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Oral history interview with Charles C.
Bergman, 2010 July 15-22

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Contact Information

Reference Department
Archives of American Art
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560
www.aaa.si.edu/askus

Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Charles C. Bergman on 2010 July 15-22. The interview took place in New York, N.Y., and was conducted by James McElhinney for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

James McElhinney has reviewed the transcript and has made corrections and emendations. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

JAMES McELHINNEY: This is James McElhinney speaking with Charles C. Bergman, chairman of the board and chief executive of the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, at 863 Park Avenue in New York, on Thursday, July 15, 2010.

Good afternoon, sir.

CHARLES C. BERGMAN: Good afternoon. Welcome.

MR. McELHINNEY: Thank you so much. To begin this conversation, perhaps it would be useful to explore your early life and how you came to be so active in the arts. What was your first experience of being in the presence of a work of art?

MR. BERGMAN: I think at age seven, my late father [Sidney M. Bergman] took me to the Peabody Museum at Harvard, a college that he attended with great pride and devotion, to see the glass flowers that are a memorable exhibit still to this day, although I'm not quite sure that they're at the Peabody, or they've been moved elsewhere. And I was more interested in ice cream and in sodas than I was glass flowers. But I was deeply moved by seeing these replicas of flowers—buds, leaves, all done with remarkable skill in glass flowers.

MR. McELHINNEY: And that impressed you deeply as just an object. You hadn't seen objects like that before? Was there any art at home?

MR. BERGMAN: There was art at home. And that brings me to the second part of this reintroduction. My father had an ancient glass collection of Roman, Etruscan, Venetian, and Grecian glass. And years later, many years later, in Pittsburgh, my dad became an honorary curator of the Carnegie Museum [of Art], where he augmented and enriched their small ancient glass collection, making it one of the finest in the country. And that kind of tied together, for me, where my first appreciation of art came from.

MR. McELHINNEY: How did your father become interested in this rather rarefied artistic genre?

MR. BERGMAN: By extensive travels with my mother, a great love of history, and my dad could even speak Latin, as well as read it. My dad was a Renaissance man to his fingertips.

MR. McELHINNEY: How did he earn a living?

MR. BERGMAN: He was a world figure in public health and in hospital administration. And he ran three of the great teaching hospitals in the country: the Beth Israel in Boston, Sinai in Baltimore, and Montefiore in Pittsburgh.

MR. McELHINNEY: And what was his name?

MR. BERGMAN: Sidney M. Bergman.

MR. McELHINNEY: So at age seven, you go to the Peabody, and all of the sort of—the treasures of the natural world that were assembled during the Agassiz period and beyond. You know, the minerals and the flowers and archaeological objects. How did this shape your awareness as a kid? I mean, what did you take away from that yourself? Obviously, you didn't become a collector of ancient glass. But what was the first memory you have of sort of being interested in doing something on your own about this epiphany of beautiful objects?

MR. BERGMAN: In 1953, my junior year at Harvard, Mother and Dad took me to Europe for my first and memorable trip. We went to [Villa] I Tatti [The Harvard Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, Florence, Italy] to visit my father's distant cousin, Bernard Berenson. We spent three nights at that villa with Berenson. [Elisabetta] Nicky Mariano was present and a couple of other people. I was thrilled and deeply moved by the library, the art collection, the villa, the setting, the whole thing. Somehow I thought someday I might just be involved in some

kind of artistic, cultural initiative—someday, somehow. But I think that that's when I really began to develop a curiosity about the art world.

MR. McELHINNEY: So did you start collecting at all? Did you have a collection of your own?

MR. BERGMAN: No, not particularly. I have, to this day, only had a few antiques, a few nice prints, some nice silver, mostly family silver. But I've never had a collection of any kind that could be—it would be pretentious to say that I have.

MR. McELHINNEY: So you weren't trolling through the antique shops and galleries in search of some kind of treasure that you would then study and enjoy after the example of your distant cousin or your dad.

MR. BERGMAN: Not really. Not really. I love antiques. I love browsing in antique shops. But I've never really been in pursuit of a piece of furniture or a piece of glass on my own initiative.

MR. McELHINNEY: What was your education like?

MR. BERGMAN: It was very special. I went to a Quaker boarding school, Oakwood [Friends School] in Poughkeepsie, where I spent my last two years after high school in Pittsburgh. And then from Oakwood in 1950, I entered Harvard. And that was also a wonderful experience. I loved the place. And many years later ended up sitting on the Overseers Visiting Committee for the Harvard Museums, which was one of the great thrills of my life.

MR. McELHINNEY: What were you doing in Pittsburgh?

MR. BERGMAN: My father was head of Montefiore Hospital there. We moved to Pittsburgh in 1944 from Baltimore. And we moved from Boston to Baltimore when I was seven. So that would be 1940.

MR. McELHINNEY: So you would have been acquainted with the Walters Collection and the Baltimore Museum.

MR. BERGMAN: Very much so. Loved both places.

MR. McELHINNEY: Was your dad involved at all with any of the people who were active in those institutions?

MR. BERGMAN: Some of them sat on the board of the hospital. My cousin Ruth Bernstein was a serious patron of the arts, and there's a wing in the museum in Baltimore in honor of Ruth and Harry Bernstein.

MR. McELHINNEY: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]Mm-hm. Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

MR. BERGMAN: On Mother's side.

MR. McELHINNEY: So you moved with your dad—

MR. BERGMAN: And mother.

MR. McELHINNEY: —and mother. Were there siblings—are there siblings?

MR. BERGMAN: Regrettably not. I was reared with Airedales. I'm an only child.

MR. McELHINNEY: I see.

MR. BERGMAN: Had I been blessed with having siblings, I'd be a much more normal person than I am.

MR. McELHINNEY: [Laughs] So how did you find this changing environment all the time? You're from the Boston area.

MR. BERGMAN: Baltimore then Pittsburgh.

MR. McELHINNEY: Then you go to Baltimore, which is—you're going south and then west. I mean, each town has its own character and its own kind of cultural flavor. How did you find it being 18, 19 years old in Pittsburgh? Just curious.

