

Oral History Number: 408-026

Interviewee: Carolyn Lott

Interviewer: David Brooks

Date of Interview: January 16, 2007

Project: University of Montana Oral History Project

David Brooks: Ok, it is January 16, 2007, and I am David Brooks, the interviewer for the University of Montana's Oral History Project. Today I am talking with Dr. Carolyn Lott. Dr. Lott, I would like to start by having you tell a little bit about your personal background, your educational background, and your path to Missoula and the University of Montana.

Carolyn Lott: Thirty-two years ago my husband came here to teach at the University of Montana in the Math Department. We brought our 1-year-old and we were going to stay for exactly one year because he was coming here for a sabbatical that someone was taking. So as I often say, we came for one year and we've been here for 32. We came from Atlanta where I had taught in the high schools, at Columbia High School and Stone Mountain High School. I had finished my master's at Georgia State and we had gotten married right after college.

After I graduated from college—and we both had gone to Union University—so we both then went to Atlanta afterwards to teach, then came to the University of Montana. I taught at Loyola High School for four years and then we went to Alaska for a year when John was on sabbatical. I taught there at the high school, really from sixth grade up. After we came back, then I decided to work on my doctorate here at the university. I got a doctorate in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis on library science. Then I went to Hellgate High School to teach as a librarian. I taught there for eight years before coming to the university.

I came here to the university in 1992 to teach library science and curriculum courses. That is what I have done until this past June 30 [2006] when I retired and now I am only teaching one-third time, or part-time. Because we are moving back to the South I'll be teaching two classes online, which is not quite one-third time, but I'll just teach the two classes online and that's it.

DB: So what were you teaching before in the various high schools you were in and I guess part of the reason I am asking that is how did you become interested in pursuing the Ph.D. here that you did pursue?

CL: I taught English for the first eight years or so. I taught English almost exclusively, high school English, and then I taught some history at Loyola. I then taught in Alaska for a year and I taught everything. That was the first time I had been introduced as a librarian at which—I wasn't at that time—but which I had the duties to do. In Alaska at that time you could teach if you had a teaching license to teach at all, you could teach practically anything. In the high school I taught business and typing, home economics, English, speech, was assistant principal and librarian. There were only seven teachers in the school, but we only had 57 students too, so all of that prepped me to want to teach at the university level.

I had been teaching high school four years, middle school up, four years and I liked that teaching but I thought I could make a better influence if I could teach people who were going to be teachers. After finishing my degree I needed some experience in library because I didn't have really any experience that way. So, I went to Hellgate High School and was librarian there for eight years and loved it. But again, thinking I could make a bigger influence on people by working at the university level—and I'm working with pre-service teachers. I applied, came here for one year on someone's leaving, so I came as an adjunct for a year and applied for the tenure-track line and got it. Working on the degree was a necessity if I was going to work at the university level because you have to have a terminal degree to teach here.

DB: What department was that in, or is that in?

CL: Curriculum and Instruction, it is in the School of Education. C & I is what we call it, C & I is what we call the department all the time. It's the pre-service and master's and doctoral level for teachers; people who are going to be working with curriculum. I worked in that department and taught library science and curriculum classes, including curriculum history, curriculum trends and issues, an introduction to curriculum class which was for—all of those were for master's and doctoral students.

The library science program is an undergraduate program ostensibly, but in reality it's a graduate program because most of our students are graduate students. Most of them are not necessarily working on a master's degree, but they already have a teaching degree and in the state of Montana you can't become a librarian or a library media specialist without having a teaching degree, or a teaching license. We solicit in and market ourselves among the teachers who are already out in the field. The majority of our students, I'd say 98 percent of our students, are people who are teaching in the field who think they might want to become a librarian. They are taking the classes to get additional endorsement in library science. Ours is not a master's in library class, or program. It is an endorsement program through the state of Montana, 25 hours of credit and then you can get an endorsement to become a librarian in your school.

DB: So you went essentially from teaching high school students to what we generically call non-traditional students; people who are out working and now coming back to get this degree to further what they are already doing.

CL: Correct.

DB: How was that transition for you?

CL: Hard at first, although I'd had sort of transitional years as well because I had taught at the high school level in the regular classroom, but then I taught eight years in the library classroom, which is a different kind of classroom even at the high school level, especially at the high school

level. You aren't in a class each period; you aren't involved in all the assignments that are going on in the school although you are involved with every area of the curriculum. You have a much bigger picture of the entire school and you work with a larger budget than most of the regular classroom teachers do. That in a way prepared me to come work with people who are going to be teachers, and more adults.

I had already worked with the faculty and the staff at the high school. I had done some in-service classes as well while I was teaching at Hellgate with the faculty and staff of the Missoula County Public Schools. It was relatively easy to come work with them. I also taught part of—one class in the library preparation program is the children's literature class and that is also a requirement in the elementary preparation program for undergraduates—so I got to teach the children's literature class as well as the young adult literature class, but all the time the children's literature class. It became one of my favorite classes to teach. The topic area is wonderful and it became a really favorite area to teach so I loved working with the children's literature classes.

DB: Why is that? What do you like about it? I mean I know nothing about the children's, a children's literature class.

CL: You have a small child; you need to know about children's lit.

DB: Well, I know about children's literature.

