what you see as I was, but I recommend that you go at least once so that then you know what Roger is talking about.” So I took her advice. We moved [to Cambridge] in fall of ’64 and the first trip, I think, was February of ’65. And because this commission was studying education throughout India, it meant of course that we saw a lot. We went from nursery schools to the university.

I remember one nursery school where the headmaster was a Sikh with his beard and his turban and a fierce look. [The children] were having “free play.” Each of the children was doing exactly the same thing, building blocks, just exactly the same. And then they had more “free play” and they were to go down the slides. One little girl was an individualist and she didn’t want to go down the slide, but she had to go down the slide and because this was “free play” and they were going down the slide! And [the headmaster] came around to where we were staying because he had forgotten to get Roger to sign his guest book. I knew Roger had thought it was a terrible place, so I couldn’t understand why the man looked so happy at what Roger had written. [Roger] said that he written this was without a doubt the most regimented—it was really an insult—school he’d ever seen. The man loved it!
Morgan: He was proud.

Eckis: Yes. Just what he wanted.

Morgan: Did you meet Indira Gandhi?\textsuperscript{182}

Eckis: No. Roger did, and she did not like him. She was protecting Nehru . . .

Morgan: That was her father.

Eckis: Yes. And he was interested apparently in talking to Roger, but she was being very protective and kept trying to get him out. No, I never did meet him or her. One interesting person who was one of [Roger’s] students was Bhutto,\textsuperscript{183} who became head of Pakistan. For some reason she was known as “Pinky” at Harvard. I can’t remember why, because she certainly didn’t have red hair, but she was known as “Pinky” Bhutto and was a good student.

Morgan: Did you see her at your home?

Eckis: I believe she was at our house, and I like to think that we also entertained the vice president,\textsuperscript{184} but I can’t be sure. Because what we often did was to have either waffle breakfasts of very small groups, or groups for informal suppers. And would ask quite a few. Then there was always a Christmas party at the Population Center. And a wonderful Christmas party at Adams House, which was quite fun, always.

Morgan: Al Gore was a student of Roger’s?

Eckis: He was a student.

Morgan: A good student?

Eckis: I don’t know. He did take part in a symposium. I think it was—let’s see, Roger died in July\textsuperscript{185}—I think it was October the following year that there was a two-day


\textsuperscript{184} Albert Arnold Gore, Jr. (1948- ), became US vice president in 1993.

\textsuperscript{185} Revelle died on July 15, 1991.
symposium at Harvard for him, and Al Gore was there on television, a big quote from him. So he takes part in that tape, *Revelle: Man of Science.*

Morgan: Were you, or are you, involved with Planned Parenthood, or was Roger? I think of that because I think of it with India.

Eckis: No, I’m a member. I’ve never been active. We always stressed that Roger was population studies, not population control. Especially as we went there with six grandchildren and had twelve when we came back.

Morgan: En route to India I read that you stopped in Istanbul and saw your friends Alice and Dick Fleming from Scripps in the 1930s. That was a wonderful coincidence. I think she may have mentioned that in a letter.

Eckis: On our way to India? They weren’t living there then, were they?

Morgan: I will double-check that.

Eckis: I know they had a wonderful year there.

Morgan: What was he doing there?

Eckis: He was probably teaching, probably in one of these exchange professorships or something. They really had a marvelous year. But I can’t ask her. I think she had Alzheimer’s, and he died. Gee, I’ll maybe wake up tonight and remember that. Because I thought I had been to Istanbul just the one time when we were living in Washington the second time around.

Morgan: What were you doing then?

Eckis: Well, we were on our way to meetings in Paris. Istanbul was not en route, it was afterward. We had the fun of flying over with Jim Wakelin. He asked if we’d like to go with him and Peggy. It was a great deal of fun. ##

## There was also Rawson Bennett, a full-fledged naval officer. Jim Wakelin was Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research and Development. Peggy and I were the only two wives. It was my first and only experience of actually being able to go to bed in a plane, and it was lovely, as there were berths. We of course had good meals, and it was a wonderful trip. We flew to Paris, and then went to the


187 James H. Wakelin, Jr. (1911-1990), assistant secretary of the Navy, 1959-1964. His wife was Margaret Wakelin (1909- ).

meetings. Then afterward, because of Jimmy’s position—he had various responsibilities, and one was in Istanbul and one was in Athens. Roger, maybe had to finish up something he hadn’t done, very likely, and couldn’t leave Paris when we left. So he wasn’t with us in Istanbul. And through some mishap, the Philippine boys had brought the wrong bags to the hotel, so that Peggy didn’t have a dress-up dress. No, she had her dress, but not shoes or purse. And Jimmy didn’t have his proper clothes. Luckily I was able to offer Peggy my evening purse and jewelry and things because I had gotten the travel “bug” on the plane and no way could I go to a reception. So I had to stay in my room. So I was able to help Peggy out. I thought that was the only time I’d ever been to Istanbul, so I’m going to be very interested to find I’ve been there before.

Morgan: In 1965, October 1 was a very special day. You returned to La Jolla [from Cambridge], and I was reading it was a double-header grand day in which—

Eckis: Oh, the dedication.

Morgan: Yes. Both of the ship—the research vessel [Ellen Browning Scripps]—and Revelle College [at UCSD].

Eckis: I didn’t get to break a bottle of champagne—as I had looked forward to doing—because she’d already been launched. And you do the champagne only at a launching. That was one time that Bill Nierenberg showed a sympathetic side that I wouldn’t have known he had. Because he drove us down, and he had said in advance that he hoped I would be able to say a few words. But he said, “I’ll introduce you in such a way that no one will know if you can’t do it. You can just stand up and smile.” Well, it happened that the Navy band was late in arriving. So we sang The Star Spangled Banner later than one normally would. It had given me a chance to find—my voice came out. And so I did [speak]. I had had a little something prepared about Aunt Ellen, and was able to do it. I remember Dick Fleming was there. He later said, “Well, I was interested in your “whiskey baritone” that you acquired.” So apparently fright had done something odd to my voice. Then we went up to the campus. That was the dedication, was it, that day?

Morgan: Of Revelle College.

Eckis: I’ve often tried to remember. It was the first graduation? No, it wasn’t obviously a graduation in October.

Morgan: Was it a bittersweet day?

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189 William Aaron Nierenberg (1919- ), Scripps Institution of Oceanography director 1965-1985. His wife is Edith Meyerson Nierenberg.
Eckis: No, I remember being very, very happy. It was exciting to come back and see the campus. So that was a year after we’d left. I think by that time Roger must have gotten pretty much into what he was doing and probably some of the disappointment must have rubbed off a bit. Because he seemed happy, too.

Morgan: Did you speak at that?

Eckis: No. I did, after that, sometime at Scripps College, a dedication. Not a dedication, a convocation.

Morgan: That was the, I believe you said, the fortieth anniversary?

Eckis: Yes, I think it was the fortieth. That was when Mark Curtis was president and when I said, “You better not ask me. I already have a black mark because I was supposed to do it another time and then I backed out.” He said, “I don’t know anything about that.” So for him I managed to do it.

Morgan: Roger’s successor as director of Scripps Oceanography was William Nierenberg, whom you just mentioned.

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: Was Roger involved in that choice, do you know?

Eckis: I don’t think so. But I really don’t know.

Morgan: It seemed, in the community, a rather drastic change of style, and I wondered if you saw the Nierenbergs socially or knew them well?

Eckis: Yes. Oh, we’ve been to parties at their house and they’ve been here.

Morgan: When Roger was at Harvard—this was a couple of years later—I read a speech he made in Washington, D.C. quoted in the New York Times about American women. And he said that “American women are perhaps the loneliest, hardest working women who have ever lived, the most isolated because of the increasingly mechanized society. All these improvements,” he said, “allowed a woman to stay home and do everything herself.” I mean, a woman would run a house alone, raise the kids, and, he said, “end up talking to no one but children.” And it was very sensitive to women. I wondered if you had heard him deliver this.

190 Mark Curtis, president of Scripps College 1965-1976.

Eckis: No, I didn’t hear him give it. When you read that excerpt, it kind of comes back, but I don’t believe I was there.

Morgan: I wondered if he was sensitive to women because of you and your daughters? He seemed to have listened to women more than some men.

Eckis: I don’t think it was very obvious! [Laughter] You ask his daughters. They always felt that unless you were a scientist or going to get a doctor’s degree that you didn’t count. Strong feelings there.

Morgan: Well, there would be at least one granddaughter who—

Eckis: Yes. Caroly. And she got [her Ph.D.] at Scripps. Her father had gotten his here, too. And Roger. So it was nice.

Morgan: That must have been a very proud time.

Eckis: Yes, it was. I went to that dissertation, her examination, and she did very well. We were all very proud of her.

Morgan: Is there anything else about the Harvard years that you’d like to include? You mentioned once that you were active in the League of Women Voters.

Eckis: Well, not very. Not like my daughter-in-law who is now on the national board, and was state president [in Illinois] for a long time. My most active was sitting at a very cold place in Harvard Square and trying to get people to register to vote. But I was a member, so at least they got contributions. I went to meetings, but I can’t say I was active, no.

Morgan: Harvard limits professors, when they turn sixty-five, to half-time teaching. I gather that your year in 1974 began being divided. Is that right?

Eckis: Yes. And there was a limit to how old one can be and be in administration, so that he had to step down from being the director of the center. I had managed to have a surprise party for him at about that time. I think he was sixty-seven. His secretary, Martha Urann, and I knew that he would not like a birthday party so we just gave him a surprise party and had a lot of fun surprising him. And he almost turned the tables, because he announced that that was the very night when I needed to entertain at least three of his Indian colleagues. So I had to cross my fingers and do quite a bit of speedy lying, and pointed out that there was a party for somebody that

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night that we *had* to go to—I’d forgotten to tell him but we had to go to it. It was out at the American Academy, and we just had to go, I’d accepted it. And that’s where we had the party. And I remember Giff Ewing came to that. As we drove up and were parking Giff was walking along and Roger said, “Gee, I didn’t know that Giff knew so-and-so,” whoever this person was that I had decided was the one having the party. Surprise! And then we walked inside and there were his children, and then he began to catch on. He said, “I’ll never trust you and Martha again.”

Morgan: What was Martha’s last name?

Eckis: Urann. She is now making a living as a stand-up comic in Los Angeles. She’s a very, very interesting young woman. And she told me once, “You’ve no idea the mileage I get out of fossil fuel.” She always had a wonderful sense of humor, and she used a lot of what she had learned with Roger, and makes fun of it.

Morgan: When Roger started dividing his year, it was the autumn term at Cambridge?

Eckis: Autumn term at Harvard, and then the rest of the year out here. We realized that one does not keep a house in Cambridge empty during the winter, because you’d have to have the furnace going because of the chance of pipes freezing and everything, so we put it on the market thinking it would sell at once. It didn’t. And so we had rented [it] in the fall. It turned out to be a disaster. The man had just come from Beirut, and he explained that he didn’t have references and things because he’d had to leave in such a hurry from Beirut. He made documentaries, he and his partner. Well we had reason to believe during the year that his documentaries were actually pornographic, as we learned more and more about the man. And he left our house in an absolute mess. He started not paying rent very regularly, and then he would send several checks at once. And they were never checks from a bank, they were always money orders, from different places. And Roger noticed at once that he was sending duplicates, copies, you know, trying to fool us by showing that he *had* sent them. Part of the lease was that the owner could go in with the agent on advance notice. And I was stunned when I went into what had been a very pristine, white guest room and it was painted in stripes. Like *that* section might be different shades of green, and *this* one different shades of red. I said, “This is a little odd.” He had gotten permission to paint where there had been a leak. And the agent said, “Oh, well he knows he has to put it back [to white] later.” And the only furniture in that room was a waterbed, and huge mirrors. We kind of wondered. And then some of the things in the bookcase, where I had pictures of grandchildren, were a little surprising. And we discovered the reason he’d asked if he could put a lock on the door of one of the basement rooms that had a sink, besides the one that had the laundry. And when it came time for the yard man to turn off the water [for the season], he said, “I couldn’t find the door.” And it was behind a bookcase. They had put in a bookcase that swung open with the door. And then when they had gotten out, finally, we found there was a little hole in the dining room floor up above that basement room. And so they apparently had a little secret communication to this
room. When the agent would make a date to show the house, there would be a car in the driveway, yet no one would answer the bell. And they were probably down hiding. So the agent gave up completely trying to sell it. They tried to make us think somebody from Europe was going to buy it and going to let the present tenant stay in it. That seemed very odd, and we turned it down. We’re quite sure it was this man trying again.

Morgan:  Right out of a mystery novel.

Eckis:   And after we moved back out here, an FBI man turned up one time and wanted to ask me questions about this man. All he would tell me was that they suspected he was smuggling under different names. I never found out whether they caught him or not. Of course I hope they did.

Morgan:  When you came back to UCSD, Bill McElroy was the chancellor. Tell me about him as a person.

Eckis:   Well, we made a special trip out for his inauguration, I remember. We went to a luncheon for him. I never knew them well. His wife is very, very shy, more or less of a recluse, and I’m ashamed to say that I haven’t done much trying to get to know her. But I always thought Bill was a lot of fun, very outgoing, and he did a splendid job from what I’ve read of how he handled the things, the campus, during the uprising student days [in the 1960s]. You were living here, weren’t you, at that time?

Morgan:  Yes.

Eckis:   So you would be much more aware of it. But everything I’ve heard, he did a very good job of standing up to the students. As I said, I think Roger would have lost his cool and would have had a hard time dealing with it.

Morgan:  I was speaking of Bill McElroy. Is it possible that you are thinking of Bill McGill?194

Eckis:   Oh, I am. I’m sorry. I’m getting the two mixed up.

Morgan:  They succeeded each other.

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193 William David McElroy (1917- ), UCSD chancellor, 1972-1980. He was married to Marlene Anderegg DeLuca McElroy from 1967-1987. Later in this interview, Mrs. Eckis realizes that here she was really speaking of Bill McGill and his wife, not the McElroys.

Eckis: Because certainly Bill McElroy’s wife was not a recluse. Take that back. No. But I didn’t know [the McElroys] very well really, either.

Morgan: And you moved back full time then in 1978. Where was Roger’s office then?

Eckis: When he first came back, his office was in what had been the original library, the Humanities Library, down on the lower level. And then after a while he was moved up to one of the temporary buildings on what had been [Camp] Matthews, where the chancellor’s office is. When Ed Frieman\textsuperscript{195} became director, he called me up one time when Roger was in the hospital and said, “Do you think that Roger would like to come back to the Scripps campus and have an office there?” And I said, “I’m sure he’d love it.” I told him when I went to see him in the hospital, and he was delighted. So his last office was down there right next to where he had been as director. And they’ve kept it as sort of a guest visitor’s office. It was a typically Ed thing to do. But Roger had been very careful to stay away from the campus when he came back, because he felt that [Bill] Nierenberg was afraid he was going to try to come back and take over or something. So he made a tremendous point of staying away, keeping his distance, not being underfoot.

Morgan: Among the things that you did when you came back was get involved with the Playreaders Group. Tell me about that.

Eckis: Well, that I loved. I always have loved plays, but I couldn’t get Roger interested at first, even when I first had a tiny little part. And then the Bradners, whom we’ve known for so many years, were producing \textit{Barefoot in the Park}, and they cajoled Roger into playing, saying, “Oh, it’s just a very little part.” All he had to do was pretend that he had climbed five flights of stairs and had to say, “Sign here.” He was the delivery man. And Roger said, “Oh well, all right.” And he practiced and practiced: “Sign here. Sign \textit{here}!” Of course everybody was so thrilled to have him take part in it, and he got a big hand. And he was hooked. From then on, it didn’t matter what the conflict was, we might have theater tickets or symphony or something. I’d say, “Which—?” [and he’d say], “Well, Playreaders, of course.”