MR. BERGMAN: I liked Pittsburgh. I found people very congenial and warm. My father played an important role in the renaissance of Pittsburgh. So we knew all kinds of interesting people, people who were doing things to make a better city in all aspects. I made some awfully good friends there. So that when I went away to boarding school, I was very concerned that my life had ended. And quite the contrary, it began a new and very exciting chapter for me. I would come back to Pittsburgh on holidays. I maintain warm friendships there to this day. And it worked out very well.

MR. McELHINNEY: And where did you live in Pittsburgh?

MR. BERGMAN: We first lived on Beacon Street right by Schenley Park, as you came out of the park onto Beacon. Then we moved to Oakland, and we lived on Morewood Avenue. Morewood and Fifth.

MR. McELHINNEY: Yes, the town's really changed a lot, as you know. It's really had a rebirth in a lot of ways. I guess when you were a kid, it must have been still a Rust Belt steel town.

MR. BERGMAN: Well, let's put it this way. When I was a kid in Pittsburgh, if you wore a white shirt for a few hours, your collar and your cuffs had a little gray patina to them. That is not the case today.

MR. McELHINNEY: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

MR. BERGMAN: It's a very desirable place to live.

MR. McELHINNEY: Yes, it is.

MR. BERGMAN: And it's so conceded to be.

MR. McELHINNEY: So you go then to Oakwood. How was that?

MR. BERGMAN: That was an amazing and very important experience for me, because the Quaker meeting was a very special way of my learning how to relate beyond myself. And I found the quiet of the Quaker meeting very fulfilling, very rewarding. I met some wonderful people there, both masters, faculty, and fellow students. I had a fine experience at Oakwood.

MR. McELHINNEY: Did you have anyone—was anyone there serving as a mentor for anything that you did in the future? I mean your interest in the arts. Was there a person who perhaps helped shape your thinking?

MR. BERGMAN: Yes, I had a wonderful, great teacher, Mary Durlan, who introduced me to the world of literature and drama in a very special way. I really adored her. In the art department area, I didn't particularly have any special experience. But in terms of literature and drama, profoundly so. I wonder whatever happened to Mary. I lost track of her. I kept in touch for many years.

MR. McELHINNEY: What was one of the things or experiences or comments or ideas that you got from her that really sticks with you to this day?

MR. BERGMAN: I would say the role of the unconscious in literature and drama. That was something very important to me. I read poets and playwrights and authors that I would not have read had it not been for the persuasion and—I don't know how to put this. But Mary advanced my curiosity that developed into a genuine love of literature and drama. And at that time in my life, I thought I would be an actor.

MR. McELHINNEY: Interesting. So that was your first ambition.

MR. BERGMAN: Partially enhanced by the fact that before I went away to Oakwood, while in Pittsburgh in public school, I was enrolled in a very serious drama school, the Caravan School of Theater Arts, run by a couple of rascals. I went after school and all day Saturday to the Caravan School of Theater Arts, to be an actor.

MR. McELHINNEY: So were they holding classes? Were they putting on productions? What were they doing? What kinds of things were you doing?

MR. BERGMAN: At the Caravan School?

MR. McELHINNEY: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

MR. BERGMAN: Justifying the exorbitant tuition that my parents were charged, I was given individual instruction. And we did indeed put on productions. I can't remember a single one. But we did put on for the benefit of the masochist parents who were seduced into tuition at that school. It really was quite an operation.

MR. McELHINNEY: Are you aware of how any of the people who were involved there—were there any classmates who evolved into notable careers?

MR. BERGMAN: Not to my knowledge.

MR. McELHINNEY: Not to your knowledge.

MR. BERGMAN: And I don't know about their prison records.

MR. McELHINNEY: It's a small world because, you know, I went to art school at Tyler [School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA]. And Roger Enlicher taught drawing there. And he had taught—he had had roommates in his class, roommates—Philip Pearlstein and Andy Warhol.

MR. BERGMAN: I know Phil very well.

MR. McELHINNEY: Roommates at Carnegie Mellon and studying with this guy Roger Enlicher.

MR. BERGMAN: Sure.

MR. McELHINNEY: And you couldn't imagine two more dissimilar people, I suppose.

MR. BERGMAN: Than Philip and/or Andy.

MR. McELHINNEY: Right. So it's a small world. I was just curious if anyone came out of the Caravan and ended up holding an Oscar.

MR. BERGMAN: If they did, I'm not aware of it.

MR. McELHINNEY: Okay. Something we don't need to worry about then, I suppose. So you didn't take any instruction in art or in drawing?

MR. BERGMAN: No.

MR. McELHINNEY: Or pottery or anything like that, working with your hands.

MR. BERGMAN: Perhaps pottery, in a frankly nondescript arts program at Oakwood. Nothing special. But I have a vague recollection of making saucers or vases in the pottery workshop.

MR. McELHINNEY: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.] Just as an enrichment activity. And so then you went to Harvard, and that was in 1950. What did you decide to major in? Mm-hm. [Affirmative.] Just as an enrichment activity. And so then you went to Harvard, and that was in 1950. What did you decide to major in?

MR. BERGMAN: English literature and American drama.

MR. McELHINNEY: And then what was your ambition? Acting, still, or was it—

MR. BERGMAN: No, not at all. I didn't know what I wanted to do. But I wanted to do something that would help people who were hurting. And that relates to the inspiration that my father made in my life. And to this day, the nicest thing anybody could say to me would be that I have been able somehow to make a contribution in that way.

MR. McELHINNEY: Helping people.

MR. BERGMAN: Helping people. Not knowing why, how, or where, or to what extent.

MR. McELHINNEY: So was that a motivation of your dad's when he went into his—well, into healthcare and into overseeing these hospitals? Was he motivated by the same idea?

MR. BERGMAN: I'm sure he was. He never, to my knowledge, verbalized this. But rather by his example, it was obvious that this was the nourishment that fortified his life.

MR. McELHINNEY: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.] Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

MR. BERGMAN: Absolutely. He was very modest about all this. But he had a passionate commitment to helping people in distress.

MR. McELHINNEY: So what do you suppose [was] the genesis of that system of value? From whence does this come? Is it a religious conviction? Is it a political—

MR. BERGMAN: My father was not religious in any way. We were Reformed Jews. And my father had absolutely no use or commitment for formal Judaism or formal religion. But I found out many years later that he prayed silently on a daily basis.