CL: Children's literature, the way we taught it, was a content level class so that you are learning about what there is out there and how to assess what there is out there for use in your classroom. Because I was working with pre-service teachers not with librarians, all of them have to judge whether a book is good or not for a particular reason. Then we concentrate on that in the class, so they are learning genres of children's literature, some authors and titles and illustrators. They are learning—they are trying to build a bibliography of books or titles that they know so that they can draw from those when they are teaching. We've seen that when they go in the further classes, and the more in the classes in the pre-service program, they come back and use those children's lit books all the time.

They are books that are written specifically for children, usually anywhere from birth to—children's literature usually goes through eighth grade. There is an overlap with young adult literature, what we call young adult literature, and young adult is for anything from say, sixth grade up through the teenage years, and some adults even. I also—we think, I think that children's literature is a misnomer because not all children's literature was written for children; it is sometimes too hard for children and they don't get all the nuances and innuendos, and the satire, and the things like that out of children's literature. So, children's literature is also for adults. It was fun to teach that; I love it.

DB: True. Right. So, you've been talking about that in a pretty general context. I wonder are there specific Montana paradigms for looking at children's literature? The reason I ask that is because now in the last few years this state has been very active in trying to pursue Indian education for all and in children's education would be one vehicle to do that.

CL: Right.

DB: Has there always been a Montana or western bent to children's selection on literature, or the way you would teach it, is that something new we are seeing?

CL: I'll say no for right this moment, ok, because there are some generic things that one has to know about children's literature. You need to know what the genres are, how to judge each one of those genres for use in the classroom. Now the content of that can be anything, so my 'no' would qualify here with the fact that in the last few years we've been adding more and more Native American literature. Not necessarily religious Montana Native American literature, but generic Native American literature, so that all literature and specifically the ones that could be used here in Montana because we are prepping, or trying to prep our teachers to teach here in Montana, specifically in Montana. We want them to know how to work with the Native American groups who are in Montana so we try to infuse a lot of that literature into the course itself.

There really isn't a western or Montana paradigm to children's lit because it's much broader than that; it has to be much broader than that. Once they get a background in children's lit, then they can ferret out and choose materials that would be most appropriate for their particular classrooms, but they know how to do that once they finish the children's lit class. They have learned some samples of all of the different kinds so that they can judge the pieces of work they pick up against some of the samples we have looked at in class and have a better sense of what's good and what's bad for their particular classes.

DB: Is that a new emphasis on Native American literature, I mean am I wrong to assume that that is coming out of this state's emphasis on Indian Education For All, or is that a national thing that is happening and UM is just following it?

CL: No, there is a national movement for multiculturalism, but it isn't specific to Native American literature; that comes out of Montana and the emphasis on Native American curriculum in the classroom. Now we don't do that just in children's literature though, we do that in every curriculum class. We try to emphasize the learning styles, the paradigms that would influence a classroom in Montana, anything from social influences to different kinds of home life, everything. We infuse that into all the curriculum classes that they learn, so it's not just in children's literature but we give them specific samples of Native American literature that will give them a sampling of what's available and try to give them some bibliographies that they can choose from after that.

We try to teach them how to find those materials, because there is no way—there are about 7,000 children’s books published each year; there is no way they can learn all of those. A very small portion of those is Native American literature, so they can learn some of that. It’s not just written literature we’re talking about either because they have to learn oral literature, especially for Native American things. The national movement is much more toward multiculturalism and nationally they are learning about every culture so that Native American is one of the four emphasized one. We look at Asian, Hispanic, African-American, and Native American literature is the four top kinds of literature for multiculturalism. That is coming out of National Council of Teachers of English; it’s coming out of International Reading Association, and all curriculum groups, ASCD etc.

DB: So I want to rewind and remind me what year was it that you started teaching here?

CL: 1992.

DB: Ok, 1992?

CL: Yeah.

DB: You know you said that one thing that transferred pretty easily for you from the high school level to university level was having a broad perspective of the faculty and administration as a whole because you are working with students in all different departments. So, I’d like you to comment a little bit about, or describe a little bit about UM at the time when you came, the administration, faculty, students, issues of importance.

CL: When I first came here I came as an adjunct and so I took a \$25,000 cut for the first year of my job to come here with the hopes that I would get a permanent job and might get a small portion of that back on a tenure-track line. Well, I did and got a small portion of that back, so one of the huge issues at that time was retrenchment and trying to keep people in positions. Thankfully I had a job that was in demand, the position was in demand, the classes I was teaching were in demand, so it was good that I could stay on that basis.

The salary itself was much less than what I had made at the high school. That was a huge issue at the time; salaries were really, really, big. At that time people were getting—and I am forgetting the term right now—but when someone who comes in with a new, who is new who has a higher salary than you do, and whatever the word is that I can’t think of at the moment, [inversion] people who had been here for a long time were then asking for raises comparable to what those people, new people, were getting. They didn’t have a problem with my salary, however, because it was low anyway.

When I came the School of Education was in what is now the LA building and the School of Ed didn’t have very much technology at all. We were at the beginning of a technology movement in the United States and so we didn’t really have very much technology. We had a Business Ed

Department with two people, and the Business Ed people knew the technology, worked with the technology, and knew computers and taught computers and stuff, but nobody else in the department did.