Morgan: Where did these take place?

Eckis: Well, it always meets in someone’s house, and the system is that someone agrees to host, say, in September, and someone else agrees to produce. Now the arrangement is that a third person does the refreshments so that the hostess doesn’t have to do that. So then the producer chooses the play and casts the play. And there is one rehearsal only. It’s lots of fun.

Morgan: How large a group is this?

Eckis: Oh, I’d say there are probably about thirty that will turn up at any one time. Of course if it’s a large cast, then there won’t be as large an audience. During the years, Roger and I did *Gin Game* with just two characters, and had very good reviews, and also one called *The Petition*, where again it was just two people, husband and wife. And Roger, as I said, got really—it was a great release, I think, completely nonscientific and something different than he had ever done. And he got very good at it. There was just one time when he had a role where he wasn’t good at all and didn’t *project* and his voice could hardly be heard. I don’t know what had happened.

Morgan: Do you remember what it was?

Eckis: I don’t remember the name, except I think he was God, and he was a very ineffective God!

Morgan: Tell me, you said *Gin Game*. Was that where you play cards?

Eckis: Yes. And the director of that one said, “Well obviously you can’t read your script and play cards.” But we felt that it was absolutely essential. Neither of us had ever played gin. We didn’t know a thing about it. But we played, we dealt, and we slammed down the cards and all. Of course no one could see our cards, so it didn’t matter what they were. And he would get madder and madder as I would keep beating him. And it would happen that very often I would get all the good cards, just by chance when it was dealt. But we had lots of fun with that one.

Morgan: You have always enjoyed plays. Were you the heroine a lot over the years?

Eckis: In college I always wanted so to be. But I was always the comic, and I always [played other ages], except for one play where I was a young woman my own age eloping. And Caroline, later Eckis, was my Aunt Em and she was helping me elope. And everybody was hoping I was going to forget and say “Roger” instead of the name of the young man I was eloping with. And that was one of the hardest things I ever did. I mean, to be someone my own age. It’s much easier to be somebody else or something totally different. I think the reason I loved plays, where I couldn’t stand up in a student body meeting and speak, was that then you are somebody else. And you just forget about being nervous because you’re some other person anyway.

Morgan: And they wouldn’t be nervous.

Eckis: And they wouldn’t. No.

Morgan: You and Roger were both involved with La Jolla Playhouse.
Eckis: He much more than I. I’m on the board now, but I’ve only been on a little less than a year. But I was involved through him, of course.

Morgan: He lobbied to have the [Playhouse] site on the campus, didn’t he?

Eckis: He probably did. Of course in the early days it was in La Jolla High School, and Marion Longstreth was such a big, strong advocate of it. He did, I believe I remember, want to have more of a town and gown cooperation and have it be on the campus and have it be supported both ways. And he was very enthusiastic about it. I wish he could have seen it now, not in the red. It would be very gratifying.

Morgan: It’s doing very well, isn’t it?

Eckis: It really is. Des McAnuff had a lot of ideas, but he didn’t want to put any limits on his spending, I guess. That was one big problem.

Morgan: In October of 1986 the International Center Complex and Ellen Revelle Oceanids Pavilion was dedicated in that eucalyptus grove, and Chancellor Dick Atkinson, I was reading, introduced you and Roger as “The First Family of UCSD.” And you spoke first at that dedication.

Eckis: Did I?

Morgan: I wondered how you remember that day.

Eckis: I’ve forgotten it entirely! [Laughter] That’s really true? I spoke first?

Morgan: You spoke first, and then Roger spoke about you and called you a woman of great character and competent, self-effacing, and said that, “She does not in any way live in my shadow or reflection. She is her own cat—a distinct and distinguished person in her own right.”

Eckis: Gee.

Morgan: And apparently there were tears in the eyes of the women listening. I read a newspaper account.

Eckis: Hmm.

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Morgan: Did you ever feel that you were living in his shadow?

Eckis: Yes! I remember not being quite sure how to answer one time at some party. You know when the music stopped as we were dancing and a total stranger turned to me and said, “What is it like to be married to such a famous man?” Now what would you answer? I think that I said, “It’s not always easy.” It wasn’t. But I think the whole family felt that we were in his shadow actually. He sort of intimidated people. Not his son. Bill was always able to speak up to his dad much more than the girls would. And they’d sort of think, “We wouldn’t have dared say that. How did [Bill] get away with it?”

Morgan: How did he get away with it?

Eckis: Oh, I suppose because he’s a man.

Morgan: But he was not a scientist.

Eckis: He’s a psychologist. We thought he was going to be an oceanographer. He had had several summers going on expeditions. And then the first time he was exposed to a computer—back when a computer filled a whole room, you know—there was one at Scripps Institution and he got involved with that and then went back and began studying psychology at Pomona. And didn’t have anymore sea trips.

Morgan: About that time, in some article, Roger was quoted as saying that you could have been a great inventor; that you were always coming up with gadgets to facilitate cooking—

Eckis: But I never carried it through.

Morgan: Did you make things, or did you just have the idea?

Eckis: I would have ideas. I just had ideas. I can’t even remember what any of them were now, but I always felt that I should have tried to follow them out. Maybe they would have gotten—. Oh, I remember, the first one was—remember Bisquik?

Morgan: Yes.

Eckis: Well, I happened to have an awfully good gingerbread recipe and Roger loved it. I had thought there ought to be some way of making this so that it would be easy to do. And I was going to call it “Jiffy Ginge.” Even had the name. And then darned if Bisquik didn’t come out right about that time and beat me to it. I don’t know if there ever has been an instant gingerbread, but I had thought there ought to be some way of doing it, but I didn’t know how.
Morgan: You also said you had your “mosaic period.”

Eckis: Oh, that was because I broke a leg. And that was just at the period when we were moving what had been Aunt Ellen’s guest house up to SEA, to the lot we had there. And the architect who was in charge—because we built one extra room, added a room—thought that I might find my activities a bit curtailed. He gave me a little [mosaic] kit, with pre-cut tiny squares just to make a little ashtray. And I found it such fun that I bought tile and bought a cutter and for awhile Roger was afraid the whole house was going to be filled with mosaic. Because it really is fascinating. Two things that I did that I like the best are the table out on the lanai, which sometimes people have said, “Well, isn’t that interesting. It’s got the colors of the ocean,” as if it were pure chance. And then the other one, my “anti-ski mosaic” that I made incorporating the pins from my first broken leg as the skis and the ski poles of a little figure. And the big pin that went on this leg as a slope. I have it hung by the pool to remind me why we have a pool and it’s my “not to ski again” plaque. I’ve had a lot of fun with it, because some people see the humor in it, and others sort of turn green at the thought that those things had been inside my body.

Morgan: Where did you break your leg? Where were you skiing?

Eckis: Mammoth. The first one I did at Stowe, Vermont, and the second one, Mammoth. But I finally stopped. I haven’t done any mosaic in quite a while now.

Morgan: Let’s talk about your ongoing role with Oceanids. You’re still involved?

Eckis: Well, right now I’m rather red-faced because I’ve been on the current board this year and as a past president, I’m supposed to be getting together with the other past presidents, of whom there are a great many, and see what input we can have. And I haven’t done one thing about it. The next meeting, the first meeting is September, and I haven’t done a thing. I haven’t even been very good about getting to the meetings. I don’t know why I agreed to do this.

Morgan: It’s a much larger group now than it was when it was formed.

Eckis: Yes, yes. I was a very reluctant co-president with Beth Spooner, who has now moved away. Neither of us had been willing to do it, but we agreed we’d do it together.

Morgan: What do you think about the changing role of faculty wives and chancellors’ wives and directors’ wives? Do you think it’s harder or easier, or how is it different from—?
Eckis: Well, I know some of it through my son and daughter-in-law, because Eleanor is very, very busy being so active with the League of Women Voters, so Bill didn’t even suggest that she should entertain when he was the chairman of the department and was recruiting people. He didn’t even think of bringing them home for dinner. He’d take them out. And he said that’s the way it is on the campuses now, that they’re not doing it. It was just the natural thing in my day. That was just part of it. We were the unpaid part of the team. It was just expected that we would entertain. And I like people, and I didn’t object too much, and but I guess this just isn’t done now. I saw the change very suddenly at Harvard, because as I may have mentioned, Anne Pusey was so wonderful and went to every one of these greeting-the-new-people things and always had something fresh to say and obviously was interested in people. And then when Bok¹⁹⁹ became president, Sissela Bok made it very clear at the outset that she had her own life. She has written several books and she was very involved. I could understand that she wouldn’t have wanted to live in the [president’s] house right on the campus with all the unrest, so they moved into a house that had been a dean’s house. She had a small child. But I felt it was too bad that she couldn’t have kept up maybe even the once a month tea at the president’s house. It was a nice, relaxed way of meeting other people. It seemed to me she might have done that one thing if not any other. But she never did. I knew her very slightly because she was a member of the Study Club. But some of the wives [still] do. For instance Joy Frieman has done lots of entertaining, very graciously. And Frieda Urey certainly did a lot.

Morgan: It really can make a difference.

Eckis: Yes. But I guess with so many women working that it’s just not fair to expect that women can have that added burden. There was just one time when I was really irked at Roger about it, because I had had a dinner party for a couple who were coming [to La Jolla] to decide whether they would come [to UCSD] or not. And the idea was that once having done that I would be free to go up to the mountains with Bill and some of his friends for snow. Got back on a Sunday night, and discovered that we were having a dinner party! And my nice German housekeeper had left a note saying, “We seem to be entertaining, and I’ve gone to the store to try to find something.” Luckily she had had a party in the guest house the night before and had pasta. There was lots of sauce, so she decided we’d have pasta and salad and ice cream. It was the Sunday night of Labor Day Weekend! So I called one of the other mothers and said, “Could you possibly come and pick up the boys and take them home? I’ve got a bit of a problem. Quickly.” And I’d keep getting phone calls, “What time is dinner?” And it turned out that the wife wanted to stay a little longer and meet more people. Roger, when I had a chance to ask him, “Why didn’t you tell me?” said, “Well, I didn’t want to spoil your fun at the cabin.” So he hadn’t told me.

¹⁹⁹ Derek Curtis Bok (1930- ), Harvard University president 1971-1991, and Sissela Myrdal Bok (1934- ), professor of philosophy at Brandeis University.
And he never understood that—this used to come up occasionally—he never did see why I was really kind of annoyed. Because not even to know who was coming to a dinner and what time it was!

Morgan: And have that time for a mental adjustment.

Eckis: Yes. Barely had time to take a bath and get dressed. I didn’t even know how many people, or if there was a buffet, or what it was. So that was one time when I was a very ungracious hostess, I’m afraid. I hope it didn’t show.


Eckis: There was a famous birthday party for Roger one time when he called from Washington the morning of the party and said, “I’m not going to be able to get home until tomorrow. I hope it doesn’t matter.” And I said, “Well, it’s just that I was having a party for you tonight for your birthday.” But he couldn’t get here. So as people would come in and say, “Where shall I put the present?” I had a big picture of Roger on the piano and I said, “Just put ’em there.” It was too late to cancel it, so we went ahead and had the party. And then the next week I was able to get everybody back again and we had the ice cream and cake.

Morgan: And Roger made it?

Eckis: And Roger was there for that. But that was very much of a divergence from your question. But I do gather that the situation has changed a great deal.

Morgan: At the dedication of the new Scripps Pier, which was in 1987 in March, I was reading that you wore a pink hard hat. That must have been a special day for you, because your Aunt Ellen had given the first pier for Scripps.

Eckis: I was ready to sue the [La Jolla] Light for the picture that they printed.

Morgan: What was that?

Eckis: Well, I had on a suit—it just happened to be pink—that when I stood up to do the spading the jacket fell open, so the side view was, shall we say, not very flattering. I looked like a small elephant. And then this little hard hat stuck on top. And people kept saying, “Oh, your picture’s in the Light on the front page.” The only thing I was grateful for was it was below the center fold, so on the newsstands it didn’t show. It was a perfectly ghastly picture. And there were a lot of nice ones taken that day that I saw later, but why they had to use—I. Someone had it in for me.

Morgan: You spoke that day?
Eckis: Yes, I think probably, yes. And I broke the bottle too fast, and luckily they had a spare.

Morgan: How does that happen?

Eckis: I don’t know how it happened, but they gave me the bottle and said to swing it. And I swung it and it broke. And then the photographer said, “Oh! I wasn’t ready” and handed me another one.

Morgan: You’re stronger than they suspected.

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: When Roger went to Africa, which was that same year of 1987 on this ten-nation tour—

Eckis: He shouldn’t have.

Morgan: That’s what I was wondering. It was a very rigorous trip, wasn’t it?

Eckis: He shouldn’t have done it, but he was the man who couldn’t say no, except to his family. Because his heart wasn’t in good shape by then, and he was getting tired more easily, and I just don’t think he should have done it. But he wanted to do it, and he did.

Morgan: That was his old friend Jerry Wiesner, wasn’t it? At MIT? At least I think they talked about it, because I believe it was Professor Wiesner who said, “What we need is a young Roger Revelle.”

Eckis: But they should have found a young Roger Revelle and not had Roger. I don’t know if it shortened his life or anything . . . But he would have been a miserable retired person. I can’t imagine how it would have been if he had really retired. I was always so grateful that every year he got his reappointment to teach. I was always afraid that maybe they wouldn’t sometime. Because he had no hobbies to fall back on. And I think he would have been just utterly miserable, because he had nothing else. You can’t read all day long.

Morgan: What about music? Did he play music?

Eckis: Oh. His mother thought that with his big hands and long fingers he surely could play the piano, but it turned out he couldn’t. And then somehow he had a saxophone. I never heard it. He said he wasn’t any good at that either. He liked music, but he certainly couldn’t do it.

Morgan: And you said you played piano for awhile.
Eckis: I played the piano. I liked to play when no one was around. I wasn’t good at it, but I enjoyed it.

Morgan: Did you take lessons?

Eckis: Oh yes, I took lessons, various times. Do you remember Connie Herreshoff?\textsuperscript{200} Did you know her? She struggled with me. Nobody could ever really get [me to] catch on. I would always say, “I have no sense of time.” I mean I could read it, but I could count 1-2-3 or 1...2...3, and I could try a metronome, but—. And I would hear something that I liked and so then I’d like to try to play, learn to play that. But it was cheating, because I knew how it sounded. But given a fresh piece that I didn’t know, it could come out completely unrecognizable.

Morgan: Well, I see you have Satie\textsuperscript{201} on the piano.

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: Now there is something that’s a challenge.

Eckis: Yes. And I like it very much, but I know how it sounds. Every now and then I think I’m going to try again, but my hands are not good at it [because of arthritis].

Morgan: What about Roger’s stamina, in that people—younger scientists—always said, “He doesn’t have jet lag. He rolls off a plane and keeps going.”

Eckis: And then falls asleep at the meeting.

Morgan: And then falls asleep?

Eckis: Yes. Well, he certainly had stamina, but I think he also pushed himself harder than he should have. And of course he was famous for falling asleep and then waking up and knowing what was going on.

Morgan: So maybe that was a catnap?

Eckis: I guess.

Morgan: Roger had a cigarette in most of the photos I’ve seen.

\textsuperscript{200}Constance Mills Herreshoff (1880-1966), music critic for the \textit{San Diego Union}.