MR. McELHINNEY: How did you learn that?

MR. BERGMAN: My mother told me that. My father would not set foot in a synagogue except that in his position he felt that he should, for political reasons, attend synagogue during the High Holidays. But neither he nor my

mother had any use for formal religion.

MR. McELHINNEY: I see.

MR. BERGMAN: But they were very anxious for me to go to a Quaker boarding school to be exposed to the Quaker philosophy of life.

MR. McELHINNEY: So were they involved at all with the Society of Friends?

MR. BERGMAN: They had many Quaker friends, but they were not involved with the society, nor did they worship in a Friends' meeting.

MR. McELHINNEY: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.] But they were interested in the values of the Society of Friends. Mm-hm. [Affirmative.] But they were interested in the values of the Society of Friends.

MR. BERGMAN: Very much so.

MR. McELHINNEY: And wanted you to be instilled with those values, as well.

MR. BERGMAN: My grandfather on my father's side was also an inspiration to my own father. My grandfather was a very wealthy man who owned a lot of real estate in Boston. He was one of the founders of the Beth Israel Hospital, which was then located in Roxbury in my grandfather's day. My grandfather, whom I never knew, was a remarkable civic leader. He was a Republican in a Democratic Irish Catholic Boston. My father was inspired by his father's benevolence and charitable interests. My grandfather owned, as I say, a lot of property. His agents were instructed that if tenants could not pay their rent because of adversity—illness, problems of one sort or another—the agents were instructed not to press for the rents. My grandfather became overextended and died a rather poor man.

MR. McELHINNEY: Oh, dear.

MR. BERGMAN: A very poor man.

MR. McELHINNEY: How sad. When you were at Harvard, and you were studying English literature and American theater, were there any other influential people in your life? Any classmates, teachers, mentors who helped continue to mold you and your system of value and your structure of thinking?

MR. BERGMAN: There were a great many people. Beginning with faculty people, I was very close to my housemaster, John Finley, in Eliot House, the great Greek scholar. I was very close to my tutor, Bill Alfred, who was a playwright and a lovely guy. I also was very fond of Bob Chapman, who also became a tutor of mine, who was the coauthor of the play, *Billy Budd*. I'm trying to think of other people on the faculty that I really appreciated. Those were the primary people who I was very close to. Richard Wilbur, the poet, was also someone that I was thrilled to study with and to be befriended by.

These were golden days at Harvard. And as a matter of fact, I will just share—irrelevant as it may be—a little anecdote about the richness of the place. T. S. Eliot, my freshman year, was the Theodore Spencer Memorial Lecturer at Harvard. The Signet Society had a tea in his honor, and I found myself standing next to him. Having heard him give readings and lecture, I decided to say something. So I said, "Mr. Eliot, may I say that the *Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* is the most beautiful poem I believe I've ever read." And Eliot looked at me, and in his snobbish way, with his phony English accent, said, "Oh. And did you understand it?" And I felt like saying, "No, do you?" That was a memorable incident in my joyful freshman year at Harvard.

MR. McELHINNEY: [Laughs] It's a good story.

MR. BERGMAN: And then classmates.

MR. McELHINNEY: Classmates, yes.

MR. BERGMAN: Roommates and classmates galore enriched my life. And to this day, I remain very close to them. I've never known friendships so rich, so sustaining, so joyful as I enjoyed at Harvard and afterwards.

MR. McELHINNEY: Did you work with any of them subsequently in any of your enterprises, either on behalf of other people or in the arts or in the legal profession?

MR. BERGMAN: You know, it's curious. I've ushered in 23 weddings in my life, and I've had a little social contact with my classmates. I can't think of anybody at the moment, offhand, that directly was involved in any of the things that I have been responsible for or participated in. I'm just trying to think right now of those people, living and dead, and I don't believe there's anybody who was directly involved in any of the jobs or charities or

organizations that I've been part of.

MR. McELHINNEY: You said they were golden days at Harvard, but they were also the years of the McCarthy hearings and the House Un-American Activities Committee. And I'm sure that a lot of people in Cambridge and at Harvard—I mean, Boston is an academic town. There must have been a lot of energy around these issues.

MR. BERGMAN: Very much so.

MR. McELHINNEY: And how did you experience that?

MR. BERGMAN: Well, by an incident that occurred [inaudible]. Berenson had gone to Boston Latin [School], as had my father. Both of them were Harvard alumni. Daddy much younger than Berenson. McCarthy was in his element when we visited I Tatti in 1953. And Berenson was horrified, repulsed that this—he referred to McCarthy as a malignant growth trying to destroy America, trying to destroy his beloved Harvard, looking for Communists and homosexuals under every bed. He could not believe that America would allow somebody like McCarthy to contaminate and poison the quality of life here. And in Cambridge, we were equally offended and repulsed by this dangerous and vicious guy.

MR. McELHINNEY: So did any of your classmates, professors, or friends find themselves at a disadvantage because of their involvement in socialism or unpopular ideas?

MR. BERGMAN: I don't think I know of anybody who directly suffered. But I know that classmates like Ted Kennedy, for example, were already showing an interest and concern and getting involved in politics. In my own case—I should be ashamed to put this in the Archives—I was the hind end of the elephant. Henry Cabot Lodge was running for president, I believe. And I was part of the Young Republicans at Harvard. And I was the hind end of the elephant in the parade. A distinction that I [laughs] should be ashamed to share.

MR. McELHINNEY: It was a two-man elephant?

MR. BERGMAN: Yes.

MR. McELHINNEY: Okay.

MR. BERGMAN: A classmate was in the front, and I was in the back.

MR. McELHINNEY: It's one of these costumes that two men climb into.

MR. BERGMAN: Exactly.

MR. McELHINNEY: You've got a back end and a front end. And it's a rather small elephant then, I would imagine.

MR. BERGMAN: Yes, discreetly so.

MR. McELHINNEY: Yes. Well, how well did you know Ted Kennedy?

MR. BERGMAN: I knew him quite well. Never thought he would emerge as one of the finest people to grace the U.S. Senate. And his own politics became mine. Very soon after the elephant incident, I became a liberal Republican and was not involved in any animal costumes from that moment on.

MR. McELHINNEY: No animals were embarrassed as a consequence of your efforts after that.