I came from a library where we had introduced computers into the library and we were the first, almost in the Northwest, to have a computerized catalogue in our county. When I came here it was imperative that we have some kind of computers to work with so I could teach library science. We started looking for technology and at that time SIMMS was breaking up and SIMMS was a math program that my husband was working with and they had two or three labs of computers that they were trying to get rid of because they didn't need them anymore for SIMMS, and we did. SIMMS donated a whole computer lab to us, both Mac and PC computers, and we started out with those used computers teaching students in the general curriculum area, not just in Business Ed, but in the general curriculum, technology.

That was a huge issue and we had no way of keeping up with the technology demands monetarily because we had not budget at all for replacing of those computers, for software, for anything, you know. It was an uphill grind to try to get money to keep those technology things somewhat current. It was the whole time that I was here as a faculty member.

There was another thing that was going on in our department and that was there were quite a few people who were, I say quite a few, there were a number of people who were leaving and coming, and new people coming in the department, so building community in C & I was a huge issue. We were trying to build a group of people who worked together and liked to work together, and worked for the common output, outcomes of the students. That was a huge issue and that got to be very good because we had a number of faculty members who all worked together and were very good at doing that to produce some of the better students. Especially the elementary program because the elementary program started teaching, in the year I came or the year before I came, they started teaching in what we call the block. The major classes in science, social studies, language arts, and math were all taught together. That has become one of the better features of our elementary program. That started out, I think they might have been teaching it one year when I came, and that continued to grow and became a major characteristic of our program.

Politically we were not very well respected on campus. We had had some presidents as well as deans who did not respect the C & I department or the School of Education. We had had some who had actually made disparaging, lots of disparaging, remarks about the School of Ed. We were trying our best to do everything we could to build that reputation back up. We had also just had a new division within the School of Education into three departments instead of two. C & I became a department among—for itself, and then Education Leadership and Health and Human Performance became the other two things.

We were just starting out as a department in trying to build up our own reputation across campus, as well as nationally. So a lot of those things have come to either fruition or success

since I was here. I was only here for 14 years so it was—but it was a real challenging time and good time when I first came. Then we continued to grow; it was really good. It was nice to see and watch the C & I Department build and add to its prestige across campus as well as among themselves.

DB: So I am completely unfamiliar with why, or who, or where disparaging remarks or being politically not well respected would have come from. To whatever extent you are comfortable talking a little more about that; where was that coming from, who was it coming from, and what type of disparagement was it? Why was the department not well respected?

CL: We have a huge teacher-student ratio and we have a large, we have a large number of classes that we have to teach, or have to cover. Therefore, we all in C & I teach three classes each semester. The usual load across campus in other departments is two, or two and three, so at least they get one or two fewer classes each year to teach than we do in C & I. As a result, the research, the quality of research, and the amount of research was not as prolific in School of Ed as it is in some of the departments.

Also, we don't get access to NSF monies; ever since Sputnik in '53 we had been having lots more monies sent into the sciences and into the physical sciences, and into the math departments and things like that. So, they were getting lots and lots of monies, outside monies, grant monies that was not available for us. School of Ed was not—School of Ed itself was not getting a lot of grants and were not producing a lot of the quality research that other peoples on campus were because we were teaching full time. That is all we had time to do.

Teaching in the School of Education is a—there is an expectation that you are going to work with the teachers in the field. That kind of work, with the teachers in the field, often doesn't lend itself to the kind of research that gets grants, or the kind of research that is respected in the sciences, say. Across campus, because we weren't prolific in publications and that is a major criterion for getting either promotion or merit, and because we weren't prolific in getting outside grants at that time, we were not as well respected. But, it had been helped by a president who made really nasty remarks about the School of Education to the high schools, to students who were coming, and he was not very, let's say he was not very astute when it came to making remarks and to whom he made them; he made them to everybody.

After he left it became better because at least people weren't making nasty remarks. Also, we worked really, really hard to get out the research quality improved and we helped our standards, we've improved our standards, unit standards. We started making expectations of our faculty, so that they could not just do service work. Service was expected but it was not just service work you also had to do the publication or the writing.

We have an arm of the School of Education, the Division of Educational Research, which has always been very successful in getting grants. We got monies from those because they were part of our department, part of our school, but that money was not being funneled back to the

faculty to encourage us to do research and that was sort of like a separate entity. The Rural Institute is part of C & I. We evaluate the people in the Rural Institute, we write evaluations for faculty members there, but it is not, again, it's sort of a separate entity in that we don't get any of the money from the grants that they get or anything like that. We have two separate things that we are getting grants in, that we are very successful in doing publications and things, but they were not a part of the core part of C & I.

I would say that because we started actively working across campus, and we started making it a goal of the department to become more active across campus in committees, in any kind of work that was going on across campus. We put our department members on those committees to try to show that we were actively involved on campus and for them to learn in turn then what was happening in our school as well. I don't think they knew us very well. We made it an active part of the campaign to get people involved in more things that were going on across campus so that we could become better known.

DB: Was a lack of research and publication, as well as a lack of seeking or getting private funding, something unique to the C & I, Curriculum and Instruction Department, here at the university, or was that fairly national; it is not a department, not a field that does a lot of publication research?