\textsuperscript{201}Alfred Éric Leslie Satie (1866-1925), French composer and pianist.
Eckis: I know it. And I give my son, our son, credit for getting him finally to stop. He had been smoking Carltons for several years. And when we were together down in the Caribbean at Virgin Gorda, the Bitter End Yacht Club, the last night there we were walking on the path before we went up to our cottages, and Bill suddenly said, “Dad, I can understand your huffing and puffing when you go up.” (We had to go up about fifty steps.) But he said, “You’re huffing and puffing right here on the straightaway, on the flat. If you’ve been smoking nothing but Carltons for two years, it isn’t nicotine, you’ve just got a filthy habit.” When that was said, lightning didn’t strike, and we got up to our cottage, and Roger didn’t light a cigarette, he didn’t light one in the morning. Can it be? We got home, and I thought, “He won’t be able to talk on the phone without a cigarette.” But I think he smoked maybe only four more in his whole life.

Bill somehow got through to him where the rest didn’t. I annoyed him, because I hated it so. We had an ashtray, the kind that you’re supposed to push down and make the cigarettes go down, and I’d go over and go like that, and it would irritate him. He would just as soon let ‘em fill up, you know, five or ten butts smoking away in there. So I didn’t help the situation, because I was so unpleasant about it. But Bill just somehow cut through and got to his mind. And I was always very grateful to Bill. When Roger had his subsequent heart problems he said, “If I hadn’t stopped smoking, I wouldn’t have lived this long.” He realized it. And as I guess happens with reformed smokers, it got to the point of the ridiculous. We checked in one time to a hotel in Washington, and he went, of course, right to his meeting. I went up to the room and I said, “You know, it smells.” And the boy said, “Oh, I’ll turn on the air conditioning.” When we came up after dinner, Roger, making a couple of sniffing noises, said, “I can’t sleep in this room. It’s been smoked in.” And we had to change rooms. But it wasn’t just the lung damage. I was always worried that he’d set himself on fire. Because he definitely would fall asleep. I have taken cigarettes out of his hands more than once, and we have quite a few pieces of furniture with burns. And when we’d be visiting any of our children, he’d get quite irritated that someone was obviously staying up until he went to bed. And it would annoy him. I’d say, “They don’t want their house burned down.” ##
INTERVIEW FIVE: 19 AUGUST 1998

Morgan: ## This is August 19, 1998, 3:00 p.m. at the home of Ellen Revelle Eckis. We were talking earlier on about your then future mother-in-law, Roger’s mother and her one word of caution to you before you were married. Tell me about that.

Eckis: Well, it was more than a word of caution. It was an attempt to keep me from marrying her precious son. I had not known her well. I knew Daddy quite well. He used to come out to college to see me, and I was very fond of him, but Mama had been up in Seattle with her daughter at college, and I hadn’t known her very well. She had come to an announcement party that Mother had for me when announcing—to no one’s surprise—that we were engaged. But then, when Roger, just before my senior year, was about to leave to go up to Berkeley for a graduate year there, we were all saying goodbye at some crossroads point. And Mama suddenly said, “I want to talk to you,” and pulled me into her touring car with the isinglass curtains all around, and said the following: “You shouldn’t marry Roger. Just get unengaged. But don’t tell him why. You know, he’s a gifted child, but he doesn’t know it. But if you got married, you would probably have children. Get in the family way.” That’s the way she put it, that old fashioned way, “You’ll get in the family way, and that would hold him back. Goodbye!” And off they drove. And I wasn’t supposed to tell Roger, just to say I’m not engaged anymore. And so Roger of course wanted to know why, and I dissolved in tears and then told him what his mother had said. And he said, “Well, ridiculous. You’re not marrying my mother, you’re marrying me. Of course I know I’m a gifted child. That’s how I got into Pomona.” And so from then on whenever he got some new honor—and we had two children, by the way, within a few years—I would say, “Well, it’s too bad you didn’t marry someone who didn’t hold you back by having a family.” And it got to be just a family joke.

Morgan: As you put the new honor on the wall.

Eckis: Yes. And Mama never said anything more about it. And unfortunately she died of typhoid fever between our second and third child. I had told her I was going to have another one, and she said, “I won’t see it.” And it was true. She died, so she never saw the last two.

Morgan: Before we move on to the 1980s, which is where we were when we last spoke, I was thinking of your swimming in the [La Jolla] Cove. And in the early days you were mentioning the thrill of the grunion runs at Scripps. And was this all fun when you first did this, or was it involved with science?

Eckis: I did it only one time, and I don’t think Roger did it. He was probably busy in the lab. But I decided to join. It was a scientific endeavor, because they needed volunteers to catch the grunion. They were tagging them. I forget which scientist was doing it. But they were making a study of how often each female came back on
the beach. And so we were supposed to grab them as they came. You hear them before you see them, because it’s sort of a rustley, funny sound on the beach. And they come in, and they’re just there, just all over the place. Then we would scoop them up and run to the nearest bucket that they had, buckets with saltwater, and we’d dump them in. Then the scientists would tag them and then I suppose put them back. And I wondered at the time how did they know they weren’t getting the same female twice the same night. But it was quite exhilarating. You start out at first being quite fastidious, the idea of touching these fish. But it gets to be such fun that you don’t even think about it. And your clothes, of course you’re in maybe shorts or something, and you get quite wet. But it was just quite fun. I never did it again, but had that one experience.

Morgan: This was right at the Scripps [Pier]?

Eckis: Right on the beach in front of Scripps. I think that’s probably their favorite beach because it’s flat. They burrow a little hole in the sand and lay the eggs and then apparently the males swim around and do their thing, and then the next high tide—it’s at high tide of course—the eggs have the time to hatch before the next high tide. And then the next high tide releases them. There are lots of them at the Cove. I have realized that’s what I’m swimming with.

Morgan: You’re also seeing garibaldi at the Cove?

Eckis: Oh heavens, yes. That I’d always thought I didn’t need to have a face plate to see, because they’re so big and orange, but there are many more [that] people are seeing—someone said this morning they had seen a sea turtle, which they hadn’t seen in a long time. Of course this is farther out than I go. And also a leopard—about a six-foot leopard shark. And even though I know that they’re harmless, I think I’d probably be scared if I saw one. But they are apparently quite timid.

Morgan: Is the change because of the temperature change?

Eckis: I suppose it is, but it really seems to me that this summer the fish have been much closer in—which is very nice for me, because I definitely am not going out as far. I never did go out terribly far. But just hardly into the water you’re seeing garibaldi and grunion and I don’t know the names. They are probably at least five or six different kinds.

Morgan: We’ve talked about changes in La Jolla above ground. How is it different below the sea? It seems that the sand at the Cove is steeper.

Eckis: There’s been a large loss of sand, definitely. At first when I would say it was hard getting out, people would sort of say, “Oh yeah. Just steep. You think it’s steep.” But it is, because there are rocks, some, oh, two feet high and maybe six feet long.
There’s one great, big one like that, right in the middle of the Cove, that used to appear just in the winter, and it’s now there permanently. It’s just part of the beach. And there are rocks all along on the sand, where it used to be just all sand. And the area at the west end where there’s the cave and the arch, that used to be sand over to there, and you could walk in on sand during the summer. And this last winter with the El Niño there was even more sand loss, so that the west steps, the bottom landing step, broke and just went, collapsed, so that the step is—. How high is that? About two feet? So that I don’t know how young families with those little children do it. I go around the side and then wait for some nice looking person who looks willing and say, “Could you just give me a hand?” Because I can’t get up it by myself. But there are many more rocks in the water, too, because of the lack of sand. So that you have to be careful not to stub your toes when you’re getting in.

Morgan: A different seascape then.

Eckis: Yes, it is. And it if keeps going like this, it’s going to be like a New England beach.

Morgan: What do you suppose your Aunt Ellen would think of the seaside park she left, the way it is today?

Eckis: Well, I’ve wondered what she’d think about the Children’s Pool not being able to be used for children.

Morgan: Tell me about that.

Eckis: Well, she built the breakwater, of course, I think it was in 1931, in order to make that a safe, protected place for children. It was just a little beach, but apparently some child had been washed out. I don’t know the circumstances. But now it’s polluted because of the seals or sea lions having taken it over, and so people can still go on the sand but they can’t go in the water. And that, I would think, would be disappointing to her, because she loved children and this was supposed to be for children.

Morgan: And environmental groups, I gather, are on the side of the sea lions?

Eckis: Well, I think the sea lions are less popular now, but no one wants to do anything too aggressive. But one idea, you’ve probably read about it, that they were thinking of taking a lot of the sand out. And I can’t see why. I mean that would just make it not any good for anybody. But I guess the seals have found that sand is more comfy than rocks. But they had existed very happily for years just being on the rock. And the rock was protected first, because it was apparently a breeding ground for them. But in my memory they had never come on the beach before. But now they’ve tried it, they like it. Have you been down and seen it? It’s amazing!

Morgan: I’ve seen them and smelled them.
Eckis: Yes. I certainly wouldn’t want to swim there.

Morgan: Among some other early people at Scripps and then in the recruitment at UCSD, some other names I’d love to ask you about. The astronomers Margaret and Geoffrey Burbidge, for example. Roger loved to call them the “Beauty and the Beast,” I remember.

Eckis: Yes, I know. I was about to comment on that. It is certainly true. Well I never knew either of them very well. Didn’t seem to see them much here in La Jolla. I saw them at meetings at the National Academy of Sciences sometimes, but I’ve never really felt that I knew them well. I know that it’s a great addition to have them here.

Morgan: What about Freddy de Hoffmann, who was head of General Atomic?

Eckis: Oh yes. That was a terrible loss when he died. And we did know him fairly well. And we were just shocked when he was ill and died. Apparently he had a transfusion and got AIDS from the transfusion. The first death I’d heard of, of it. Just such an exemplary person, it was just so awful. They had a magnificent house, one of the early houses up on the bluff—or no, I guess it was at La Jolla Farms, probably. It must have been.

Morgan: He was quite active with Roger in the early days.

Eckis: I think so. And I used to play tennis a lot with his wife. We went to parties there. I don’t know what’s happened to her, whether she stayed in La Jolla or not.

Morgan: Did you know George Backus?

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: He was recruited by either Roger or Walter Munk.

Eckis: It may have been Walter. Yes, I still know him.

Morgan: His wife, Varda, is quite active in your chamber music group, I think.

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202 Margaret Burbidge (1919- ) and Geoffrey Ronald Burbidge (1925- ), both professors of physics at UC San Diego.

203 Frederic de Hoffmann (1924-1989), also director of Salk Institute for Biological Studies. His wife was Patricia Lynn Stewart de Hoffmann.

204 George Edward Backus (1930- ), professor of geophysics at Scripps Institution of Oceanography. Varda Peller Backus, MD, is associate clinical professor of psychiatry at UC San Diego School of Medicine.
Eckis: Yes, she is. She is about his third I think. He was one of the many husbands of Marianne McDonald.205 Did you know that?

Morgan: I did not.

Eckis: And he married one of the Marstons. It was just—he was one of these marrying types and seemed to collect wives.

Morgan: Did you ever go up on the mesa with Roger to the place where he always said that he would stand on an old chimney and share his dream of the campus? Did you ever see that?

Eckis: Yes, I think I have been up there with him. There was that whole mesa, such a change and all that Golden Triangle bit. I remember the Flemings with their little girl and we with Annie, getting stuck in the mud there on a Sunday drive. We wouldn’t do that anymore.

Morgan: Roger also said that he once spent two afternoons on what is now the Revelle College campus wrapping colored ribbons around the trees that he thought should be saved.

Eckis: Oh yes. He was very, very determined that that campus was not going to be just leveled, and new planting. That they already had the beautiful trees there. And I think that’s one reason it’s such a beautiful place now, because you don’t get mature trees overnight. I’ve wondered what he’d think about the slaughter of them to make that pathway now, that walkway to the library. Have you seen that?

Morgan: It’s a straight shot, isn’t it.

Eckis: It is, yes. Eventually it may look better, but now I think it still looks kind of raw. And I guess lots of the area would have been that way if Roger hadn’t insisted on holding onto the trees.

Morgan: Did you go up with him to do the tagging, do you remember?

Eckis: No, I can’t say I did that.


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205 Marianne McDonald is professor of theatre and classics at UC San Diego.

206 Rear Admiral Charles DeLorma Wheelock (1897-1980), professor of oceanography at Scripps Institution of Oceanography and director of the Institute of Marine Resources. He was married to Beatrice Grace McLeish Wheelock (-1980), artist.
Eckis: Oh, he was a charming man. And a great help to Roger. He was so much more organized than Roger was. It was great having him. He was a big help. His wife unfortunately had a tremendous allergy to dogs. So that when Charles stayed with us before they had found a place to live—Bea hadn’t come down yet, so Charles was staying with us. And our schnauzer had to be kept outside during the entire period that Charles was here, because he wouldn’t have been able to go back if he smelled of dog. And that schnauzer knew when Charles left, and he made his rights known, he was back in the house.

Morgan: [Charles], Roger said, was such a nice guy.

Eckis: Oh, he was.

Morgan: And a kindly, virtuous man, [Roger] said—unlike Roger who called himself “ornery” and said, “I lost my temper.”

Eckis: He did get tempy.

Morgan: It sounds like an interesting balance to me.

Eckis: It was, because Charles was just a very sweet person and very gentle, and I think probably Roger’s methods of doing things must have been very difficult for him a lot of the time.

Morgan: Wasn’t it Charles Wheelock who talked the Miramar Naval Air Station into moving the flight paths?

Eckis: I wouldn’t be surprised. I don’t know for sure. I saw [the Wheelocks] once after they left here. We were spending about two or three weeks on the Santa Cruz campus and they were somewhere near and I went to visit them.

Morgan: I was wondering about Bill Nierenberg, who succeeded Roger. He, I gather, was a right wing, at least a conservative person. I wondered if there were political sparks between the two men. Did you ever see or hear any of that?

Eckis: I don’t recall any political problems, just know that Roger felt that when he came back—I think we already talked about that—that he should stay away from the lower campus and have his office on the upper campus.

Morgan: After you came back to UCSD there was the annual graduation ceremony at Revelle College in which Roger said that he always kissed each female graduate and shook hands with the fellows. And it was a little confusing some years.

Eckis: Yes, when the [men’s] hair was long. I was always afraid he would do it the wrong way, but he said he had a little trick that he always, if he was in doubt, he would ask
them something so they had to answer. If the voice came out down here he’d shake hands, and if it came out up here he’d kiss them. But he missed once, and one girl was left out and didn’t get kissed, and I think she felt a little insulted.

Morgan: As far as community involvements, were you a founder of this Citizens Coordinate for Century 3 (called C3)?

Eckis: We were involved at the very beginning, and I remember having one meeting here, one of the early meetings. And oh dear, what is the name of that architect who really did found it? It will come to me at midnight. But he gave a very interesting slide show to the group to emphasize things that we just don’t notice about our own city. He had pictures taken as you came along [Highway] 101 and came into San Diego that showed the ugly signs. And said we just didn’t have, you know, civic pride, that we would have the entrance to our town be so ugly. That we ought to think about it and do better. And he was just really a great influence. It seems to me that Judy Munk was one of the early ones, too. I’m not quite positive. But that group, they did great things. I don’t know if you knew that when they were putting in [Interstate] 5 that they were going to have the main four-lane on each side, I think, go right under the Laurel [Street] bridge, where it’s such a pretty road now. And C3 was instrumental in helping avoid that, so that that entrance to the city would be pretty. And then also [Highway] 52. When 52 went in, the road builders were going to put it right down the middle, you know, and obliterate the little creek that’s there.

Morgan: In San Clemente Canyon?

Eckis: Yes, San Clemente Canyon. And C3 was very strong on that, and got the road put up the side and saved it so that the canyon bottom is still there, nice for hiking and picnicking and things. [The architect] was Ruocco. Ha! Didn’t wait ’til midnight. Lloyd Ruocco. He was a very, very influential person getting it started, and I think he did a lot for San Diego.

Morgan: And you are still active in it, aren’t you?

Eckis: Yes. I served on the board for awhile, but now I’m not so active. They mainly seem to have meetings in San Diego at 7:30 in the morning, and that does not interest me in the least. I’m not that much of a morning person.