MR. BERGMAN: Not to my knowledge.

MR. McELHINNEY: Not to your knowledge. Not with your involvement.

MR. BERGMAN: No.

MR. McELHINNEY: So what year would this have been, '54?

MR. BERGMAN: Fifty-three-'54.

MR. McELHINNEY: Fifty-three-'54. Because the presidential election would have been '54.

MR. BERGMAN: That's right.

MR. McELHINNEY: And it was a Stevenson [Adlai Stevenson] year, right, for the Democrats?

MR. BERGMAN: Who I knew and loved. I got to know him very well because his sons were at Harvard in my time.

Borden [Stevenson] was a class or two below me, and John Fell [Stevenson] came afterwards, and Ad Junior [Adlai Stevenson III] was above me. But through Borden, I got to know the governor very well. And when he was ambassador to the UN, I saw him occasionally.

MR. McELHINNEY: Here in New York?

MR. BERGMAN: Here in New York, he lived in the Waldorf Towers.

MR. McELHINNEY: So how did you find him over the years? I mean, it's extraordinary to know such a person.

MR. BERGMAN: Inspiring—if we have a natural aristocracy in America, it's people like Adlai Stevenson.

MR. McELHINNEY: An aristocracy of character and learning.

MR. BERGMAN: Of character, of learning, of social consciousness, of compassion, of integrity. What a great man he was.

MR. McELHINNEY: So was he a mentor to you, as well? I mean, he must have been a pretty young man. If you knew him as a student, it must have been a very impressive thing.

MR. BERGMAN: He was very impressive, and I was thrilled to be one of the young guys that surrounded his son, who shared the father with us.

MR. McELHINNEY: That's about it.

MR. BERGMAN: I also met through him Marietta Tree, who became a friend. And years later, at the Aspen Institute, Marietta and I resumed a friendship when I became a Presidential Fellow of the Aspen Institute.

MR. McELHINNEY: When did you graduate from Harvard? Would that be 1954?

MR. BERGMAN: Nineteen fifty-four. Spring of '54.

MR. McELHINNEY: And what happened then? Where did you find yourself after that?

MR. BERGMAN: I went back to Pittsburgh to join an advertising agency called Ketchum, McLeod, and Grove, which I irreverently renamed—after I'd been there six months—Catch 'em, Screw 'em, and Forget 'em. I thought the advertising business was a Kafka nightmare, exemplified by the fact that your clients would ask you, "What did you do for me tomorrow, let alone what did you do for me today?" I found it turbulent, chaotic, irrelevant, and pretty ghastly.

So after two masochistic years of dealing with the slings and arrows of the advertising profession—if you could call it that; it's not the world's oldest profession, which I believe is prostitution, but it comes damned close to it—I fled back to Cambridge and went to see John Finley, my housemaster. And I said to Professor Finley, "What do I do, sir, to earn a living?" And he said, "Teach, dear boy. Teach." And I said, "But, MR. Finley, I don't know anything." He said, "That's totally irrelevant." He said, "Register your credentials at the Harvard Teaching Appointment Office, and the rest will take care of itself."

So I finished my tea, left in confusion, registered my truly nonexistent credentials at the Harvard Teaching Appointment House, and there begins my story. Because after proper interviews, I was offered jobs in all kinds of the best prep schools in the country. And I ended up going back to Cambridge, to [Buckingham] Browne and Nichols [Day School], on Gerry's Landing Road right near Harvard Square. And I spent two wonderful years earning \$5,400 a year, which was excessive, supplemented by a \$500 extra allotment for doing alumni affairs [inaudible] and public relations for the school.

Borrowing heavily from my indulgent parents so that I could put on clean clothes in the morning, after two wonderful years of teaching in the lower school, where I was voted the most popular master by my kids—although I knew absolutely nothing and taught them things that were totally wrong. For example, saying that Honolulu was the capital of the Philippines. All 12 boys in my class frantically waved their hands. I called on one of them, a nemesis of mine that I particularly loved, and said, "What is it, Benjie?" Little Benjamin Bradlee IV, whose parents are well known to the world, said to me, "Please, sir, Honolulu is not in the Philippines. It's in the Hawaiian Islands." And I said, "Certainly not. Look at your atlas." And this little darling said, "I have, sir. Look at yours." [They laugh.] This characterized my teaching plight at Browne and Nichols.

I was en route to the headmaster's office one day, late—sorry, the reverse. I was rushing from the headmaster's office to the lower school, where I taught nine-year-old boys in the fifth grade. And I got hit in the head with a

softball. And I turned around, and there's Benjamin "Ground-shield" Bradley IV grinning like a monkey. So I said, "Benjie, come over here. You realize you could have killed me. What would you have done?" He said, "Please, sir, if I had, I would have buried you in the Mt. Auburn Cemetery—which was next to the school playing field—"along with the other great men in this country." What could I do but give him a hug, kick him in the behind, and sent him flying off to sports. That was my Browne and Nichols teaching experience, and I loved it. But I felt I was playing a Mister Chips kind of a game, and that I could not survive economically on what I was being well paid to do, under the circumstances.

MR. McELHINNEY: How was it that you were able to avoid military service?

MR. BERGMAN: That is quite a story.

MR. McELHINNEY: I think we have time.

MR. BERGMAN: I'm hesitating, but I have my dear friend, advisor, confidante, senior colleague in the room with me. She will probably tell me I shouldn't tell this story. All right, I will.

MR. McELHINNEY: She's laughing. [Laughs.]

MR. BERGMAN: The Korean War was on at the time. The Local Draft Board 16 in Pittsburgh, in the old post office building, was bugging me every five minutes: Was I enrolled in the university, in the college? Was I in good standing? They seemed to have an inordinate interest in getting me to leave Harvard and go into the Korean War. So I, wanting to finish Harvard, decided, having had my physical and all the attendant things that I needed to complain about this harassment. So I went, at my father's suggestion, to see Sargent Kennedy—his Christian first name was Sargent, and he was a Kennedy. A very patrician, WASPy Kennedy, who was the registrar of Harvard at the time. I told him my plight and about the harassment of Local Number 16 in Pittsburgh. And in this booming aristocratic, North Shore accent, Sargent Kennedy yelled out to his secretary, "Bea, get me General Hershey in Washington." General Hershey, Lewis Hershey, was in charge of the Selective Service of the United States.