CL: That was some anomaly here at the university. Again, because we were required to teach so many classes, sometimes people teach four or five classes a semester and now because the union protested and we got it somewhat regulated to three, or nine credits per semester, we have to have average nine credits per semester, it got better. But, no, that is not true across the nation. It is a very active research group; we have a lot of people that do research. Both the Educational Leadership and HHP were actively doing more research than we were. They had, Ed Leadership for example, had a lot less, a lot fewer students than we did in their classes and they taught fewer classes than we did. Again, C & I was just—because we taught with pre-service teachers and because we had so many students in so many class to cover we had to do that.

Now, the quality has improved dramatically. The research grant monies at this time are more prolific than they were when I first started. We get lots of monies in math still, we get lots of monies in science still, we get lots of money in special education, which is relatively new, we get monies in other areas and practically everybody who wants to can be involved in a grant in our department now, if they want to. We have—as chair I had a lot of people who were being bought out of their classes because they were involved with grants. That's been a good thing for them because salary wise, it has been a good thing for us research wise, because it means that gives them a source of active research that they can do.

DB: When were you the chair?

CL: These last three years.

DB: So who, I mean if you can be specific, who in your mind was behind working towards changing both the image of the department on campus, the actual output as well as the intake of private money, who was behind those changes?

CL: The whole department. Every three years the chair changes. When I was chair Audrey—when I came to the department here, Audrey Peterson was chair and then Jean Luckowski took over, then we had [Rhea] Ashmore, and then I. Now Audrey is chair again for one more year before she retires, so we're having a real hard time finding a permanent chair right this moment because the job has evolved to almost a full-time job. The chair really can't teach a lot of classes and do all the requirements that are coming from across campus, as well as from the dean, for being chair.

So, right now we are having a really hard time finding a chair, but I think the chairs were instrumental in making sure that we thought as a group and that we were working as a group. It sort of came to a head when I became chair and we started setting—we had in some sense set some goals before, you know we had sort of set goals for the department, but we'd never been accountable for those before. The first year we set goals and I wrote a report at the end of the year how well we had achieved those goals, and it said, 'and I worked really, really, hard to make sure we achieved those goals.' That meant pushing the faculty, it meant encouraging the faculty, it meant giving them the support that they needed, it meant using some of the budget to give them the relief that they needed.

For example, the block classes are really intense classes and they require a lot of work. I tried to give some relief to the people who were teaching those block classes to be able to have some time to do something else besides just teach those classes; they are real labor-intensive and individualized with the students. I tried to give them some relief with for not teaching full loads, or for getting some help, they could get a T.A. to help them with their classes, or I could get somebody else to help them teach a class. Someway I'd use the budget to help them get something that would help them get more time and they could put more effort and energy into writing as well as research.

We also emphasized the fact and pointed out that it was a requirement across campus—the provost at that time said that it didn't matter what our unit standards said, she was going to judge our department on its publication record and whether or not those publications were at the level 1 research titles. We really had to encourage that so I worked really, really, hard to make sure that the faculty knew that, that the faculty were aware of what they were being judged against for merits and promotions. They could come to me and say, 'I have this article in a certain title,' and I would say, 'It's not going to do you any good at all, don't even bother. It's not worth your time, you've got to have it published somewhere else. The quality of research that you have to do must meet the standards of other people across campus.'

DB: Has that happened in your mind?

CL: Yes, it has.

DB: Has it been acknowledged?

CL: Across campus?

DB: Has the perception of the department changed across campus?

CL: I hope. I don't have any evidence for that necessarily other than the fact that when we send merits across we usually get merits. When we send promotions across we usually get promoted. I know very few people who have not gotten the promotions when they have gone for promotion. Now we are having a turnover in faculty again because this year we have three searches and we have turned over in administrative assistants, we have turned over a dean. When I took over this chair, the dean was new; he and I were new together. Dean [Paul] Rowland was very big on assessment, so anything—I mean he was very involved in assessment, so anything that we did had to be assessed and we had to be accountable for our assessment. That became sort of a part of our mantra as well because we had to prove everything.

The last three years were also, well the middle year of my tenure as chair we had four program reviews to do, including NCATE [National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education] at Northwest. We had internal program review and we also had the state review. Those four reviews were extremely rigorous. We had so much data that we had to deal with and explain and write about, and find and keep. More and more NCATE, our national organization that accredits schools of education, is requiring student outcome as the measure of a unit to see that we are successful; that students can do what we've said they can do and we have to prove that they can do it. These last three years were pretty intense.

DB: So let me pick up on that. The students, you know the other perspective, not the administrative perspective, but what through the years has been the demand in terms of student demand to get in the school here, what do you feel has been your success in turning out well-educated students, how do you gauge that?

CL: In my program, the library program, which is what I was involved in all this time intensely, we have, I would say, I had at least one call, two calls a week from principals or people looking for librarians. We had some districts that wouldn't hire a librarian unless they came through our program. We had some districts in Nevada that called and said, 'I'll take everyone you can send me, it doesn't matter if they've graduated from your program, we'll take you.'

We also were—the program has evolved to become totally online and this was one of the first total programs on campus that was put online. We did that because, and Dr. Brewer, Sally Brewer, who was my colleague in the School of Education and teaches library science as well, we did that together, we put the program totally online mainly because we had saturated the market here in Missoula. Our program, we thought, was probably going to die if we did not put

it online. There were so many students who were becoming aware of online programs and they just could not come to Missoula to take classes. Most teachers can't afford to take off a year with no salary or even with sabbaticals because they lose all kinds of benefits when they go back, and they sometimes can't go back to the same place and things like that. So, most teachers can't afford to take a sabbatical and they certainly can't take a year off without a salary, so we don't have many people who come to work full-time on degrees or programs. It almost had to go online.