Morgan: What about the group called BLOB?

Eckis: Oh yes! Ban Large Office Buildings, I think.

Morgan: Was that in La Jolla?

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207 Lloyd Ruocco (1907-1981), architect.
Eckis: I think it must have been, because it would have been too late for San Diego. I had forgotten about that one. I remember the one that Giff Ewing and Roger had, which was to give all the reasons why it was dangerous to come to Southern California to try to keep people out instead of encouraging them to come in. That had a lovely name too, which of course I can’t remember.

Morgan: Was that the “Heaven on—?”

Eckis: No. “Hell on Earth.” There was, I think, some realtor or furniture man\(^{208}\) had talked about [San Diego as] “heaven on earth” and extolled all the virtues, and so they had the Hell on Earth group to stress that there was earthquake danger and drought and fire when it was dry and, you know, everything—because it was felt there were enough people here already.

Morgan: From looking around San Diego, I would say that was one of their failures. People did come.

Eckis: Oh. We’re all looking forward to when the tourists go home. It’s getting just harder and harder to move around.

Morgan: You have to plan your schedule, don’t you?

Eckis: Yes. I got two convenient parking places at [the beach] this early afternoon. I couldn’t believe it.

Morgan: In 1988 Roger was named Mr. San Diego by the San Diego Rotary Club. Do you remember the reaction to his speech? I gather it was a bit of a challenge, or chiding, at least—what he thought San Diego could become if people became involved.

Eckis: Actually I don’t. I remember Pete Wilson\(^{209}\) really running for governor when he was introducing Roger, and a bit of raised eyebrows on that it wasn’t the usual laudatory remarks about the speaker and the honored guest. He was definitely running for office. And I’m afraid I don’t remember much about what Roger said. But I’m sure I was proud of him.

Morgan: When you went in 1990 to the White House, that was—

Eckis: Oh, when he got the Medal of Science?

Morgan: Yes. Tell me about that event.

\(^{208}\)Joe Dwyer, furniture dealer.

Eckis: Well, the night before, there was a big dinner party given at one of the hotels that was very, very nice. And Bush himself wasn’t there, but the various people who were to make the presentations were, and it was a lovely party. And then the next day there was a party at—where was it? It wasn’t at Blair House. It was quite near the Capitol, near the White House, so it would be easy to get from one to the other, which gave an opportunity for reporters to interview the various medal winners. We all had to go through terrific security checks beforehand, of course. And we didn’t get to go in the front door. We went in through the side so that there would be a chance to check all our IDs and everything. It was, I believe, in the East Room. And there was a dais raised for the President and Mrs. Bush and various people who were going to make the presentations. Families were at least close enough so we could see. The honorees were seated in a center section facing the platform, and we were at the side. And as each one was introduced, he would go up on the dais and the President would present the medal and shake his hand. And Mrs. Bush shook hands, too. And there was one recipient who was in a wheelchair, and the President had gone down to give him his down there, and then Mrs. Bush very graciously went down and did it, too.

There was one weird thing—there was the Medal of Science, which is what Roger got, and the Medal of Industry\textsuperscript{210} or something. I can’t remember what the other one was. But the one who presented that latter one hadn’t done his homework, and he not only mispronounced the names, but tried to read the citation and garbled it terribly. Which was really rather weird. You’d think they would have been able to get ready. The one who presented Roger was someone we knew well, and he did a good job. But then the families never met the President or Mrs. Bush. They were on stage, and then they left, and we all stood up and the band played and everything and they left. Then we were told that we could spend about a half an hour, I think it was, walking around the first floor looking. And then we were very hastily, just very definitely ushered out. I thought that was too bad. When Walter Munk got it several years before, they got punch and cookies. We didn’t get anything. I guess they had felt they had done enough feeding the night before.

Morgan: This was after Roger’s first cardiac surgery, wasn’t it?

Eckis: Probably, yes. Yes, it must have been. So we were being very careful of him.

Morgan: And Roger then died in July of 1991.

Eckis: Yes. And that spring I had managed to cut down his travel a little bit, which was difficult. There was one meeting he wanted to go to in Innsbrook. His geography

sense was misleading. If he was going to be in Japan, he might as well go on to Timbuktu. Well, that might be too close. But we had gone to Washington, I think, for the spring meetings of the National Academy of Science, and then went on to London for the meeting of the Royal Society and the American Philosophical Society, which usually meets in Philadelphia. Actually we went first to Italy, and had, oh, about five days, I think, in Assisi at our daughter’s house that Roger hadn’t yet ever seen. And he’d been very anxious to get there. And then we went from there to London for the things there. He was definitely slowing down. They had one expedition, a boat trip down the river to Greenwich, and it was not what you or I would consider much of a walk from boat to the museum to see all the things. But for Roger it was quite tedious, and he got quite tired. And I thought they should have provided transportation. I saw to it that he got driven back. But that time in London was very exciting, because they had a banquet in the Goldsmiths’ Guild Hall, which was fascinating because the entire light for this great big area where we were having a wonderful dinner was all candlelight—candles on the tables and candles in sconces on the walls. It was wonderful that Roger had that trip. It was sort of a grand tour and saying goodbye, in a way. Let’s see, that was in May, and he died in July.

Morgan: And your children were all here at the time of his death?

Eckis: By the time that he officially died, they had all come out, yes. But he had decided that we should celebrate our sixtieth anniversary, besides the opening of the Mandel Weiss Forum, which was on the actual date, the twenty-second of June. And so he had arranged a small dinner party at the Valencia for the twenty-third. So that was getting pretty close. But I was so grateful that he went with his heart and didn’t have one of these long, lingering things that I’m going through now with Rollin. He loved teaching, and it was just great that they renewed his semester-at-a-time appointment. If it hadn’t come through, I think that would have killed him. Because he really liked young people. Friends who were here for lunch the other day had been at his funeral. One remembered Kirk Peterson, his cardiologist and good friend, talking about even when [Roger] was a patient, he was a teacher. Because he would ask Kirk questions about, “Well, what’s going on here?” and ask all the things that Kirk really wanted to bring out for these students. He was just curious up to the end.

Morgan: In 1993 you married Rollin Eckis, who had been a dear friend of Roger’s from college days.

Eckis: Yes. Rollin is older, but they were both geologists, and so they were both in Dr. Woodford’s lab. Rollin had graduated from Pomona and then gone on to Caltech for graduate work, and then come back and worked with Woody. So we all knew Rollin then, and his late wife was a classmate of mine. We’d been classmates at

211 Kirk L. Peterson, professor of medicine at UC San Diego.
college and high school. So the four of us had known each other for sixty-some years. We can’t quite figure out when we first met. They had both been in our wedding.

Morgan: Had you and Rollin kept up through the years?

Eckis: Well, the four—the two couples had, yes.

Morgan: And he was living in—?

Eckis: Well, they never really lived anywhere but California. He had an office in New York and I think they had an apartment there, but they lived in Bakersfield and then in various areas around Los Angeles. Because he was president of Richfield and then when it merged with Atlantic and became ARCO, he was vice-president, and that’s what he was when he [retired]. But he was largely responsible for discovering the big oil fields in Alaska. And he will still, to this day, in spite of Alzheimer’s, give you a lecture on drilling for oil in Alaska. Be happy to. That’s completely in his mind still.

Morgan: I read an account in which Roger said that Rollin in the 1950s was one of his close friends who urged him not to be so headstrong about the matter of the Loyalty Oath.

Eckis: Very likely. Because Rollin and Caroline were both Republicans.

Morgan: Well, he also said he was afraid it might jeopardize Roger’s academic future.

Eckis: It was a risk, of course.

Morgan: Were you ever there when the two men discussed this?

Eckis: I don’t remember that that had taken place. But I can understand that Rollin would be concerned about it. And of course as a businessman and not an academic, he probably couldn’t really understand what the fuss was all about. Many people couldn’t.

Morgan: Rollin was with you in April of 1995 for the launching of the new research vessel.

Eckis: Yes, yes.

Morgan: TheRoger Revelle. Tell me about that day.

Eckis: Well, that was really very exciting. All of my children were there, our children. And let’s see, how many grandchildren? Caroly Shumway was there and was on
the platform. Christopher and Myra.\footnote{Christopher Cleante Paci and Myra Claire Ellen Paci.} I think several of our grandchildren had got there. Caroly had a fairly new baby, but Grandmother Anne took care of that problem. It was a beautiful, sunny day. What’s the name of—? It’s a town with a very strange name.

Morgan: In Louisiana?

Eckis: In Mississippi, and I’m trying to remember the name of the town where it was. But it was one of several ships that had just been finished in this big shipyard. I’ll get it in a minute. Because they were building four of the same type, the AGOR thing.\footnote{R/V \textit{Roger Revelle} is one of four AGOR oceanographic research vessels built by the US Navy. The other three are R/V \textit{Thomas G. Thompson} (University of Washington, 1991), NOAAS \textit{Ronald H. Brown} (National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, 1996) and R/V \textit{Atlantis} (Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, 1996).} And one had already been finished and had gone to the University of Washington, and then \textit{Revelle} was the next one, and then two more, and then the one after \textit{Revelle} was to go to Woods Hole. And I forget where the fourth one was going. But Roger had at least seen this one that was going to Washington. The Sunday before he died, I think, there was an open house on it. It was here, it had come through the canal, and was here for some repairs. And Roger and I went through it. And I remember his saying, “It wasn’t like this in the olden days.” An elevator carrying things and air conditioning and all.

Pascagoula. That’s the town. I always think of “pass the goulash,” as my mnemonic device. But I was glad that he had seen that one. Of course he didn’t know there was going to be one coming to Scripps that would be named for him, but he did see what was in the works. [The \textit{Revelle} launching] was a very spirited day with lots of speeches, and then a reception afterward at a hotel in this little tiny town. The launching was fantastic. Because I had always thought that ships went down the ways backwards. Well this was done sideways. Have you ever seen one sideways?

Morgan: I have not.

Eckis: Well, it’s spectacular. They say that once in a while they go over and go a little too far, and that’s too bad. ’Bye, boat! But this one made a tremendous splash as it went over, and then it righted itself. But we had been told that it would. Some people didn’t believe it was going to make such a splash, and got quite wet. But I whacked the champagne bottle at the right time, almost forgot to say “I christen thee \textit{Roger Revelle},” and hit it so hard that I almost fell over. But it was a very exciting moment to see it.

Morgan: I have seen the photograph of the \textit{Revelle} hitting the water, and it \textit{was} dramatic.
Eckis: It was indeed. And we had hoped to be able to go on her at that time, but they said no, we couldn’t. They had a cherry picker off on a boat somewhere that brought a whole bunch of workmen over, and the minute it had righted they were lowered onto the deck and then took charge and brought her up alongside so that it was moored right by the dock.

Morgan: Then later you went back to sail her home.

Eckis: Yes. Yes. I at that time had asked Bob Knox,214 the chief scientist, just almost jokingly, whether there was a chance that Rollin and I could go through the canal. I said we’ve neither of us ever done that. And he was sweet enough to remember it. Of course by the time that it was time to do it, it was clear that that was not the thing to do with Rollin. As Bill, my son, said, “You wouldn’t have any peace of mind at all with Rollin on a ship. You wouldn’t know what he might do.” So Mary Ellen, our middle daughter, was delighted to do it. It was an absolutely wonderful ten days. I discovered that oceanography was fun, as Roger had said always. And I found that I had—by osmosis, I guess—absorbed more than I realized, because I knew what they were talking about to some extent. And I kept thinking, “Gosh, if I were sixty years younger, I’d like to take this up.” And the food was great, and everybody—all the scientists and all the crew—were just delighted. They were like kids with a new toy, just so excited about the ship and the equipment.

Morgan: The laboratories are so modern.

Eckis: Oh, they’re incredible. One of the tests that was done was with Navy personnel. We had gone near an island whose name I don’t remember. They arranged a boom, I guess, or telephone pole or something, that was anchored at both ends with buoys, and the ship sailed over this while divers were on it taking pictures. I kept thinking, “I’m glad it’s not a son of mine doing this.” They were doing all kinds of [approaches]—we’d go through at high speed and at low speed. I think we made maybe fifteen passes (I’m not quite sure) over it. We could watch some of it on the television set on the deck and see the divers down there. It was very exciting. I don’t know what they found, but I hope they found out what they wanted.

Morgan: We were talking earlier about the philanthropy of your great-aunt, Ellen Browning Scripps, and how she made decisions large and small as far as giving. You seem to have inherited part of that spirit. I would love to know how you set priorities for philanthropy. Do groups come to you or—?

Eckis: Oh, do they come to me! I’ll say. Well, I’m trying to be a little bit selective. It’s just impossible to give to every single place. And so for large gifts my priorities are

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Scripps College and the La Jolla Playhouse and the La Jolla Chamber Music Society. And of course the Symphony loomed large for quite a while, but that, alas, died. But smaller ones, oh, I get a lot of guidance from my kids, actually, because my son and daughter-in-law are very careful givers, very thoughtful, and I often when I am with them, look at their lists. Because they check very carefully as to what percentage is really given where it’s supposed to go and how much goes for overhead and running the office and all like that. And they’re very fussy. So I get a lot of help from them. I don’t manage to do quite what they do. They don’t open all their mail every day. They put requests in a box, and then once a month they go through the whole thing. It saves them time. And then also they see how many requests they have had from the same place. And they don’t like that. I have tried doing it, but I don’t seem to manage. I guess I’m too curious, and I tend to sit by the wastebasket and open my mail. And the ones I know I’m not going to do anything about go right in.

Morgan: Did you and Roger decide together in his lifetime on these, such as San Diego Symphony, for example?

Eckis: Yes, we were both very interested in that. There was one that he gave, where I think he really just kind of got worked on, it was in his later days and it was to Salk. And I know he hadn’t intended to, when we went to something there, but I think Ray,215 who used to be a development officer at UC and now is at Salk, got to him because it turned out that he had made a commitment. So I was stuck with that when he died. And that was a little annoying.

Morgan: Do you have this set up as a foundation?

Eckis: We do. We have a family foundation called the New Horizon. Annie’s family has its own foundation, but the others and I are all in the Horizon. And so we often do discuss gifts together in that. For instance, a gift after Roger died to the AAAS.216 They were hoping to get a very, very large gift that would help build the new building. But the kids and I all felt that he had a college named for him and that he would be more interested in something in his name that was actually helping students. So we held out for setting up a scholarship system at AAAS. And then there is one room that has his name and a big picture, and that’s the Revelle Room, one of the rooms in the new building. But we just felt strongly that [a scholarship] was a more meaningful thing for him.

Morgan: And the AAAS office is in Washington?

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215Ray Ramseyer (1919– ), assistant to the chancellor for development at UC San Diego, and fundraiser for Salk Institute for Biological Studies.

216American Association for the Advancement of Science
Eckis: Yes, they built a nice new building, and we went to the dedication of that last fall. The children were all there. It’s a splendid building. But in the first place, we just didn’t feel that we had the amount they wanted us to give to name the building. We usually have family meetings about every six months, and [discuss] any really large gifts from the Horizon Foundation. ##

## I felt it was not suitable really to use my Eckis name on [the $500,000 gift for the La Jolla Chamber Music Society “Revelle Series”], because it was really from the Revelle family. And Rollin wouldn’t understand it anyway. But they had thought of calling it Ellen Eckis, and I said no, I really thought it should be just Revelle. And the family voted. One of them thought that “Roger’s got his name on enough things, I think it should be Ellen, but I’ll go with the rest of them.” But as I mentioned a couple of times, it really is a Revelle gift, because anything that I give, [the family doesn’t] get. So it’s really from all of them. But I was glad to be able to do it, and apparently it was a significant gift for them. And I love that music. Having music right here in La Jolla is marvelous.