The conversation went something like this: "General Hershey, Sargent Kennedy here at University Hall. Young lad, Charlie Bergman, from the local Pittsburgh draft board is being harassed by one of your offensive clerks. We really ought to have this terminated. We've been in a most cordial relationship with the federal republic since our inception. And let me remind you, General, that we preceded the formation of the republic. The lad is being told to report for this or report for that. We give examinations twice a year, midyears and finals. And that is our practice, and that is the way it has always been and will be. Thank you, General. Thank you very much. I appreciate your courtesy in this matter." He hung up the phone, and he said, "That ought to take care of it." I never heard from the draft board again.

MR. McELHINNEY: Good story.

MR. BERGMAN: It's a wonderful story. I don't know if I want this in the transcript or not.

MR. McELHINNEY: Well, we can think about it. It's a wonderful story.

MR. BERGMAN: You asked me about my draft experience.

MR. McELHINNEY: Well, it just occurred to me. I'm trying to assemble your early life as a kind of contextual preamble to talking about the Pollock-Krasner—

MR. BERGMAN: I appreciate that, Jim, very much.

MR. McELHINNEY: Foundation and all of your other activities. Just to give, you know, the reader of the transcript a way to read the transcript and have an image of you, your character, your personality, and the things that shaped you as a young man.

MR. BERGMAN: I appreciate that, and I am very intrigued and pleased by your questions. I should also add, lest the noblesse oblige of this story be offensive, that I have had since birth a heart murmur. And I have suffered some arrhythmia and fibrillation in my adult life. So I would have been probably rejected by the draft. But I certainly had every intention of finishing college, and I did.

MR. McELHINNEY: Harvard. But, you probably would have—maybe would have—gone.

MR. BERGMAN: Well, I actually did have a pre-induction physical, and I was turned down for it.

MR. McELHINNEY: Well, there you go.

MR. BERGMAN: Yes. But making fun of Harvard and hopefully making fun of myself at the same time, that is quite a story.

MR. McELHINNEY: It's a lovely story. I don't think things like that happen any longer.

MR. BERGMAN: You can be sure, my friend, they don't.

MR. McELHINNEY: What was the next evolution in your life from being a schoolmaster and teaching? I don't know if we found out what subject you taught.

MR. BERGMAN: Fifth grade social studies and an experimental course on poetry and drama.

MR. McELHINNEY: Oh, and geography.

MR. BERGMAN: And geography was my strong suit. [Laughs.] Standing at the blackboard with a large map unfolded, desperately trying to find the Mississippi River, unable to find it. And one of my little lads would come up, take my hand, and show me the biggest river in America in the middle of the map that any fool could see.

My next installment relates to Cambridge also. Radcliffe was embarked on a major capital campaign, as was Harvard.

MR. McELHINNEY: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.] Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

MR. BERGMAN: And a remarkable man—speaking of mentors in my life—Robert F. Duncan, Bob Duncan, of Kersting Brown and Company, was the senior consultant on the Harvard and Radcliffe campaigns. Dean Lord, the director of public relations at Radcliffe, wanted some freelance writing done and hired me to do something on the Women's Archives at Radcliffe. Bob Duncan, the legendary leading fund-raising consultant in higher education in America, said to Dean Lord, "Who wrote this stuff?" And she said, "A young master at Browne and Nichols, Charlie Bergman." Bob Duncan took me to the Window Shop for lunch, on Brattle Street. I vividly remember he wore both a belt and braces. Didn't want any accidents.

MR. McELHINNEY: Not leaving anything to chance.

MR. BERGMAN: Not leaving anything to chance. He said to me, "Charlie, there's a profession out there that you belong in. We're looking for young people of character, breeding and quality. It's the field that I'm in. It's institutional fund-raising and public relations consulting. And I think you belong in this business. And I'd like to sponsor you." Which he did.

And once again I had a plethora of opportunities to be of service. Bob Duncan had as his best friend and sometime rival a small, prestigious firm in Boston, the Lavin Company. Jim Lavin, who had cancer of the larynx and talked like this with a voice box, was one of the most remarkable people I have ever met. And six months after I joined his firm, at Bob Duncan's sponsoring, they sent me to New York to open up an office of the Lavin Company. So three days a week, as a reformed Jew, I was on loan to the American Unitarian Association and one day a week to the Jesuit Foreign Missions, for their work in Baghdad, Iraq, where I never went. And that was four days. And the fifth day was soliciting new business. And I spent three crazy years at the Lavin Company, living on Beacon Hill, commuting to New York, where I had an apartment given to me by the Lavin Company at 10 Park Avenue.

We desperately needed business for the firm. And Percy Brundage, who had been the director of the budget under Eisenhower, and board chairman of Price Waterhouse, was treasurer of Project HOPE [Health Opportunities for People Everywhere], of the Unitarian— sorry, I'm getting this a little mixed up. Percy Brundage was treasurer of Project HOPE, a client that we were trying to get. And Jim Lavin told Dr. William Walsh, the president of Project HOPE, the founder of Project HOPE, that if he hired the Lavin Company, I would be assigned full-time to that account. And Percy Brundage was pushing very hard for me to be assigned to that account, because Percy was national chairman of the Unitarian Development Fund and the man that I was assigned to work with for three years.

Jim Lavin was dying of cancer. And Dr. Walsh took an enormous dislike to Jim Lavin. And secretly approached me to leave the Lavin Company and reorganize Project HOPE, the People-to-People Help Foundation with the hospital ship. I, naturally, went to Jim Lavin, told him about this end run, and asked him what I should do and how I should handle it. He said to me, "I'm dying of cancer. You go to Washington, Charlie. You clean up their mess. And if you do, the rest will be history. Go with my blessing and do this."

I went down to Washington. I reorganized Project HOPE's fund-raising, one of the most difficult jobs I've ever had in my life. In one year we fired people all over the place. We closed field offices that were ripping off Project HOPE. It was a nightmare. But Hubert Humphrey, the watchdog of the Alliance for Progress at [US]AID gave us

two-and-a-half million dollars to preserve the HOPE medical teaching mission.