We put our program online and it has grown because we can offer—we work with continuing education and we offered the program at one fee, so there is no out-of-state fee for library media and it was the first program to do that. Because of that, we had students from all over the United States, as well as foreign countries. We had students who knew of Montana or had a connection to Montana, but who were in foreign countries and would take classes from us; many of them. The library program has grown prolifically.

The same could be said for the elementary and the high school programs. I know more about the elementary program than the high school program results because I taught in the elementary program. The teachers with whom we work all the time where we send our students for their practicums, or in-service or infield work, tell us all the time that our students are exceptionally good, that they are really, really, prepared; we have exceptions, but that is a rarity. [We're told] that our students are really good.

Also they get hired. They all get hired and most of them who want a job can get a job if they want it. They may not get a job in Missoula, because there is so much competition for Missoula, but they can certainly get a job if they want to; that goes for both the library as well as the elementary program, also for the high school program. They have to be willing to go where the job is. Often in Montana that is in the country or the rural areas. If they are willing to go we can place almost everyone. They do get placements outside the state and a majority of our students, unfortunately, move outside of Montana, because of salaries and the fact that they have such huge debts when they graduate from here.

Because our elementary program is very proscribed—we tell them what 125 credits to take out of 128—so you almost need to know you are going to be an elementary teacher when you come to campus otherwise you are behind and it is going to take five years. A lot of our students don't determine that they want to be a teacher until their junior year, so they are already behind and it will sometimes take them four more years to do it, depending on what they have already had. If they are willing to take lots of classes and lots of credits at one semester, if they are willing to go to summer school they can usually finish in, say, five years, but it does take at least that long.

Many of our students do go out of state because at the end they can find a job almost anywhere, and they do go everywhere. Out-of-state pay is significantly better than it does in Montana. Most people who have ties to Montana want to stay here, of course, so everybody

wants to stay in Montana, but they would also want to teach in a place like Missoula, or Helena, Great Falls, Billings, or something like that; mostly Missoula because they love Missoula.

DB: So clearly the library sciences going online is a fairly innovative thing; the first one in the country as you mentioned.

CL: Not in the country, but in this area.

DB: Were you working, I guess then, off of models from other schools to do that?

CL: No. There weren't many models from other schools. There were some programs that were offering some classes, but there weren't total programs online. We worked, and we did this gradually, we started putting our classes online. Because the skills that people are working on are so applicable to what they are doing—see, a majority of students in library science are in a library already and they are working toward an endorsement. They are part of what we call an internship program, which means that they work in the field, in the library, while they are learning to do their jobs. We agreed to supervise them and make sure that they could call on us for questions or call on us for help if they need to while they are studying and while they are becoming librarians. They have three years then to finish the program.

It was not, there were not a lot of programs online at that time. There weren't any programs on campus totally online at that time. We were an innovator with that, but we did it not entirely altruistically, we did it to save our jobs. There weren't going to be jobs in library if we didn't do something like that. Because library is so technology-oriented it was imperative that students who are working toward that library endorsement know technology and the best way to do it is to have hands-on. We really had to stress [that] to our students, because most of them didn't want it either, they wanted the personal touches of a person in front of you.

When we first started teaching classes online I talked to every one of my students in person, personally on the phone before they took a class and I would do an interview, and I would work for them to get to know me as well as for me to get to know them. Now that is all done online and we start building community from day one and try to do that community online. Before that the students were, 'I would rather take it in person.' We didn't have enough students here on campus to offer the classes on campus as well as online, so we had to make a choice. We probably lost some students, but we gained a lot more students; now it is a huge program.

DB: How about curriculum or specific courses in the curriculum and instruction department aimed at preparing students to go teach in rural areas? It sounds like you are placing a lot of students in rural areas who would, quite frankly, rather stay in Missoula. Do you prepare them for that? Is there anything to prepare for in terms of it being unique?

CL: Oh, yes. Yes. Our sister college, Western Montana College, prepares all their students just for rural teaching; I mean that is their emphasis. We try to give our students an extremely

broad viewpoint so that they can teach either in Missoula or in Browning, or in Wisdom, which is a very small school, both of them; Browning is not so small, but it is rural.

We try to teach our students to be aware of the entire student; you know the whole student and know the whole student, know what to do to individualize that student and individualize that work in the classroom. We try to show our students the broad spectrum of K-8 teaching so that in a small school they may have to teach a K-12 class, or they may have to teach a 2-3-4 class, so that it is not just second grade, but it is second, third, and fourth grades combined. We have some students who teach in a K-8 school and it's only one or two teachers; there are quite a few schools in the state of Montana that are like that, so, yes, we have to prep them to do that.