Morgan: And that’s the summer series?

Eckis: No, no. That’s called Summerfest. No, this would be the series that’s the winter series in Sherwood Hall. And that is harder to maintain, because after all, it’s a just under 500-seat theater or auditorium. They make money on the concerts, the Celebrity Series in the [San Diego] Civic Theater, because that’s so big. They don’t make money on this one. One thing they hope to do is to encourage younger audiences. You have to have a future audience. And so Neale Perl217 wants to have a certain number of seats be lower priced seats for people who wouldn’t be able to come. And he’s already doing that this summer. Neale Perl is the executive officer. This summer has been particularly lively. It’s been a wonderful series. I’m really enjoying it.

Morgan: You did rescue the San Diego Symphony more than once.

Eckis: Yes. It wouldn’t stay rescued was the trouble. It was a terrible loss. I wish the new group well. I hope they are going to succeed.

Morgan: Is the Chamber Music gift your largest to date?

Eckis: They said it was the largest they’d had. I didn’t realize that. But that’s what they said.

Morgan: Do you want to share the amount, or will it be announced?

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217 Neale Perl, executive director of the La Jolla Chamber Music Society.
Eckis: Well, I pledged $100,000 for five years.

Morgan: You’ve also given very generously for undergraduate scholarships at UCSD.

Eckis: Yes. That was something we felt strongly about, and it probably should be increased. Roger and I used to meet the applicants at a luncheon. They used to have students come down overnight, stay in the dormitories, and see the campus and all and then be interviewed. And we’d go to the luncheon and be so impressed. We’d read all the material about them beforehand and think each one is so wonderful. But the trouble is that our scholarship fund was not able to compete with Harvard and Yale and others, and we didn’t get enough of them. But I think it’s been working out a little better lately. And we also started one at Scripps College which we named the James E. Scripps Scholarship, because Mother had wanted to have her father’s name on the second residence hall which she and Aunt Ellen built. But the president didn’t think it was suitable to have a man’s name on a dormitory.

Morgan: At a girl’s college.

Eckis: Really. Yes.

Morgan: Pardon me. For women.

Eckis: But this has worked out just incredibly well. It’s based not on need but on ability. Roger felt that they needed to raise the caliber of applicants. And it has worked incredibly well. It has brought in young women who really hadn’t heard about and didn’t know about Scripps. And then they’ve applied for this scholarship, and even if they didn’t get one they came anyway. There are sometimes twenty. The scholarship continues for all four years. They call them the “Jessies,” James E. Scripps. It has really been a great success. I think Roger would have been so pleased to know how extremely well it has succeeded.

Morgan: They are for incoming freshmen, is that right?

Eckis: Yes. And it’s really worked.

Morgan: You mentioned that your Aunt Ellen gave both big things and small, including giving you and Roger airline tickets one Christmas.

Eckis: Not airline those days. Train tickets.

Morgan: Train tickets. Did she ever give things anonymously, to your knowledge?
Eckis: I don’t really know. But I know what a difference it made to us with Roger’s hundred a month to have this $25 added a month was just incredible. I think others were rather jealous.

Morgan: Do you give anonymously?

Eckis: Sometimes.

Morgan: I always wonder when I see that in a program, whether it’s [La Jolla] Playhouse, and it makes one curious. There was a story that Roger, early in his days as director of Scripps Institution, once forgot to sign the payroll and hurried into La Jolla to take a personal loan to cover the salaries. Did you know about that at the time?

Eckis: I wouldn’t be surprised, because he was known to forget things. And that wonderful musical, that review that I told you about, was based on his forgetting to get the permission to go [to sea].

Morgan: Endless Holiday.

Eckis: Endless Holiday, yes. Well, I know that we established a loan fund that when—I don’t know if it had to be a student or if it could have been young faculty—was needing some money that they could have, I believe, an interest-free loan. We had sort of a revolving fund that was to help out. I don’t think it was very big, but it was often quite useful.

Morgan: You and Roger gave $100,000, I read, to the Faculty Club at UCSD. There had never been a faculty club and—

Eckis: Yes. He felt very strongly that there should be a faculty club. And it’s very, very well used. And they have something that he wanted. He always enjoyed the fact that at the Harvard Faculty Club at lunch time—I don’t think they did it at dinner, I think it was just lunch—that they had one big table that anybody could just go and sit at. And he was a great believer in wanting to mix the various faculty together and not have just the physicists always be together and the chemists. And he felt this eating together was a good thing. So [at UCSD] they had what they called “Roger’s Table” for a while, and sometimes I see that they still have it and other times they don’t. And I don’t know if it works, but he liked the idea of having different disciplines get together.

Morgan: We talked about Ellen Browning Scripps and the early days and your first memories of her and how hard she worked as a teacher and raising siblings. But we didn’t really talk much about her half brother, E.W. Scripps, who was the first to come to San Diego in your family, wasn’t he?
Eckis: Yes, he was. He bought that Miramar Ranch property and felt he could run his empire from there. And Aunt Ellen used to come out and visit him out there. Then he invited her to move out permanently and stay with [him]. I read one of the letters from her in the collection thanking him, but no thank you, because she said no matter how much family members liked each other that to live together was another thing. It was better to be independent. Then she did move out and build her house on Prospect Street. I never really knew him anywhere near as well as I knew Aunt Ellen, of course, but you could always tell when he’d been visiting her because he was the only one, as far as I know, who ever smoked in her house. And she’d be standing at the front door, waving it [open and shut], and trying to air out the house, and you’d know Uncle Ed’s been there.

Morgan: Was that cigars?

Eckis: Oh yes. Great big nasty black cigars.

Morgan: Do you have any feeling or knowledge why he came to San Diego in the first place, how he chose it?

Eckis: I don’t know whether it had to do with his health, because he had been advised to take this trip that he [took], and Aunt Ellen went with him, to sunny climes. And it may be that he just felt that it would be wise to be in a warmer place than Detroit. I guess he liked it. Then Aunt Virginia came out and joined Ellen and had her own room, and then she built her own guest house, [the Wisteria Cottage], which is where Barbara Cole’s bookshop[^218] is now.

Morgan: What is your early memory of E.W. Scripps? Would that have been when you were in college?

Eckis: Oh no. He was dead by that time. I really don’t have many, Judith. As I said, I didn’t see him very much. He was on his yacht a lot of the time. Somehow my brother Bill got to know him, and Uncle Ed invited Bill to go on an around the world trip with him. And mother said no. She thought that Uncle Ed was an evil, womanizing, cigar smoking, whisky drinking man and would be a bad influence. She was absolutely incensed when Uncle Ed said, “Well, what do you have to say about it?” And she said, “Lots.” And she didn’t let [Bill] go. I always felt it was a mistake, because I think it would have been a very stimulating year for my brother who never had much interest in things. Bill drank just as much and smoked just as much without going with Uncle Ed. And I think it would have done him good and opened his eyes a bit. He was very unmotivated.

Morgan: Was he college age at the time?

[^218]: John Cole’s Book Shop was founded in 1946 by John Cole (-1959) and Barbara Cameron Todd Cole (1913- ). It moved to Wisteria Cottage in 1966.
Eckis: No, he was in high school. He graduated finally from high school when I was a sophomore at Scripps. He was just not interested in education.

Morgan: Did your other brother go to college?

Eckis: He went to Caltech, and then I think in his sophomore year he developed such bad back problems that he had to stop. And he always liked to say that he was on leave from Caltech. But then he later developed multiple sclerosis. They were never absolutely positive that’s what it was. It may have been an outcome of his bad back, an injury he had had, but he never was able to go back. There was never even any thought of Bill going to college. So I was the first one in the family to go to college.

Morgan: What was the relationship between E.W. and Ellen Browning Scripps?

Eckis: Oh, very, very close. He was the youngest. He was eighteen years younger than she, and his mother was fragile, not in good health. And so Ellen essentially brought him up. He was very anti-feminist and didn’t believe women had much say. Except Aunt Ellen was the only one. He really respected her mind and always said wonderful things about her. But he, for instance when he had six children, four boys and two girls, he really paid more attention to the boys in settling the estate and things like that. The girls were just not as important. And one of them was a very bright woman. But he just didn’t have much good to say about women.

Morgan: But he did run decisions past your Aunt Ellen, I gather.

Eckis: Yes. I think in fact that’s probably why she got interested in the Oceanographic. He became interested in it and he used to say he had endowed not an institution but a man. He was very interested in Ritter and also Dr. Sumner. I think I’m right on that. I believe that it was also Sumner. But this was—let me see. I was in La Jolla summers, and so the only time I would have seen him was if he were over at Aunt Ellen’s, and I don’t have much memory of it.

Morgan: Was it mainly because he loved the sea, or did he love science, E.W. Scripps?

Eckis: I don’t know. He certainly enjoyed sea voyages. He spent a lot of his time on his yacht. But he and Ellen, of course, probably got even closer with the two years that they traveled in Africa and Spain and I believe, but I’m not sure, England. They were mainly going to warm places for his health. And that’s when she wrote her famous travel letters. She had been writing what the paper called “Miss Ellen’s Miscellany,” her daily column. And she had gotten so used to doing that, that she wrote and sent it back to the paper. And so [the letters] were published.

219Francis Bertody Sumner (1874-1945), professor of biology at Scripps Institution of Oceanography.
Morgan: In the Detroit paper.

Eckis: Yes, for the Detroit paper. Scripps College, some years ago, thanks to one of the alums, published a small volume of the travel letters. They chose mainly ones about women. We’re hoping sometime to publish more of them. She was a keen observer. I may have mentioned the bullfight that she wrote about so vividly that a woman behind me at the Woman’s Club where it was being read, said, “I think I’ll have to leave.” [Aunt Ellen] obviously wasn’t liking it, but she was observing it intently and then wrote it down. I don’t know how she got into some of the places. She got in a harem at one point. And she just seemed to manage to see women of all types and stations in life on those trips, on those two years. And I guess it was natural for her to come on out here and be fairly close to him.

Morgan: As for the family today, we were talking earlier about the trust involvement you have in the area called San Dieguito, which is north of La Jolla.

Eckis: Yes. It’s bounded by [Interstate] 5 and Via de la Valle and El Camino Real. There’s one little tiny piece that’s east of that. It is beautiful.

Morgan: And you and Roger originally thought this would be a way of saving open land in San Diego. Is that right?

Eckis: At that point we also had land up along Del Dios Road, quite a lot. But the only one we’re still involved in now is the San Dieguito.

Morgan: And the entire family is involved in this?

Eckis: No. I’m trying to think which ones are. I don’t think Annie is. Just the other three.

Morgan: What would your family like to see happen there, or what would you like to see happen?

Eckis: Well, I’d be very happy to see a whole lot of it as a park. The Edison Company has a lot of mitigation it has to do, and they are buying some area and planning to expand the lagoon and make that be part of this park. You know, they want the Sea-to-Mountain trail system. And a lot of it should be open. We’re losing almost all the open space there is around here. But I wouldn’t mind seeing some of it have some houses, not this row after row, all identical. That I would hate. But our original plans and hopes have been to have houses on big lots and nice-looking. We weren’t going to build them ourselves, but that’s what we wanted to develop for it.

Morgan: And that would be overlooking San Elijo lagoon?
Eckis: No, it isn’t San Elijo. San Elijo’s, I think, the next one up. I don’t know why, but this one’s called Del Mar. But we should know fairly soon how this is going to come out.

Morgan: You said it had been three generations now in the talking.

Eckis: Yes. Really. Because it was Roger and I, then Bill and the girls. But some of the grandchildren are involved.

Morgan: Your calendar seems as busy as ever. You were talking about your autobiography class, and a yoga class.

Eckis: No, it isn’t yoga. It’s Tai Chi.

Morgan: Tell me about that.

Eckis: Well, that’s an interesting occupation. The first half of the hour is spent breathing, doing various breathings and stretchings and things. And I’m not at all sure that I am breathing in my abdomen and breathing in the various areas, but it’s all very relaxing. And then in the second half, we go into the movements. Unfortunately, we have just one instructor now. There are two or three at a time of the advanced ones in class and three or so of the dubs. And so the advanced ones just go ahead usually on their own because they know what to do, and he struggles with us, trying to get us to turn and do the various things at the right moment. I always feel I’m going to fall on my nose some day, but I haven’t yet. And I’m hoping it’s going to increase my balance. It’s a good thing to do, I think. One girl yesterday in the advanced group said that when she had started that she was absolutely rigid, and she said now she’s much more relaxed. And she showed us how different she felt. She felt that she had really benefitted by it. So I keep hoping I’m going to benefit, too.

Morgan: You’re also active with La Jolla Library, aren’t you?

Eckis: No, I’m not. I was on the board many, many, many years ago, but I haven’t been in a long time.

Morgan: Your involvements today include La Jolla Playhouse still, don’t they? Are you on the board?

Eckis: I’m on the board now. I never had been before. Roger always had been. And my involvement there had been to go and pick him up when it was time for him to leave to go to something else, to pry him out. I’ve been on the board now for about four months. But I was always interested and concerned. I like acting, and I like music. That’s probably one reason I like opera.

Morgan: Are you involved in selection of productions or previews?
Eckis: No, the board really doesn’t say what’s going to be. We hear about it, and get to go to rehearsals and things.

Morgan: I heard you comment once on the noise level of some future production.

Eckis: Yes. Well, *Rent*. Did you go to that?

Morgan: I did. What did you think?

Eckis: Well, I think I could have enjoyed it more if it hadn’t hurt my ears so. I just don’t see why it has to be so loud. But I know a lot of people like it, but I think it’s because they’ve gotten deaf and—

Morgan: Perhaps grew up with music playing at that level?

Eckis: I guess. Probably. I really think it, well studies have shown that it is damaging people’s ears.

Morgan: The Playhouse lost a lot of money in 1983, ’85, and those years. I know Roger was concerned with that when he was on the board. Has it turned around now?

Eckis: It’s definitely turned around. They said they wouldn’t have asked me to be on the board if it were still in the red. It’s actually in the black now. And Des MacAnuff was excellent in many ways, but he just didn’t count pennies at all. He just spent too much money. Roger used to get very upset, because we’d make a contribution that was supposed to be for endowment and then it would be gone. And he felt that with any organization—to survive—that endowment is so important. But now they are beginning to build up an endowment, and I think it’s really on a very firm basis. And it’s certainly getting wide interest and attention.

Morgan: Michael Greif is the new director.

Eckis: He seems to be doing a very good job.

Morgan: In your autobiography writing class, is that a UCSD Extension?

Eckis: It’s an Extension. It’s under the Institute for Continued Learning, ICL. It isn’t a class; it’s a group actually. I mean, there’s no teacher, and we don’t get grades or anything. But two people take turns leading it, and that means they are responsible for seeing that people sign up for the session and then being sure they don’t talk too long. And then encouraging comments afterward. It’s lots of fun. I’ve been going, goodness, I’ve been going since the fall after Roger died. And it’s really been a very, very interesting thing.
Morgan: Is this weekly?

Eckis: No, no. It’s every other week, in the mornings. It isn’t just autobiography. There is a program of events, you could just take a sandwich and stay all day. I mean there are all kinds of groups. I went to a play-reading group for a while. I’d like to join that one again. They are such an interesting group of people. I mean, they are of course mostly retired people, and their backgrounds are so different. Many have come out here to retire. Some, a few, are San Diegans, natural, I mean born San Diegans. And some are retired doctors, lawyers, judges, grew up on farms in Iowa or New York or Europe, so that the backgrounds are so different that it’s fascinating the stories that come out.

Morgan: How large is the group?