When the HOPE ship [SS *HOPE* hospital ship] came back to New York from its triumphant voyage in Peru, I was lunching with members of the Rockefeller Family and become the first vice president of the first private cultural exchange program between the United States and Latin America, the Inter-American Foundation for the Arts. So using the success of Project HOPE's mission as a catalyst, I left Washington and came to New York.

MR. McELHINNEY: A lot of people may not remember the *HOPE* ship. And as a kid, I remember the image. Whoever was in charge of publicity did a great job of seeing that it was on the news. That the image was well known, the white—was it a Liberty Ship from World War II that had been overhauled as a hospital and had "HOPE" painted on the side?

MR. BERGMAN: Yes. Absolutely.

MR. McELHINNEY: And used to travel from port to port and country to country and do good works and try to promote public health.

MR. BERGMAN: I used to refer to it in speeches as "a floating embassy of health."

MR. McELHINNEY: So what were the problems? Was it just—

MR. BERGMAN: The integrity of the medical teaching mission, the nursing care on the ship was impeccable. We were doing outstanding things in medical, surgical care. The bad part was here in the United States.

MR. McELHINNEY: Was the administration?

MR. BERGMAN: Fund-raising offices all over the country, 18 of them. I closed most of them and fired the people who ran them.

MR. McELHINNEY: Skimming? Inappropriate malfeasance.

MR. BERGMAN: Malfeasance extraordinaire.

MR. McELHINNEY: Oh, dear. So it must have been interesting for you to find yourself at the helm—pardon the pun—of a project which put you sort of in a similar occupation to your dad.

MR. BERGMAN: Very much so.

MR. McELHINNEY: How did that feel?

MR. BERGMAN: It felt awfully good to me.

MR. McELHINNEY: I bet.

MR. BERGMAN: My parents were enormously proud of me; they were so supportive and undergirding. I had an experience in Washington that was, on the one hand, very romantic and exciting. I was a bachelor. I knew the Kennedys. I was invited to the White House. I had a beautiful little house in Georgetown. I had all kinds of privileges and perks, but my work was extremely anxiety-producing and rough.

MR. McELHINNEY: I see. I see. What—just to do a little housekeeping on the conversation—

MR. BERGMAN: Anything.

MR. McELHINNEY: Your teaching was from the time of your graduation—or after you left the world of advertising.

MR. BERGMAN: Fifty-five to '57.

MR. McELHINNEY: Fifty-five to '57.

MR. BERGMAN: Was the Ketchum years. Fifty-seven to '59 was Browne and Nichols. Fifty-nine to '61 or '62 was the Lavin Company, Project HOPE. And '63 was the Inter-American Foundation for the Arts [IAFA]. While there, while vice president of IAFA, the Rockefellers brought me into other interests of the family as a consultant and advisor. And there is where the Academy of Religion and Mental Health comes into my life.

MR. McELHINNEY: This might be a good time to take a break because it's an hour.

MR. BERGMAN: Sure.

MR. McELHINNEY: How are you feeling?

MR. BERGMAN: Tired but stimulated. What time is it?

MR. McELHINNEY: It's three-twenty. We've been talking for about an hour. Thank you. And we will resume next week.

[END TRACK 01.]

This is James McElhinney speaking with Charles Bergman at the offices of the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, at 863 Park Avenue in New York City, on Wednesday, the 21st of July, 2010. And speaking also with Kerrie Buitrago. Welcome.

KERRIE BUITRAGO: Thank you.

MR. BERGMAN: Thank you.

MR. McELHINNEY: Thank you for your hospitality this afternoon.

Last time we spoke, you were telling us about your work with the HOPE Foundation and your subsequent—we were starting to talk about your involvement with, I believe it was, the Institutes of Religion and Health? Is that correct?

MR. BERGMAN: It is correct.

MR. McELHINNEY: So shall we try to pick up the story at that point?

MR. BERGMAN: Surely. The Institutes of Religion and Health was the result of a merger of two organizations that I brought together: one, the Academy of Religion and Mental Health; the other, the American Foundation of Religion and Psychiatry. The purpose of the Academy was to end the war between the men of the cloth and the men of the couch. And to bring the clergy of all types into well-educated, well-trained psychotherapy; and conversely, to let psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, psychiatric social workers, and most important, pastoral counselors, clergy—ministers, priests, rabbis, nuns—trained in a three-year residency program to be psychotherapists. And to keep their well-meaning, Bible-thumping hands off of people who needed professional health rendered by the medical, social, and behavioral sciences.

The Academy had no clinical or training operations. It was a conference, seminar, symposia convening group, and published a scholarly journal, the *Journal of Religion and Health*.

The American Foundation [was] started by Norman Vincent Peale, and the late Smiley Blanton, a famous psychiatrist analyzed personally by Freud; the American Foundation, however, was a clinical and training program, where clergy of all faiths were trained in a three-year residency program. The American Foundation also had clinics around the country, including a psychiatric licensed clinic at the Marble Collegiate Church here in New York, which was Norman Vincent Peale's famous venue for his preaching.

I had the honor, the privilege, and the dubious pleasure of taking these two foundations, merging them together to form the Institutes of Religion and Health, with a clinical program, a training program, a conference-convening program, and the continuation of the *Journal of Religion and Health*.

And it was quite a challenge, to put it mildly, because the disciplines involved were not always harmonious, not always compatible, and not always agreeable. But it was a wonderful experience, because, even today, many people with emotional and mental disorders seek help from their clergy before they go to anybody in the medical or the psychological field. So it is terribly important that clergy be trained to offer psychotherapy and, above all, to make appropriate referrals when necessary to psychiatrists, to psychologists, and to psychiatric social workers.

MR. McELHINNEY: So how would you describe the nature of the divisions between, at this point, the—

MR. BERGMAN: The Academy began long [before] I joined it. I can't recall now what year the Academy began. It was started by an Episcopal clergyman, the Reverend George Christian Anderson, who always referred to himself as someone in good standing with his bishop, which always made me slightly suspicious of George. I'm sorry, I've lost the—

MR. McELHINNEY: What year, approximately, did you become involved with this?

MR. BERGMAN: [Nineteen] Sixty-five.

MR. McELHINNEY: And what was the motivation, or the impetus, for this? Who reached out to you and invited you to do this?