We have to give them a broad view of the curriculum, show where the curriculum is progressively getting harder and broader. We have to show them the development of a child from K through 8 so that they know what a person in second grade is capable of doing, as well as what that person should normally be doing in a second grade, and may or may not be normal, but what that person is supposed to be doing. We teach them that—we also teach them that they have to get involved with the community; that is an aspect of rural teaching that's not as prevalent in the more urban area because you have to get involved in the community. That means that parents, the extra-curricular activities at school, the other organizations in the town, and things like that. You have to be involved politically; you have to be involved socially with the work that is happening in the town. We teach them about working with adults, working with parents, making sure that they are aware of what is going on in the community.

Now, that has become even more important since the emphasis on Native American students has become so obvious in Montana and has become a law in Montana. We stress the fact that they have to know the culture of the people where they are working and that, in a rural community, is extremely important. Yes, it is important in Missoula as well, but in a rural community you stand out and so you have to know that school. We are teaching them what they have to know about the culture, we are teaching them what they have to know about students and about the curriculum.

We also stress, and this is getting more, and more emphasized now, is that their learning does not end when they finish their degree. They are getting a job in a lifetime-learning field. They have to continue to grow both professionally, as well as personally. They have to continue to grow, they have to continue to take classes, or attend professional meetings, or work with other faculty to be able talk professionally with each other. That's a problem in a rural school [and it] is that you may or may not have anybody else who teaches what you teach. In a rural school they may have to teach all the English, there is no other English teacher in town. We teach them that there are connections across the state and there are connections across the United States. We tell them about professional organizations and we try to get them involved in professional organizations, so that they'll have some personal way of growing as well.

DB: I want to switch a little bit, you know you've talked about the department, students, faculty, and administration, I'd like you to talk a little bit about some of your own accomplishments and I'll mention that I know you were a member of, or worked on the National Council of Teachers and Students.

CL: Teachers of English.

DB: Teachers of English. Could you kind of describe that organization, why it is important, what it is all about, and also how your position at University of Montana allowed you, prepared you, or motivated you to be part of that?

CL: The University faculty are required to have a service component of their worklife and one of the ways that you can do in teaching, to have a service component, is you work with the national profession, and professional organization and make sure that you are part of that. In fact, to become a professor you are required to have worked on the national level. It is part of our job, first. Secondly, as a teacher, long before I came to the university I was extremely involved at the state level in Montana Association Teachers of English and Language Arts; we call it MATELA. I had worked since coming to Montana in that organization; that is an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English. By virtue of being part of MATELA, I was also part of NCTE.

I worked as practically every officer in MATELA and I worked on a regional level because we had regional meetings of all the different state organizations [where they] would come together in a regional convention or project and I worked with that. As a result of all of that I also then became active in NCTE as a—working on committees as that kind of thing, working for different kinds of positions in that. Because I ran for some national positions I got elected to the secondary section which is the—there are nine people who represent all the secondary English teachers in the United States. We each have to run for that position. I was elected to that and then I was reelected as chair of that position. I then served on the executive board for National Council of Teachers of English for two years as a result of that position. The executive board is the governing organization for the whole, the governing unit for the whole organization.

I was also very active, when I worked on my dissertation, I worked with Dr. Beverly Chin, who, she was my co-chair. She subsequently became president of NCTE and because of her again, and because I had worked with her extensively here in the state as well as nationally, I continued to work with NCTE. I worked with all of the affiliates in the country. I worked as the chair of the Standard Committee on Affiliates. I was the chair of the Orbis Pictus Committee. Orbis Pictus is the group—Orbis Pictus Committee selects the best non-fiction piece of literature published for children K-8 in the United States each year. I worked for seven years on the Orbis Pictus Committee; four of those as chair.

I got to know a lot of people. I've worked on election committees and nominating committees and a little bit of every other kind of committee there is, I think, in NCTE; yeah, I've been on lots of committees for NCTE. I was a lot more active in NCTE and a lot—I was known better and knew more people in NCTE than I knew in the library organization. I did work in the library organization here in the state; I worked in the Montana Library Association. I also worked with American Library Association and have made multiple presentations in both NCTE and AC—ALA.

I worked also with the, it's called ELMS, and I forget what this stands for because we always deal in acronyms; Educators of Library Media Specialists, I think, is the section, which is a subsection of ALA. It is a smaller section, just for people who are teachers of, people who are going to become librarians. I served as president of that in the American Library Association. But, I was not as active and not for as long because since I've been a teacher for 40 years, I've been active in NCTE, but after I became a librarian then I've started becoming active in Montana Library Association and ALA. I continued that and I am still active in both of those. I'm still a member of both of those. I am not as active right this minute as I have—I just went off as chair of the Orbis Pictus Committee, so I am taking a deep breath before I do much more, before I assume another role that I don't necessarily want.

I still do lots of presentations. I do lots of in-service and I may do some professional development for NCTE because they've asked me to and I don't know whether I will take that or not, but I might. It means working with faculty and English teachers across the United States in a professional development field. Through NCTE—when they are asking for help then—the NCTE asked me to go and work with them in whatever areas. I might do that, I don't know; I've been asked to.

DB: So you know, in general, and I mean this is a very general statement, but in elementary and secondary education women have played a larger part in those professional positions. Today women make up a majority of students at UM as well as most campuses in higher education, but that is a fairly recent development and it is certainly not mirrored in faculty demographics at the university level; over half of the faculty are not women. Have you perceived a change in that at all in your department, or in your career at the University of Montana?