Eckis: Well, I’d say there are twenty or thirty at a time that are there, and those of us who like it a lot put our hands up when we were asked if we’d like to continue during the summer. So it has continued, but we had the last one yesterday, so there won’t be any now until October 6. But what happens, I think, for all of us is that something that one person reads will remind you of something, “Oh yeah, that’s something I could write about.” You never know what’s going to come out. And I often get ideas during the night or when I’m waking up in the morning and then I’m all eager to write it. It’s a nice group. I love it.

Morgan: Do you jot down notes in the night when you think of things?

Eckis: Sometimes on the bedside table in the morning, but what I like to do is just get right to the computer. Do you write on the computer?

Morgan: I do.

Eckis: I find my thoughts just come out so much more easily, especially with my arthritic hands it’s harder and harder to write. Before, I always wrote papers on a typewriter. But it’s so much easier.

Morgan: And it’s easy to correct, too.

Eckis: Oh, I know. It’s lovely.

Morgan: I would like to talk a little bit about some of your travels. You mentioned Italy, and you mentioned once driving in Rome. Was that an early trip?

Eckis: Well, Roger’s travel, of course, had to do with where his meetings were. And scientists have a way of choosing awfully nice places for meetings. And very often families can go along. So that one was in Rome and was when the Sverdrups were still alive. Yes, they were both there at that one, because that was when I couldn’t
find my way to get to the hotel at the top of the Spanish steps after I’d let Gudrun out, below. The meeting itself was held out in a place—now it isn’t remote, but it was at that time fairly remote—sort of a city that had been built and had meeting places and everything. Then Roger said, “Well, I told Harald that you’d take Gudrun back.” And so here I was suddenly driving in Rome. Now I don’t do it, but my daughter does. That time Walter was with us, Walter Munk, and two of our daughters and our son. Annie was already married. Annie married young, so she missed out on an awful lot of travel. We bought this little car in Florence, and we managed to take ten days to get from Florence to Rome. It was not your usual route. Because we were just seeing everything we wanted on the way, and I remember spending one night in San Gimignano and I’ve always wanted to go back. I never have. And one night in a seaside place. We’d have these wonderful picnics. We’d have committees. One person was to choose the picnic spot, and another was to organize the lunch. Roger loved peeling peaches for some reason, and so a family quote always is, “Can I peel anybody a peach?” So we picnicked right up to the time we got to Rome. And our car was not a desirable car for the fancy hotel. What is that? The Hass—?

Morgan: The Hassler?

Eckis: The Medici Hassler. And I’ll never forget. They always had had us go and park our little car off somewhere. They didn’t want it parked nearby, but we had to bring it up in front to load, to leave. We opened the trunk, and there was a terrible smell. We’d all forgotten that our picnic basket was still in the trunk. And it had, you know, a little bit of cheese, and probably a little bit of fish, and a few other things. And Walter, with great aplomb, picked up this stinky thing, and handed it to the elegant doorman and said, “Dispose of this.”

But Roger, as was his wont, sort of took that over as if he had done it. And he hadn’t. He hadn’t come out yet. He was still paying the bill. Because he later said, “Well, what happened to our knives, and what happened to the basket?” We said, “Forget it. It was worth losing whatever we had in that basket just to see the face of that elegant doorman when he was handed it.” We had started out with a basket that had been a fruit basket or something, because the children and I had gone over on the ship. Then Walter and Roger joined us in Naples, and we went on from there. Didn’t get the car until we got to Florence.

Morgan: Roger talked about Gubbio.

Eckis: Yes, and he finally got there on the trip to Italy when he got to see Mary’s house. For some reason he had this fascination for the story of the wolf that was made a Christian by St. Francis. I don’t know how it happened to be so fascinating to him. Nobody else seemed to know anything about it. But he probably read it in the Book of Knowledge when he was a kid or something. So we did take a trip to Gubbio. It was a cold day, and we had two cars—the one that Mary had rented and her
sister-in-law’s car. We had lunch in the city, and then we saw the church and various things, and he said, “Now I’ve got to see this place.” I think there is some great geological discontinuity or some geological thing. Of course we couldn’t really see it, but we had to drive as far as we could so that he felt he’d gotten close to it. And of course we came home with a little bowl with a wolf on it, which is hanging out there.

Morgan: It’s a bowl?

Eckis: Yes. I’ll show you later. But Roger was satisfied, because he had finally gotten to Gubbio.

Morgan: But you never knew why he cared so much about the marauding wolf.

Eckis: No. I’ve never understood, and I never thought to get him to try to explain why he was so interested in that legend. Because he wasn’t a religious man, and yet he quoted the Bible as much as anybody I ever have known, for some reason. But he didn’t go to church. I guess he got enough of it as a kid, probably had to.

Morgan: Did he like poetry?

Eckis: Yes, he did, very much. For quite a few years he would recite poetry, a lot of poetry. And I think that tapered off.

Morgan: Earlier we were speaking of various presidents that you had met. When Bill Clinton spoke at UCSD commencement in 1997, did you attend?

Eckis: I was there and I was supposed to be at the next table and I was going to have a chance to meet him. And then somehow that table was taken over and I was at the next table. So I never did meet him.

Morgan: Did he speak at lunch that day?

Eckis: Yes, he spoke, and many of us who were going to go to lunch decided not to try to go to the actual event because of the traffic. And we were going to be able to hear it and watch it on television outside, because the [Stephen Birch] Aquarium building was completely sealed off. We couldn’t go in there at all. It had all been debugged for Clinton. And so it was quite a disappointment that in this scientific institution the television was terrible! The color didn’t work, and sometimes the television sound was working and sometimes it wasn’t. So it was very frustrating. So we heard parts of his speech, heard the beginning of it and heard the girl just before him, and he said she had really given his speech.

Morgan: Oh, the undergraduate.

Eckis: Yes, the student. And then his motorcade drove up and we were all seated. It was a beautiful, sunny day, in fact so hot that the Aquarium had provided little like tennis caps for everybody and sun cream to protect us. And quite a few people did just go over and stand in line and meet him, but I guess I was shy and I didn’t. I wanted to tell him how much I admired his wife, because I had met her.

Morgan: Where did you meet her?

Eckis: Well, she received the first Ellen Browning Scripps Medal at Scripps College. Because of my being Aunt Ellen’s grandniece, and in the first class and on the board and all, I got to put it around her neck. I was so impressed with her. I think she’s a wonderful woman. But that day there happened to be a terrible storm, and at one point while Mrs. Clinton was speaking the power went out. The power went off, everything went black, and someone from down in the front said, “Whitewater!” and the Secret Service started out on the stage. [Mrs. Clinton] gave a perceptible little jump and then she just went right on, and she said, “To quote my mentor. . . .” She was talking about Eleanor Roosevelt and making an interesting comparison of Eleanor Roosevelt and Aunt Ellen as women before their time. She said, “To quote her, ‘It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness,’ but I hope someone knows how to turn the lights back.” It turns out a generator had been hit by lightning or something. And the power did come back. But meanwhile in the dark she continued with her talk. And I thought she just showed such incredible poise. Someone asked me the other day whether I thought she had written it, and I said I thought that the way it sounded I think she probably had. And the fact that she could go on anyway when the lights [went out] and give it in the dark, it seemed to me she had. So at least I met the better half of the family.

Morgan: How do you think she will handle this siege situation since this week in August?

Eckis: I don’t know. With dignity. She and the president were both classmates with the president of Scripps College. And Nancy221 was down here, we had lunch together on Monday, and she said, “I’m not going to even turn the television on tonight.” I think she is very upset.

Morgan: That was the night of the President’s speech to the country.222

Eckis: Yeah. It’s a real test of family.

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221 Nancy Y. Bekavac, president of Scripps College since 1990.

222 On August 17, 1998, President William J. Clinton gave a speech in the White House Map Room admitting an inappropriate relationship. This is the siege situation to which the interview refers.
Morgan: All your children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren live somewhere beyond San Diego, don’t they?

Eckis: Yes. The only one even in California is my granddaughter Ellen Hufbauer, who is in the first year of her residency at the University of California, San Francisco hospital where she got her degree in May. And the next nearest geographically is my son in Illinois, Evanston, where he is a psychology professor at Northwestern. And then from then on they’re up and down New York, Massachusetts, Washington, D.C. Oh no, I beg your pardon. One family lives in Portland, Oregon—near Portland.

Morgan: Well, I know they like to visit.

Eckis: Some of them come out more often than others. Carolyn, the one who lives in Chevy Chase, Maryland, who is the mother of the doctor, is on the Scripps [College] board, which is great. She’s been on for I guess it’s, well it’s before Roger died, now that I think of it. So it’s been about eight years. She gets out when she can and flies here and drives my car up, and we drive up together. Before I was being encouraged not to drive, she’d fly to Ontario and I would drive up. But they don’t seem to want me to do that anymore.

Morgan: You have spoken of your great admiration for your mother and for your great-aunt Ellen. Are there other women who have been in the forefront of influencing you, as you look back, men or women for short term or long who—?

Eckis: Well, two of my favorite professors at Scripps. One was a psychology professor. I was majoring in child psychology. I laugh because there were no children and we had no nursery school, of course, and so I learned just enough to be terrified of Annie and do all the wrong things. But I was very, very, very influenced by Una Sait. She was a very unusual woman. And she was writing a book on the family, and so our lectures were the chapters in her book she was writing, essentially.

Morgan: Oh, you mentioned that, yes.

Eckis: And then the other one was Ruth George, who was the English professor. I think I’ve mentioned her to you.

Morgan: You did.

Eckis: She would be very pleased to know that I was continuing to write, because she encouraged me to do it. But when you have small children, somehow you don’t. I know in our early days Roger was quite disappointed and he said, “You have a good mind and you aren’t using it.” He thought I should be reading philosophy or
something. Well, when you’re getting up at 6:00 a.m. to feed a baby, by nighttime you aren’t reading philosophy.

Morgan: Your son Bill comes out monthly, you said.

Eckis: Just about. He comes out for a meeting of the San Dieguito [Valley] Corporation and then spends a day or day and a half down at the newspaper.

Morgan: Do you think he might retire here and run the paper some day when he finishes teaching?

Eckis: I doubt it. I think he’s just definitely an academic. He really likes it. And his wife grew up in La Jolla, actually. She was born in Evanston but came to La Jolla when she was about two weeks. So when we travel together, as we have sometimes, it sounds as if we hadn’t made much progress—place of birth, place of residence—the same! But she is very, very involved with League of Women Voters. She is now on the national board, and she was head of the state board. And she feels La Jolla’s changed so much that she wouldn’t want to come out. Dick Atkinson had tried repeatedly to get Bill to take a position out here at UCSD. But Bill said, “Not with my present wife, Dick.” And I don’t think she’d move.

Morgan: Those who know you consider you to be very unflappable and witty and courageous.

Eckis: Gee.

Morgan: How do you see yourself?

Eckis: Oh, I think I flap.

Morgan: But you are made of stern stuff, it seems to your friends.

Eckis: Well, maybe so. I had a Vermont grandmother, and I guess maybe her strong genes . . . #
INTERVIEW SIX:  20 NOVEMBER 1998

Morgan:   ## Good morning.

Eckis:   Good morning, Judith.

Morgan:   Welcome back from the East Coast, to begin with. I hear the Scripps-Revelle clan has a new addition.

Eckis:   Yes.

Morgan:   Tell us about her.

Eckis:   She was born on the fourteenth of October, and is of course a beautiful little girl, and named for one Italian aunt and one Irish aunt, so her name is Adriana Elsie Paci-Furlong. And she’s darling. A totally unbiased point of view, of course.

Morgan:   So how many great-grandchildren?

Eckis:   That makes twelve. Six boys and six girls. A good group.

Morgan:   I did want to mention, because we had talked earlier about a novel that was written—was it in the 1950s?—about Scripps Oceanography?

Eckis:   I forget just when Teddy and Margaret were here. I know that they lived in the cottage up on Horizon Way one summer when they were here, the cottage that was Great-Aunt Ellen's guest house that we moved up there when it was going to be torn down by the art center. But Teddy used to say that Margaret made one place after another uninhabitable for them because she wrote so very badly about places. For instance the one after they had spent a year in Toronto, they would never have dared go back to Toronto again. And I think this one about La Jolla was called Sardine Goes West, but I'm not positive. It's a weird title. But that's what popped into my mind when Deborah Day asked me.

Morgan:   What was the reaction here when the book came out?

Eckis:   Well I think some people were upset at some of the things she wrote and some were not. It was humorous and probably quite accurate in some—. I actually don't

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223Sir Edward Crisp Bullard (1907-1980) and Lady Margaret Bullard. Margaret Bullard was the author of novels including Love Goes West: An Entertainment (London: H. Hamilton, 1953), based on the Bullard's visit to La Jolla.

224Deborah Cozort Day, archivist of Scripps Institution of Oceanography.
remember it terribly well. I may get it mixed up with another one by an author who was here years before that, who wrote about the Oceanographic.

Morgan: Were the characters recognizable in the Bullard book?

Eckis: I really couldn't say. As I say, maybe this other book popped into my mind just now, and in that they were, quite a few of them were.

Morgan: I'd love to get that title. We can add that to the record.

Eckis: I will try to find it.

Morgan: We were talking about what I consider your truly unique experience over the years: your role and relationships as a Scripps and a Revelle and your role as a university and community force in San Diego. As far as synthesizing this and summarizing, I'd like to address some broader questions about those relationships. For example, as Scripps looks ahead to its centennial, I was wondering how you might describe what SIO has received from the Scripps family, the connection over the years other than, obviously, the endowment and the philanthropy. It seems to me in the beginning that E.W. and Ellen Browning [Scripps] were in the planning stage, sitting around the table. Do you see their imprint or character through those early years?

Eckis: Well, the fact that it kept going, I think, was largely, during the lean years, due to them, because apparently when the institution would be having bad times Uncle Ed would call his sister and say, "They need more money," and she'd write a check. But no member of the family is really doing that now. The development officer, I guess they're called now, not money raisers, is very astute at trying to re-interest members of the Scripps family in the place, and he has an annual Scripps picnic held in Martin Johnson House, one of the few remaining of the old cottages. And some of them, I believe, have been contributing, but I don't think anyone as generously as Aunt Ellen did. Of course, one of the family gave the [whale] statue and the fountains in memory of his brother, who had died of a heart attack on the way to Hawaii years ago. And his brother and his family gave that fountain with the whales.225

Morgan: Oh, up by the Aquarium.

Eckis: At the Aquarium, yes. And I think that, as far as I know, is the most substantial contribution any of the family has made.

225The bronze sculpture *The Legacy*, by artist Randy Puckett, was donated in memory of Edward (Ted) Willis Scripps II (1930-1987) by his wife Jean Scripps Boas and children William Hawkins Scripps, Cindy Leising, Ed Scripps, and Christie Scripps. It was dedicated March 16, 1996 at the Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography.
Morgan: Which Scripps was that?

Eckis: That was one of E.W. Scripps' grandsons. I forget which. I think Ted was the one who died, and so that it would have been, obviously, one of the others. There were six in that family, four boys and two girls.

Morgan: I will look that up. I read that the first gift from E.W. to Dr. Ritter was an anonymous $500.

Eckis: Five hundred?

Morgan: In 1903. And it was the largest single contribution that Dr. Ritter and Dr. Fred Baker had received.

Eckis: They must have been excited.

Morgan: Yes indeed. It made things possible.

Eckis: Five hundred dollars! What would that equal today?

Morgan: I was wondering. I can't imagine. But apparently Ellen Browning Scripps and E.W. spent a lot of hours in the beginning sitting around the table at Miramar Ranch in this planning phase.

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: Reversing that mirror of the family and the institution, what do you think the Scripps family has received over the years from this founding? It seems to me an unusually intense and consistent relationship for much of a century.

Eckis: What have they received? Gratification at having started something, been involved with something so significant.

Morgan: It seems an unusual link. I can't think of many examples of such a personal family involvement.