MR. BERGMAN: The Reverend George Christian Anderson and the board of the Academy of Religion and Mental Health, including the chairman, somebody whom I loved and revered and was a mentor of my career, Frank Fremont-Smith. Frank was the medical director of the Josiah Macy Foundation, a psychiatrist who never practiced with people, individual clients, but rather had as his clients the World Federation of Mental Health. I believe the UN, the Atomic Bomb Project, amazing examples of where his insight and empathy were valued and sought after.

MR. McELHINNEY: What were the divisions in 1965 between the way mental health was understood by the clergies of the various different religions involved and the psychiatric profession? How would you characterize those?

MR. BERGMAN: Many clergy thought that the disciplines of psychiatry—particularly psychoanalysis—were controversial, perhaps even the work of the devil. There was a lot of tension between religion and psychiatry. Psychiatrists also, some of them, and some analysts in particular, were—

MS. BUITRAGO: Antireligious?

MR. BERGMAN: Were antireligious in the extreme. And thought that religion was a sop.

MR. McELHINNEY: Opiate of the masses.

MR. BERGMAN: So it was our challenge and privilege to try to bridge the war between the men of the cloth and the men of the couch. We did a couple of very interesting things. We were consultants, for example, to the Vatican. We also started a training clinical program at Harvard Divinity School for Protestants, Loyola, Chicago, for Catholics. And a wonderful program at Albert Einstein [College of Medicine] for rabbis—with a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health

MR. McELHINNEY: That would have been my next question, which is, bringing together all of these different, seemingly incompatible, warring camps and trying to start new programs and expand services that they were offering already at the same time must have been very costly. How did you raise all the funds to do that?

MR. BERGMAN: We had an awful time raising money. But there were a couple of people who played a very key role in undergirding and buttressing, which was rough going for the very inception. I cite now the generosity of Paul Mellon, interestingly enough, and Laurence Rockefeller. The Academy had really been started by George Anderson, going to Carl Jung, getting Jung's blessing and approval, that this was an instrument that needed to be created. Paul Mellon was deeply influenced by Carl Jung. These two men and their respective foundations were very instrumental in preserving the small staff and program of the Academy.

In the case of the American Foundation of Religion and Psychiatry, there was a very deep-pocket, well-heeled patron, W. Clement Stone of Chicago, an insurance billionaire who was the major money behind Richard Nixon. And Normal Vincent Peale was the sun, moon, and stars to Clem Stone, as he was to Richard Nixon.

MR. McELHINNEY: So how did the programs evolve? What were the particular challenges that you met?

MR. BERGMAN: The first big challenge was funding. The second challenge was getting the leadership of the medical, social, behavioral sciences, and the denominations to endorse and sanction the work of the Academy, and later the American Foundation, and then the merger of the two.

MR. McELHINNEY: So you've spoken about certain training for clergy in psychiatry. Was there any training for—

MR. BERGMAN: Psychotherapy.

MR. McELHINNEY: Yes, I'm sorry. Psychotherapy, not psychiatry but psychotherapy, psychotherapeutic techniques.

MR. BERGMAN: Yes.

MR. McELHINNEY: Was there any reciprocal training for psychiatrists in helping them to understand the starting points of clergy and the kind of advice they gave?

MR. BERGMAN: Only by virtue of the journal and of conferences, symposia, and small meetings. This was the way we dealt with the top leadership of the respective denominations.

MR. McELHINNEY: So in other words, through dialogue, they began to see each other in a different light.

MR. BERGMAN: Dialogue, correspondence, publication of monographs, scholarly articles.

MR. McELHINNEY: How frequent was the journal out—how frequently was the journal published?

MR. BERGMAN: Four times a year.

MR. McELHINNEY: Quarterly.

MR. BERGMAN: Yes.

MR. McELHINNEY: And how often were you holding symposia and conferences?

MR. BERGMAN: Depending on the funding available, we had a major annual meeting each year where people came from all over the world, and people like Margaret Mead were our star performers.

MR. McELHINNEY: What kind of input did you have from her? What was her contribution, if you can remember?

MR. BERGMAN: Her contribution was to be salty, to be disrespectful, to be very incisive about the purpose of this collaboration.

And I must tell a story in this regard. Each year we had an annual luncheon or dinner that was part of the annual meeting of the Academy of Religion and Mental Health. And we always had a suite before the luncheon or dinner where the head table guests convened for a little aperitif before going into the ballroom to the stage where the head table was presented. Margaret Mead was the chief speaker one year, and she was very late coming to this cocktail. And suddenly down the hall I saw this tiny little woman with her shepherd's crook barreling along. She came into the suite. And turning to the Cardinal of New York at the time, she said, "Father, I'll have a martini straight up without any ice." And the Cardinal was absolutely furious. And turning to a priest aide, he said, "Bring Dr. Mead whatever libation it is that she asks for." [They laugh.] But this was Margaret Mead putting down the Cardinal of New York. Just a mere little vignette of those years.

MR. McELHINNEY: A great story. So of all of the different initiatives—the treatment facilities, the training operations, the conferences, promotion of dialogue, you know, publication of original scholarship—what proved to be the most successful track of all of these programs?

MR. BERGMAN: The most successful track, by all odds, was the training received by an extraordinary group of young, devoted, committed clergy who wanted to really be trained in psychotherapy and to be of service in that regard as part of their ministry. And to this day, I still am in touch. Tom Pickton, whom you know well, Kerrie.

MS. BUITRAGO: I adore him. He's marvelous.

MR. BERGMAN: Was a marvelous example of the enlightened, skilled, and loving clergymen that emerged out of this program. Tom Pickton, parenthetically, today is a vice provincial of one of the largest Catholic orders in the world. But he is still actively involved as a psychotherapist.

MR. McELHINNEY: Did any of these clergymen or women—were any of them women?

MR. BERGMAN: Absolutely. Our medical director of the newly formed Institutes was a lady. And there were a number of women who went through our training program. Not many nuns, but a lot of clergy.

MR. McELHINNEY: Did any of the clergy, male or female, actually pursue a medical degree as a result of this experience?

MR. BERGMAN: Very, very few. I cannot think of anybody offhand who did. They were content to realize the validity of their respective faith group and the validity of their training as a psychotherapist.