CL: Women's role in C & I has always been very strong. In fact, we always have to work to get men to teach in C & I. Because teaching has been such a feminine-dominated, or woman-dominated profession, in C & I specifically, because we work with people who are going to be teachers and people who are teachers, we have to work harder to get men to come into our department than we do women, because most of the people who are working with them are teachers.

Now, that is different, say, for Educational Leadership, our sister department in the School of Education because all but one of them is men, because most of the administrators have been, in the past at least, men. We are trying to change that so that women become administrators

as often or because it is a female-dominated organization or profession, then women should be in all areas and all levels of education.

We have the opposite problem in C & I, but in working with people across campus that has not been true. I haven't noticed any kind of—I honestly haven't noticed any kind of prejudice or bias against women. I know that there is a science grant where some people are working to have more science women in the science fields. They actually have a grant to try to push for women. I know because of my husband's position in the Math Department that they work really, really hard to get women to become math majors, because most of them are men, or have been at least in the past. I think that it is turning around.

Some areas, like in English, mostly women. A lot of women in social studies, lots of women in elementary program because I would be—it is always a shock when you have males in the class. Sometimes you will have five males and 25 women in the elementary classes. Now, the program itself though—you asked me a question a while ago that I didn't finish answering, the growth of our program itself has been mostly with women; we've been dominated by women. Because of many changes in education, like No Child Left Behind and things like that, and the huge, huge responsibilities that teachers, not just elementary teachers, that teachers have now for inclusiveness of students, that all students are in the main track of classes, and because we don't get paid nearly as much, we often don't get—we have begun sort of in the last two years to go down in the number of people who are applying to the School of Education.

We were turning away probably 40 percent of our students, 40 percent of our applicants up until the last couple of years. In the last couple of years, and my perception is that because of the bad press that teachers have—well we've always had bad press, maybe it is No Child Left Behind, I don't know what reason—but there are lots of new requirements of teachers. Also our department has cracked down on what students can do and what students can't do. They can't, they have to have the grade point averages that we say they do, they have to keep their grade point averages or they can't take classes, and we have instituted a better record of keeping up with what students are doing and so that may or may not have an influence on it as well.

The last two years though we've had fewer students apply to the program. We hope to turn that around because we really want the students and we desperately need the teachers in the state of Montana so we would like to have more. Now, I went back to a question and you had started asking me about something else that I have forgotten.

DB: Well, you were talking essentially about the reversal, the gender reversal in C & I and the problem of having to recruit men.

CL: Yes, and we actually actively do have to recruit men. We need to be recruiting in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades for teachers because they need to know when they go to high school that they are going to be teachers, that they want to become a teacher. We need to do a lot more

recruitment in the middle schools and get some really good students to become teachers. We have good students become teachers—I am not saying we don't—but I am just saying we need to be recruiting in the middle schools with those students to let them see what it is like to become a teacher and that there are intrinsic rewards as well as extrinsic rewards to becoming a teacher.

I know we had a grant written, we wrote a grant, not I personally, but people in the department, wrote a grant to work with middle school students and talk about their becoming teachers, you know, to try to lay some groundwork for those teachers, and especially in Native American students to become teachers. We wanted, we desperately need more Native American teachers. We wrote a grant and it wasn't funded, but we continued to write those kinds of grants and try to get more women, more people into the field.

From my perspective, see, I don't think being a woman has had a detrimental effect on where I teach or how I teach. I haven't been as aware of that across campus, other than the fact that in some departments I know they have a problem keeping, or to having their proportions equal. That's my personal experience; [it] has not been negative at all.

DB: Hypothetically, when you are out recruiting for teachers, whether they are from Montana or not, what does UM have to offer that's unique? Why would they come here?

CL: Well, for one thing, we take a real personal interest in our students. We try to know our students really well, we try to work with our students on an individual basis. We have done our best to keep our classes to 25–30 students each, and we try to teach no classes that are the huge numbers. So, some of the beginning classes in the program itself are, sometime we have as many as 40 or 45 students in the beginning classes, but once they determine what level they are going to be in, and [in] those upper-level classes we don't have the larger classes. That is one of the reasons that we have to teach more classes is because we have so many of the classes that are smaller. We try to keep them smaller so we do a lot of individual attention.

We also have a nationally recognized faculty, because they are well-published now and they are well-researched and they know exactly what is going on in the world, in the field of education and they're good, they're really good. We have a good program, a design of programs and the only program that we are responsible for is the elementary program. We work with the departments—the high school-endorsed people work with each one of the departments. For example, if I am going to be endorsed in English then most of the program comes out of English. We only do the education classes so that most of the preparation comes through the English department, or math, or science, or whatever science it is, or whatever. Most of the prep comes through the specific department in the secondary level.

For secondary teachers, and probably in the future for middle school teachers, most of that preparation is going to be coming through the departments, through the individual departments. We are responsible only for the elementary program itself; we are totally

responsible for that. We have a good program and we're proud of our program. We tell them about it, what happens, and we are proud of our graduates and what they do. They come back and they tell us that they are really pleased with what they know.

We try to tell them that you can't know everything the first day you are out in the field. It is like any other job; you have to do a lot of learning on the job. We try to give them everything that we can to get them prepped for that first day. But, it is sort of a scary thing to be in front of those students for the first time and totally responsible for them yourself. Sometimes everything we taught them goes out their heads and they honestly reverberate, return to all the things that—the ways that they have been taught, which are not necessarily always good. But they do come back and they tell us that they were prepped, that they were well prepped and they appreciate the kinds of things that we do. We get a lot of unsolicited thank you's, so that's good.