Eckis: Yes. And of course so few of the family are in this area. It's interesting that so many of them are in the Midwest, in Chicago and Ohio. I don't mean Chicago, I mean Michigan and Ohio. I don't really feel like I'm giving an answer to that, Judith.

Morgan: There is a lot of pride.
Eckis: There certainly is on my part. I'm very excited about it, and watching it grow. It was such a tiny place in '31 when Roger and I came down here, supposedly for one year. And stayed and stayed.

Morgan: Do you think that E.W. had any idea of what he was launching?

Eckis: Oh, I can't imagine how he could have. The idea of going out so far to sea would be quite unusual. Of course he went around the world on his yacht, so that was nothing different for him, but the idea of going out and plumbing the depths I don't think had even been thought of.

Morgan: Do you know of any times when you or others in the family were upset with the way that the institution was progressing and made suggestions or responded to being asked for advice?

Eckis: No, I don't.
Morgan: Did your Aunt Ellen ever talk to you or your mother, that you know of, about carrying on that particular philanthropy?

Eckis: I don't believe she did, Judith. The only time that I know of that she and Mother did something together, was in financing the second residence hall at Scripps College, that they both wanted to call for Mother's father, James Edmund Scripps. But the president at that time didn't believe a women's residence hall should have a man's name. So his name had not been anywhere on the college until, oh, a couple of years before Roger died. We started the James E. Scripps Scholarships, to have something in Grandfather's name, because without him there wouldn't have been the paper and there wouldn't have been the funds available for us to do it. But mother and Aunt Ellen did co-finance that second dormitory. Residence hall, they're called, not dormitories. And I don't believe that she suggested anything else to Mother.

Morgan: You said that Aunt Ellen responded to needs that she saw, such as putting the breakwater in for the Children's Pool, and a fence around the zoo so they could charge admission.

Eckis: And building the big aviary.

Morgan: Yes, yes.

Eckis: So birds could really be flying practically free.

Morgan: Where did she get that idea, do you know?

Eckis: I have no idea, but it was a wonderful idea.

Morgan: It seems very early.

Eckis: Yes. I don't know of there being anything like that when she traveled that she would have seen. I think it is unique perhaps to here.

Morgan: And she founded the hospital, the original Scripps Hospital on Prospect Street.

Eckis: Yes, when she was in the clinic, the Gillespie Clinic, when she broke her hip, and she realized that the town was growing and would continue to grow. The story is that she called in Jacob Harper, her attorney, and said to get plans started for a larger hospital.

Morgan: Do you have any clue or guess how she might have felt about today's medical battles, the Scripps Hospital/Scripps Clinic mergers? They started out together. I just wondered how you think she might have felt?
Eckis: The only medical things that I can remember her commenting on were how when she was growing up, you either got diphtheria and survived or typhoid and survived, and she said, “Now they have special ailments down to your little toe.” She was a bit bemused I think at all the specializations and complications. But she probably would have been very interested, I imagine, in the work of the clinic and research in medical matters. She was a far-thinking person, and as I say, knowing that the town was going to need a bigger hospital. But of course it was supposed to be in La Jolla. I've always blamed the fact that the Golden Triangle has the 92037 zip[code] is because by the terms of the giving of the hospital it's supposed to be in La Jolla. And I think she would have been a little appalled to find that the Golden Triangle was called The La Jolla Village. It's just ridiculous.

Morgan: She is so synonymous with La Jolla.

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: I mean, obviously with San Diego, too, but the way La Jolla was when she first saw it must have—

Eckis: It was very tiny.

Morgan: And very beautiful.

Eckis: Yes. She has some beautiful writing about coming over from Miramar Ranch, where she'd come out and visit Uncle Ed before she built her own house. Really lovely writing about coming through the canyon and then seeing the sea and she loved the ocean. I don't think she liked being on it. I think I may have mentioned her terrible seasick voyage to Europe. She was absolutely miserable. But I think she liked to look at the ocean, but not go on it.

Morgan: But she would be a philanthropist to allow other people to go out on it.

Eckis: Yes, yes.

Morgan: Was that writing in letters or—?

Eckis: I believe this was—no, not in letters—one of her Miss Ellen's Miscellany Letters. And it's a very, very vivid description of absolute misery with seasickness, not helped at all by her brother coming in with a cigar and saying what a good dinner he'd just had! And she has a wonderful sentence about when they docked, Southampton I guess, that never had that place looked so beautiful. And she had a great affection for it, because of this firm land at last.
Morgan: How do you think she might have felt, because of her interests and involvement with education, about the idea of the charter schools and this new model school at UCSD?

Eckis: I have a feeling she would be very happy that it was going to take place, going to be on the campus there. Education was one of her big concerns. She’d had to struggle to get her education of course, working and then going to school and working and—

Morgan: How do you feel about that? The idea of model schools.

Eckis: I'm very in favor of it. It seems to me there are many young people who are just not able to get off to a good start because of their backgrounds, not having the opportunities and probably being in families where reading is not part of the regular thing and probably very little encouragement. So I think it's wonderful to catch them while they're young.

Morgan: So they know the options that are out there.

Eckis: Yes. I remember one young woman who applied for the Revelle Scholarship and she was from Point Loma. Not up on the cliffs, obviously. And she was the first one in her large Hispanic family to be even trying to go to college, and you wonder what gives this one individual that spark that pushes her on and gives her the curiosity and interest in study and all. But she went somewhere else. She didn't come here. I was really disappointed.

Morgan: That was at UCSD?

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: You wonder how she even heard about it.

Eckis: Yes, well she may have had an inspirational teacher, but it was a fairly large Hispanic family and she was the very first one to go to college.

Morgan: You said that being a Scripps in that first class at Scripps College had both advantages and disadvantages. I was wondering, looking back at all the years in San Diego, have you felt advantages or disadvantages as an adult because of the link?

Eckis: Well, I don't think the link is as strong now as it was in earlier days, so I don't think it's been a handicap. I think, by the way, as the town has gotten larger, the memory of [Ellen Browning Scripps] is getting smaller. Do you remember it always used to be that on her birthday on October 18, store windows had pictures of her. I don't think you see that anymore. I think that stopped.
Morgan: That's a shame.

Eckis: I wouldn't swear to it. Of course the La Jolla Historical Society, their fall luncheon they try to have as close to her birthday as possible, and it's always in honor of her birthday. But aside from that, I don't remember noticing anything uptown about her birthday. I imagine if one went to the Athenaeum there probably were displays there. Maybe Barbara Cole’s bookshop had, I don't know. But I don't think there is as much acknowledgment of her role. It's quite natural, because how many people, you know, come in who wouldn't have any idea who she was?

Morgan: It should be part of the curriculum, really, for this city.

Eckis: Yes, yes, to know the background and know how important her contributions in a quiet way were to the town.

Morgan: Do you know if the Bishop’s School is still marking her birthday? It seems to me there used to be a tea on that occasion.

Eckis: I just was looking at an invitation to a tea, but that doesn't say anything about her at all. It's a Christmas Tea. They may do something, I don't know.

Morgan: When you look around San Diego's philanthropists today, those who are giving anonymously or otherwise, do you see any individuals or foundations or families who you think are as far sighted as she was?

Eckis: Well, it certainly seems to me that the Jacobses226 are very far sighted. They've been giving wonderful contributions, and the Preusses.227 And then I think in San Diego, too, Mary and Dallas Clark228 are very consistent contributors to the life of San Diego, in a very quiet way. I don't know if there's any one family that would fit in her category, but those are some of the ones who come to mind.

Morgan: What do you see as San Diego's greatest need as a city, or some of the needs, as we approach this millennium? What are we lacking, if you could get involved and—

Eckis: City planning.

Morgan: Tell me about that.

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226Joan Klein Jacobs and Irwin Mark Jacobs (1933- ), founder of Qualcomm, Inc.

227Peggy and Peter Preuss. The Preuss School, a charter school at UC San Diego, was named in recognition of their support.

228James Dallas Clark (1913- ) and Mary Hollis Clark.
Eckis: Well, is there any? I don't think there even is a city planner now. Unless we could get Neil Morgan\textsuperscript{229} into that role. I've always admired his ideas.

Morgan: What about civic leadership and direction? Do you see any?

Eckis: No. Not outstanding, no. I've been admittedly disturbed by the mayor.\textsuperscript{230} I was very enthusiastic about her at first, but I think the arrangement about the football stadium was deplorable. And I'm not much happier about the ballpark either.

Morgan: It's the baseball—

Eckis: The baseball. Of course not being either a football or baseball fan, I may be showing a bit of prejudice, but it seems to me that there are other things that perhaps need doing more than that.

Morgan: And what would those be?

Eckis: Well, taking advantage of the waterfront, for one thing. We're blessed with such a beautiful waterfront, and I don't like the idea of this great massive stadium hiding a lot of it. I don't imagine you'll see the bay from the stadium if you weren't looking at the ball game. I have no idea which way, whether it's all enclosed or what it is. But I think cities that take advantage of their waterfront are rather few. Baltimore of course has done a wonderful job recently, really livening it up and making it very beautiful. And San Antonio with the river. But I think San Diego has kind of turned its back on it. It's pretty along Harbor Drive—they've done good things there, but I feel there's a lot that could be done to make it a more beautiful place.

Morgan: How does a city find leadership? How do you get people to run for those offices?

Eckis: I think it must be harder and harder. I can't imagine wanting to run for anything. But somehow people do, and they don't necessarily have imagination.

Morgan: I saw in the newspaper that the face of downtown San Diego is in for several changes in the next five years.

Eckis: Because of the stadium or—?

Morgan: The stadium and other projects—hotels, and after having construction slow, apparently things are picking up again.

\textsuperscript{229}Neil Morgan, San Diego-Union Tribune columnist and husband of Judith Morgan.

\textsuperscript{230}Susan G. Golding, mayor of San Diego since 1992.
Eckis: I think it must be hard on all cities to have the urban, the malls, taking away the businesses. I loved the old Marston’s downtown and Hamiltons; it was a friendlier downtown, perhaps. But some of the streets that have trees on them now are prettier. For instance, if you drive down Ash [Street], that's lined with jacaranda trees. That is so pretty. I hope somebody is going to listen to Neil's ideas about good use of the Naval Training Station buildings.

Morgan: That's almost 500 acres.

Eckis: It's a lot of land. And the idea of putting this [building] to train them to put out fires on that site seems to me utterly ridiculous, but unfortunately they haven't asked my opinion.

Morgan: But now it will be on the record. That's a good feeling.

Eckis: Yes. Now it's on the record. Because that could be anywhere. You don't have to have prime land for that. And I like the idea of connecting Mission Bay and the harbor, too. I imagine it's a little complicated to do, because there are businesses between, but that seemed to be an imaginative thing that might be done. But probably never will be.

Morgan: How do you feel about the look and the focus and spirit of the UCSD campus today when you're up there?

Eckis: Well, I find it very satisfying to go up there. I was up at the library the other night. I'm just so glad there are so many trees. That was one thing that Roger was determined on—they weren't going to bulldoze the whole thing to have vacant land to build on, and that's one reason there are so many mature trees. I'm not quite convinced about the promenade that goes to the library. When the trees grow bigger maybe it will be nicer, but it's a little sterile, it seems to me. I liked it better when there were more trees in that area, too. But I think it's really a beautiful campus. I always enjoy taking people up there to see it. And there are some interesting buildings. One of my many grandchildren is an architect, and he took Rollin and me up, guided us to a building that he wanted to show us. Of course I can't remember now which one it was, but it was one I hadn't seen at all. He knew about it as an architect and took us up to see it. But there again, there was a lack of trees, and we went on a fairly hot day and I kept saying, “You know, there needs to be some shade.” It was designed by an eastern architect who didn't realize how hot it could be on a hot day here, and how you really would like to be under a tree. But it was an architecturally interesting building. As one architect to another, of course, Stefano231 was very thrilled with it. I think I like some of the older buildings better.

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231Stefano Revelle Paci.
Morgan: What about the sculptures, the Stuart Collection? Have you walked around—?

Eckis: I have not seen all of them, Judith. I like the Sun God.\(^2\) I find that fun, and I have a little replica of it in my study. Have you seen the small sized one?

Morgan: No, I haven't.

Eckis: Oh, I'll show it to you. It's quite fun. I have it in my little office. I have yet to see the Snake Path,\(^3\) which I am told is lovely. Eloise Duff mentioned it the other night and said I must go see it. But the one with the buried television sets\(^4\) being watched over by monkeys I have not seen. I saw it in a video presentation by Mary Beebe,\(^5\) and I found it rather difficult to think of that as art. I suppose it's a commentary on modern life with so much time watching televisions that we're all monkeys, but I don't see it as art. And I'm getting more used now to the blue ping pong net or volleyball net,\(^6\) which seen from certain angles is kind of interesting. But the artificial tree\(^7\) that you go around as you approach the [Geisel] Library, I don't find very beautiful. I'd rather have a real one with leaves.

Morgan: I keep waiting for it to grow leaves.

Eckis: Yes. It just doesn't seem to.

Morgan: It's not seasonal.

Eckis: No. No, I can't say I've seen all of the art by any means. I have always liked the one by the Revelle Humanities, the little Stonehenge.\(^8\) That's near the theater.

Morgan: Near the Mandel Weiss [Forum]?

Eckis: Yes. They used to have Revelle graduations there. I don't know now if they are still doing that. Up to the last two years of course they've had all-campus


\(^5\)Mary Livingstone Beebe, director of the Stuart Collection at UC San Diego.

\(^6\)Robert Irwin (1928- ), *Two Running Violet V Forms*, 1983.


\(^8\)Richard Fleischner (1944- ), *La Jolla Project*, 1984.
commencements, and I don't know if the individual colleges are having their own as well or not. Have you happened to hear?

Morgan: I don't know.

Eckis: I just don't know. But I like the more personal ones. I always went to the Revelle one, of course. And the poor chancellor had to rush around and get to all of them, so it was easier for him, of course.

Morgan: What about the Scripps campus today? How do you feel about that—the lower campus, I mean.

Eckis: The lower campus. Yes, I realize you didn't mean Scripps College. I like it. I don't know what these newer buildings are going to be. One thing I think they did very successfully—you know they had quite a lot of opposition from people in the Shores in putting in a parking lot south of the buildings, but I think they did a very good job of hiding that with the gardens. Nice rolling gardens and Japanese flavor between La Jolla Shores and where the parking lot starts. And of course I love the bridge.239 I think that's very nice, and I'm looking forward to when they finally get the one over [Interstate] 5 to get to the Medical Center. That's going to be similar to that in that it will be all artificial materials, and to be testing earthquakes and all sorts of things.

Morgan: Is that a pedestrian bridge?

Eckis: No, I think that's going to be both. No, I think it will be a car bridge. It will certainly be a tremendous help to the students. It is a long way around now. But I'm delighted on the lower campus that they're reviving what was the director's house, Ritter House.

Morgan: In the original colony.

Eckis: Yes. Down on the water. Of course my son pointed out that it was a little odd to call it the Director's House, that only Ritter and Vaughan and Sverdrup had actually lived in it. But so now it's being called Ritter House, and they are doing a nice job of restoring it. They plan to use it for entertaining and possibly have the upstairs as guest rooms for visitors. Big need. I thought we were going to have to move from here into it when Roger became director, and I must admit I was delighted not to. Because we had just come back after being away from this house for six years, and I was just enjoying so getting settled back in it again. Then when Roger lost the “acting” and became director, I thought, oh dear, we're going to have to move out there, but we didn't have to.

239 Frieder Seible, Scripps Crossing Pedestrian Bridge, 1993.
Morgan: Was there a discussion of that?

Eckis: No, I think it was entirely up to us. And the university really benefited because Dr. and Mrs. Hubbs were delighted to have it, and so the university got rent from it instead of having us live in it for free.