DB: In spite of those accolades you are retiring and moving on this year.

CL: Yes.

DB: Tell me a little bit about what you are going on to do and then you know, modesty aside, if I go to your colleagues when you are gone and say, 'Well, remember for me the accomplishments or some significant things about Carolyn Lott's time here,' what are they going to say?

CL: We're moving to Ole Miss [University of Mississippi], in Oxford, Mississippi, because my husband has taken up a new job there. He tells everybody that he just flunked retirement because he retired from here and was working one-third time as the director of the Center for Teaching Excellence and Ole Miss actively recruited him and said they have a new center for teaching excellence there, I think it is called Teaching and Learning Excellence, or something like that. Anyway, they have a new position and a new job title that they have just created and they wanted him to come start the program, so we are moving on to Ole Miss.

I will be teaching two classes through the university here online for next semester. I have an extended contract where retirees can have, if approved, can have a one-third contract and so I have a one-third contract that I can continue teaching one-third time if I want to and if the department wants [me] to. I will teach at least for this spring and then I don't know if I will continue to teach after that. It might get a little hard being away, so we will see how that works and we'll see whether or not I teach after that here. I haven't sought anything out in Mississippi at all because this has been totally Johnny's doing so I haven't even looked to see what classes are being taught, or whether or not I could teach any of them or anything. I don't know whether I'll do that or not, it depends.

What they will say: I think they will say I was a good chair because I worked for the good of the faculty. I tried to support the faculty for them to get their jobs done. I think they will say that I

have very high standards and I expect both the faculty and the students to meet those standards, and I keep up with it. I think they will say I am organized, but I am not. They think I am much more than I am. I think they'll say that I was a good teacher, I loved my classes, I loved my teaching. That was one of the reasons that I liked being chair, but I loved my teaching. I missed the students because you couldn't teach as much. I think they'll say I was a good chair and they'll remember me more as a chair than they will as a regular faculty member because I left right after being chair. I think they will be more cognitive of what I did, or at least remember what I did as chair.

The ones who know about the innovations that we did in the library I think will remember the library program as being very active and very innovative. Not everybody is aware of that, not everybody knows. When you're on the evaluation committee, or you're chair for the department, you get to learn what other people are doing, because you have to read their files. Until I was on some of those committees, and until I became chair, I wasn't even aware of what everybody was doing. You don't have time to sit around and talk about what everyone is doing, so I didn't know all of those things.

I think that they will have good memories. I think that they'll say that I supported them, the faculty. Now the students in the last three years didn't know me, not very well. I had to deal, unfortunately, mostly with the ones who had problems. I often had to say no, and so they don't like that. I often had to tell a student that he was not going to be part of the program anymore, or she was not going to be part of the program anymore, because grades had fallen down, or for whatever reasons. Unfortunately, I had to deal with the problem issues so the peoples I dealt with are not going to have good memories of me at all.

My students before then, my students in library remember me well. But, my students before then, I got good reviews and they're all the time coming back and asking for help or calling and saying, do you have a book that you can recommend for this? I take that as positive reinforcement as well. So, I think I left a good record here at the university. I am very proud of what I did and I always said I wanted to leave teaching before everybody wanted me to leave. I would prefer to leave while people were begging me to stay, rather than to wait and wear out my welcome, or to do things that would not be in my best interest, or the school's best interest.

I left at an opportune time right after being chair because that was the epitome, or the apex of the kinds of things that I had done because it held a lot of responsibilities; I enjoyed it. I loved working here at the university. Most of things that I did were enjoyable and fun. I've never worked so hard in my whole life. High school and teaching was nowhere near as hard as it was here. I worked a lot harder as a university faculty member than I did as a grade school, or high school teacher. Most high school and elementary teachers wouldn't believe that and don't know that because they don't always see all the things that we do.

I am very happy to be leaving, but I also think I will miss a lot of people. I'm not happy to leave the town; I'm just pleased that I am retired. I want to do other things too. My husband and I

have some plans; we were doing a lot of traveling, lot of speaking, a lot of working with teachers, and we will continue to do that.

DB: Well, I don't have any other formal questions for you; I would offer you the time if you'd like to recollect anything else that we haven't gotten to.

CL: Oh, I don't know. This has been a—this is a great, beautiful campus, beautiful campus. I get frustrated with all the buildings sometimes because you can't get from here to there. Most of the time, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here at the university. I have worked with a lot of really good people, and through my connections with Johnny, because both of us were at the university, we knew a lot of people on campus. I got to know a lot of people he worked with and I think he got to know people I worked with. So my range of acquaintances was much wider than just normal, because once we get a job sometimes we sit in our office and we just get so myopic it's not even funny because we are so involved in the things that we have to do and we don't take time to even get up and walk around campus sometimes. Because we were both involved in the university, we got to hear from both sides of campus and because he was in math and I was in education we learned—I learned from both sides. It was a very good time to be at the university. We worked hard, but we enjoyed it too.

DB: Great. Well, I appreciate your time. Thank you.

CL: Sure, thank you; it was fun to talk with you.

[End of Interview]