Morgan: And it was never used again then as the director's residence.

Morgan: No. Of course when Carl Eckart became director he didn't want to live in it all by himself, and stayed in his own house, and we didn't want to. But of course it isn't as attractive as a residence now that the once new, now old, Aquarium is so close. But I think it's nice to have something of the old architecture still on the campus and retained.

Morgan: And the old trees help with that mood, it seems to me.

Eckis: Oh yes, yes. And there are a few of the original cottages that are used in some way. The very, very first ones were just single board-and-batten and then the ones up on the hill were double. The wind didn't blow through quite as much.

Morgan: What about the Scripps Library? Have you spent much time there?

Eckis: Well, I was there a month or so ago at some function. I think it's very good. I was glad they named it for Carl. It seemed to me there should be his name somewhere on the campus. One thing I don't like when I go in is to see my husband's shrunken head.

Morgan: It is the smallest of the bronze heads.

Eckis: Yes. Well, that was done by one of Giff Ewing's daughters by his first wife, and she happened to like to work in the reduced size. But for someone with as large a head as Roger's it was not appropriate. I just wince every time I see it. I don't like it. I feel that he's gotten in the wrong place where there are head shrinkers.

Morgan: Maybe it should be separated from the others so at least—

Eckis: Yes. But I know one time when we were up there Bill had one of his sons with him, who was a little boy to be sure, but he didn't have any idea who it was. It didn't look like his grandfather. I'd love to see Judy do one, Judy Munk.

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240 The Scripps Institution of Oceanography Library is located in the Carl Eckart building.

Morgan:   She's very talented.

Eckis:    She's done a very good one of Ed Frieman.\textsuperscript{242} And I think it would be nice if she
would do one of Roger.

Morgan:   Has that ever come up?

Eckis:    No, it never has, really. I think I should talk to her about it and see if she would.
She knew him so well.

Morgan:   Yes.

Eckis:    And I don't see why they should have that little tiny head. But to go back to the
original question, I like the library and I think it's a friendly library. It certainly is
interesting to go in there and be able to wander around and see the interesting
exhibits, and I think it's a very well done library. I like it.

Morgan:   I think it's remarkable how much air there is and light when you're inside, because
from outside it's so beautifully concealed in the hillside.

Eckis:    I know it. That you hardly know it's there. I don't know what architect built that.
Do you remember?

Morgan:   I don't.

Eckis:    Could it have been Liebhardt?\textsuperscript{243} I don't know.

Morgan:   Judy Munk was involved with the bridge, wasn't she?

Eckis:    Oh yes, very much so. And of course there was lots of opposition to that, too, as
well as the parking down below. But I think people have accepted it now. And it's
an interesting thing to see at night, with the lights. Of course having to be in a
wheelchair herself, she's so aware of the importance of having good access for the
handicapped, and it is interestingly done that you can go up one elevator and then
cross over in a little place and then take another, and you've got a wonderful view
from there unless it's a foggy day, from the elevator. I like those buildings
particularly.

\textsuperscript{242} Judith Horton Munk, bronze bust of Edward Allan Frieman, 1997.

\textsuperscript{243} Frederick Liebhardt (1924- ). The Scripps Institution of Oceanography Library building was designed by
architectural firm Liebhardt, Weston and Goldman, with consulting architect A. Quincy Jones, in 1976.
And it's nice that the campus has finally recognized John Isaacs and named one of the buildings for him. It was a building that just hadn't had a name before. It was probably called for whatever its use was. But now it's called the John Dove Isaacs Building. It was dedicated this summer. And that was really nice, because he was here for so long and was such an imaginative and interesting guy, that it was too bad that there wasn't anything with this name on it. And at the dedication, as Mary Carol [Isaacs] pulled off the blue cloth that covered the inscription that will go on the building, white doves flew off. It took me quite a while to realize that the importance of that, that his middle name was Dove. But it was a nice touch.

Morgan: That's beautiful.

Eckis: Yes, it was. All four of his children were there for the occasion.

Morgan: And what is the use of that building? Is it classrooms or—?

Eckis: No, I don't know. It's research of some sort. I just don't remember what. It undoubtedly is continuing for whatever it was to start with, but they just gave it his name instead of the name of the particular thing that it was used for. And I don't know. I'm sorry.

Morgan: I was thinking of Richard Atkinson, who was chancellor here at UCSD, as you know, before becoming president of the University of California system. He is a big member of your fan club.

Eckis: Oh, is he?

Morgan: He is. He has spoken to me of the sensitive behind-the-scenes moral support that you have given friends and colleagues over the years. Including the Atkinsons.

Eckis: My goodness.

Morgan: I wondered if it's sometimes easier to accomplish things behind the scenes. Do you find—?

Eckis: Well, I didn't know I was doing it. I remember one thing about Dick that I still sort of chuckle over. I was sitting next to him at a dinner party one night, I think in the Aquarium, and he suddenly turned to me and said, “Ellen, have you thought about getting remarried?” And I said, “Oh, I haven't had to think about it. I haven't been asked.”

Morgan: Did he drop the subject?

Eckis: Yes, I guess so. He didn't seem to have anybody in mind to offer me.
Morgan: When we started these tapes, the nation was in a very different phase politically. Last evening, as we were winding this up, the impeachment hearings were beginning in Washington. How do you feel about this?

Eckis: Well, it's hard to say. As so many are, I'm really annoyed at the President, and I think he's made us a laughing stock. It's ridiculous that he's acted the way he has, but I still cannot feel it's an impeachable offense. I'm fond of Al Gore and I wouldn't mind seeing him be President, but I just think that to remove a President in mid-term is a rather serious thing, and I don't want to see it happen. I think he should get more than a slap on the wrist, but I don't know what. I'm a great admirer of his wife, whom I had the occasion to meet on the Scripps campus when she got the first Ellen Browning Scripps Medal, and liked her so much, and I just feel so for her and for Chelsea. He should behave better. I hope he learns.

Morgan: What about the media role, since your family has been in newspapering?

Eckis: Well I think the media has maybe spent more time than it needed on it. I think people have gotten pretty sick of the subject. And yet I'm sure we read it, because it's there.

Morgan: And watch it.

Eckis: And watch it, yes.

Morgan: Have your children or grandchildren talked to you about this, the Clinton impeachment matter?

Eckis: I think we all feel about the same way, that I don't think any of us in the family really feel that he should be impeached. We haven't talked a great deal about it. At our family meeting last weekend we had a whole lot of other things to talk about than that.

Morgan: Your family meetings—one of the big roles is to decide philanthropy from the foundation, is that right?

Eckis: Well, we discuss all sorts of things. We have land holdings in various places, and various ones of the family are in charge of certain things. I'm very proud of my daughters because when Roger was alive he just sort of ran things and we were not any of us encouraged to learn about it and "just sign here." But each of the daughters has grown a great deal. Bill, my son, of course took over Roger's place. And he's very proud of them all, that they've all matured and learned how to handle things and are growing really and learning how to take care of investments more. We have a nice little saying. We don't talk about "when Mom dies"; it's "when Mom takes the wrong bus." That's an expression that Mary's lawyer presented and we all like it. We think it's kind of fun.
Eckis: And we're all able to talk about it perfectly calmly. For instance, we discussed a little bit at this last meeting what happens to this house, because it's left of course to the children. And I suggested a bed and breakfast, or a timeshare might be good, because none of them want to move out here, but they like to come out. So it's kind of a question. It actually belongs to them now, and I pay rent to the family for it. It's a nice little tax reason. But we meet about twice a year as a family, Mom and “the sibs,” as they're called, and we have a rule that one member of the next generation [comes] per family. We tried having the whole bunch, and that was just too unwieldy, to try to find a time when they could come and then accommodations and whatnot. So the idea is that each one of them is supposed to go back and report to the rest of the family. It's good to have them being in on discussions, because they have different interests than their parents may have.

Morgan: So that there were four grandchildren?

Eckis: The four children, and at this last meeting there was one Paci, the older one who’s a lawyer, and the youngest of Anne's children. I don't think Eric had been to one before, and it was really very nice to have his input. He had very sound ideas, and it was good to have him there. Because his mother had not been doing as good a job at reporting back to the children, and they felt they didn't know what was going on. And Eric was taking a lot of notes, and I'm sure he is going to let the other four know just what was being talked about.

Morgan: It is definitely a changing role of women, knowing the finances. ##

Eckis: ## I think the children have thought of [the house in La Jolla] more as being able to come out themselves and what with so many grandchildren and great-grandchildren, it’s—. But of course that would be complicated, so I’m going to have to be maintaining it and seeing that the termites don’t tear it down. It needs to be tented right now and I don’t want to do it. It’s such a mess with the garden. Just awful for the garden. But I used to jokingly say that I thought I’d give it to White Sands [retirement home] with life-time care in it, but I wasn’t really serious. They might not like the expense of maintenance, I can tell you.

Morgan: Speaking of the family and talking to your children and grandchildren, do any of them talk to you about their concerns for the future, for the world approaching the year 2000? There seems so much millennium talk out there.

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Eckis: I don't think we've discussed that particularly. Something I read the other day, this man said he wasn't going to fly until the 16th of January that year.

Morgan: Because of the computers.

Eckis: Yes. I'm just assuming that my son will get mine set for the new decade when it happens, if I'm still using it.

Morgan: Speaking of that, how is your autobiography class going?

Eckis: Well, I got back in time for it. I got back Monday afternoon, and I thought I was going to read it on Tuesday, but my name had fallen off the list apparently, and I was just as glad because what I had sort of ready I wasn't really very happy about. So I have another two weeks to work on it. I still like that group. It's a very interesting group of people, very varied tales that are told.

Morgan: What are you working on now? What are you writing?

Eckis: Well, the two that are halfway written, one is way back in 19—, let's see, 1920-21, I guess, because it was before Mother had built this house, and I wrote about the two summers in the Red Raven Cottage back in the days when there were no addresses and just names. And we had the Red Raven for two years, just at the end of the beach. It isn't there anymore. And then I didn't really get to any conclusion on that one. And then another night I started writing about coming to Cottage #24 on the campus and was writing about the early days there at Scripps. So I jump about, just whatever happens to be coming into my mind. And very often in the group, we all are aware of it, what one person reads will trigger a memory in someone else. Very few of us, I think, do it chronologically. We just write episodically about whatever happens to pop into our minds.

Morgan: Do you discuss books in that class?

Eckis: No.

Morgan: Trade book reviews or—?

Eckis: I think a book may come up once in a while, but time goes so fast, and with people reading, it's just too much.

Morgan: How long is your session?

Eckis: Two hours. And you're not supposed to read more than a fifteen-minute paper. If you have a longer one, then you continue it the next time. Our group all knows about Mary's Italian wedding and about Myra's Irish wedding, because those were big events in the family, of course. Myra is the new mother.
Morgan: We mentioned before we began taping the other day about the fact that former UC president, Clark Kerr, is beginning to write his memoirs. And I'm told that in defending his highly controversial decision not to appoint Roger as UCSD chancellor that he states he never felt obliged to do so, despite Roger's years of planning the campus and recruiting faculty. He also intimates, apparently, that there were reasons other than the Ed Pauley feud for Roger being passed over. I wondered if Roger had ever, other than the general acknowledgment that Roger was more inspiration than administration, as far as his skills, if he ever felt that there was anything more to that.

Eckis: Well, I think he felt that was the largest thing against him. And he was the first to admit that he was not so good at administration. Great at having ideas. Maybe that's the reason he and John Isaacs were such good friends. That's an interesting way to put it, that [Kerr] didn't feel obliged to do it. Well if he didn't feel obliged, then why did he really sort of tease [Roger] with it the second time, asking him whether he would consider it if he had someone like John Galbraith as [associate] chancellor? He actually did that. So I felt he was sort of leading Roger along and then dropping him over the edge, and I didn't like that.

Morgan: Was there any local opposition?

Eckis: You mean here?

Morgan: To Roger's [appointment]? Civic. Not Scripps.

Eckis: I don't think there was. I think that people generally felt he would... In fact, very often people think he was chancellor, and are amazed that he wasn't. Of course he had this maybe too strong support from Mary Hall. She wrote so many articles about it, and pushed for him so hard.

Morgan: Do you think that would have affected Clark Kerr?

Eckis: I don't know. I assume that he probably would have been sent them.\textsuperscript{245} I don't know if he felt that someone was trying to do his job by making the decision for him or what. The first time I can understand, but the second, I don't see why he ever talked to [Roger] about the possibility if he was definitely not going to do it. I think that was unkind. It really was. But eventually, and I don't think it took too many years at Harvard, Roger realized it really was for the best. I think it would have been just terrible for him to have gone through the sixties and to see the students acting the

\textsuperscript{245}Mary Harrington Hall wrote several articles on Roger Revelle in \textit{San Diego and Point Magazine} in the 1960s, including: “Revelle,” \textit{San Diego and Point Magazine} 13 (7): 132 (May 1961), and “Bad Day at UCSD: the Kerr and Revelle Thing,” \textit{San Diego and Point Magazine} 16 (9): 42 (July 1964).
way they did on his campus. I think it would have just killed him. But it opened up a whole new career for him, after all, at Harvard. And with his interest in India and Pakistan and whatnot. In the long run, I think it was a good thing. But it was heartbreaking at the time for him.

Morgan: Do you think he might have—? He wouldn't have quit, would he, in the [nineteen] sixties?

Eckis: Oh no, I don't think so, but I think it would have been very hard for him to deal with it. It was bad enough at Harvard. He and one of his grad students stayed all night at 9 Bow Street, [the Center for Population Studies], because of the students and the young people at Cambridge—it wasn't just students—who were on a rampage and were breaking windows. Nine Bow Street is just one building off of Mass. Avenue and is an old wooden building, and he was really quite worried that they might set it on fire. So the two of them stayed all night to protect it. And of course Harvard wasn't as deeply in his blood as UCSD was, so if he felt so strongly there I can imagine how difficult it would have been to have seen student unrest here.

Morgan: He was really used to the give and take of discussion and debate and respect and being listened to.

Eckis: Yes.

Morgan: And that went by the wayside.

Eckis: It sure did.

Morgan: And in public frequently. Is there anything else, for history's sake, since we're doing this, that you would like to correct or amplify, the things we've talked about as far as the campus or La Jolla changing?

Eckis: Well, La Jolla-wise, I think Roger would be absolutely amazed at the turnabout from the “no Jews can buy” attitude in La Jolla and the fact that there are Jewish centers, and there is just no problem anymore. And I think that would have delighted him.

Morgan: Anything else that you would especially love to have him see on campus if he could?

Eckis: Well, I believe he too would be very happy about the charter school. I think that could really fit into his thinking. But I don't think that charter schools had been talked about way back in those days. And I think he would have appreciated that idea, and I think he'd be pleased the way Scripps is going, the Oceanographic.
Morgan: Have you had a chance to spend much time with the new director?\textsuperscript{246}

Eckis: Enough so that I really feel I have gotten acquainted with him, and I wish his wife were able to be here more. She's charming. But she has her own business. Practice, not business. She's a psychologist, and I think [provides] therapy of some sort, I'm not quite sure what. But when I have seen her I've liked her and found her very nice and wish she could be here more. But Charlie is an easy, friendly person and quite delightful. I was glad Bill met him at the—Bill happened to be here at the time of the last Scripps picnic, and we were at the table with Charlie, and Bill had a chance to get acquainted too, and I was glad.

Morgan: He has a very positive spirit.

Eckis: Yes, and he seems very open.

Morgan: Thank you. Ellen, this has been very important. Scripps Oceanography thanks you, and Berkeley thanks you.

Eckis: Thank you, Judith. I can't think of a nicer inquisitor.

\textsuperscript{246}Charles Frederick Kennel (1939–) has been director of SIO since 1998. His wife is Dr. Ellen Lehman.
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