MR. McELHINNEY: So science meets divinity in a useful way. How long were you with the organization?

MR. BERGMAN: From 1965 to '72, I was the chief operating officer of the Academy. I merged the academy and the American Foundation in '72. I remained as chief operating officer of it until '78; I remained on the board until at least '84, actively involved on the board of the Institutes.

MR. McELHINNEY: During this time, were you involved in the arts at all? Were you actively involved as either a patron or a member of the board of arts organizations?

MR. BERGMAN: Not particularly. But in '61 or '62, through the Rockefellers' interest in religion and mental health and the reconciliation of the two, I became a consultant to the Academy of Religion and Mental Health while vice president of the Rockefeller-sponsored first private cultural exchange program between the United States and

Latin America, the Inter-American Foundation for the Arts. And the purpose of IAFA was to bring the best of artists, intellectuals, and cultural leaders from North America to Latin America, and the converse, of course, the other way. This was my major responsibility from '61 to '63 approximately.

MR. McELHINNEY: So was this working in concert with the UN or OAS [Organization of American States]? Or was it completely independent?

MR. BERGMAN: We were, regrettably, only too independent. Even though we had our basic core support from the Rockefeller Brothers' Fund, Rodman Rockefeller was chairman of my executive committee. We had the misfortune of asking Huntington Hartford to be chairman of the board of the IAFA Foundation, hoping that he would, in that role, be a major patron and supporter. And he never gave a nickel to the program. The first question that anybody asked us was how, much is Hunt giving the program? He never gave us a dime.

MR. McELHINNEY: Well, some people say that the rule is, if you're going to serve on certain kinds of boards—

MR. BERGMAN: Yes.

MR. McELHINNEY: —that the G's, as they say: give, get, or go.

MR. BERGMAN: Yes. I also did something with my colleague Robert Wool, who was president of IAFA. We did not take salaries for at least six months, to prove to the Rockefellers that we were sincere in our commitment to make this thing work. We had some historic conferences in Yucatan, Puerto Rico, and in the Bahamas. Hartford owned the Ocean Club on Paradise Island. We had a symposium there. We had one down in Baran Quitas in Puerto Rico; we had one in Chichen Itza in Yucatan, where we had people like [William] Bill Styron, Gore Vidal, Lillian Hellmann. These were actively involved artists, intellectuals— an amazing group of people—that we brought from North America to Latin America, to lecture, to talk, to be part of the artists' community.

MR. McELHINNEY: And who was there from Latin America? Who were among the notables?

MR. BERGMAN: Marta Traba from Colombia; Hans Neumann from Caracas; Guillermo [inaudible] Rodriguez from Puerto Rico; Manuela Ponce from Yucatan; Raphael Squirru [sp]; Oskar Niemeyer, the famous architect from Brazil; Fernando de Szyszlo, Peru's leading painter. Oh, they were an incredible group of people.

MR. McELHINNEY: What was the greatest success achieved by IAFA?

MR. BERGMAN: The greatest success, in my humble opinion, was "Magnet New York," the first contemporary show of outstanding, current Latin American artists, visual artists—painters, sculptors, printmakers—held at the Galleria Bonino in New York. I had Adlai Stevenson open that exhibit. And it was the beginning of a major, major influx of Latin American, talented artists. Lilliana Porter from Argentina was an example of one of the artists.

MS. BUITRAGO: Were there any writers?

MR. BERGMAN: There were writers, too, very much so.

MS. BUITRAGO: From Latin America.

MR. BERGMAN: Jorge Elliot [sp] from Argentina and Carlos Fuentes from Mexico.

MR. McELHINNEY: That's fine. How long were you involved with IAFA?

MR. BERGMAN: Two years.

MR. McELHINNEY: Two years? And this was prior to—

MR. BERGMAN: —joining the Academy, George Anderson came to me and said, Stop being a consultant to us. Come full time.

MR. McELHINNEY: I see.

MR. BERGMAN: Which I did. I simply went from being a consultant to the academy to being the full-time executive vice president.

IAFA has long since disappeared, when Rodman's uncle, David, Nelson's brother, decided that IAFA should not be in business, but should be a cultural division of the Americas Society.

MR. McELHINNEY: So it must be rewarding to see all of the exhibitions now; like the "Nueva York" exhibition is about to open at El Museo de Barrio up the street, sponsored by the New York Historical Society. And also all of

the attention being paid to artists like Armando Riveron or—a lot of Latin American artists are being shown at MoMA and elsewhere. And of course, you know, the [Henry] Cisneroses have been helpful in organizing that.

MR. BERGMAN: They certainly have.

MR. McELHINNEY: And that's all good.

MR. BERGMAN: We never had patrons of that kind. We had Rodman to a certain extent. And we had Andrew Heiskell, the chairman of Time Incorporated, on the board. Andrew was very helpful in getting us some corporate support. But we never were adequately funded.

MR. McELHINNEY: Well, how did the Rockefellers become interested in the art of Latin America?

MR. BERGMAN: Oh, my, I can answer that very easily. A company called IBEC, International Basic Economy Corporation, was the Rockefeller major interest in Latin America. Nothing wrong with this. This was part of their corporate social responsibility level.

MR. McELHINNEY: But why Latin America? Was there a personal interest?

MR. BERGMAN: Nelson had been coordinator of Latin American Affairs at the State Department at one point in his career, prior to becoming governor of New York.

MR. McELHINNEY: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

MR. BERGMAN: This is the connection there.

MR. McELHINNEY: Okay. That's illuminating. So in a way IAFA was a preamble to your coming into the cultural sphere at Pollock-Krasner Foundation.

MR. BERGMAN: And I also did consulting work on the side, with the blessing of Rodman. And one of the things that I got involved with, keeping the mental health interest, which continues to this day, I became a consultant to a variety of clients, including the Maurice Falk Medical Fund in Pittsburgh. I did some work for the Urban League through Rodman. There were all kinds of things that I got involved with: the United Nations Center of Transnational Corporations. A lot of clients that were foundation-oriented, foundation-sponsored. Not necessarily in the arts.

MR. McELHINNEY: But generally, I mean so far, we're seeing a picture of a person who's very involved in philanthropy and the arts and basic salubriousness of the human race. You've got Project HOPE. You've got religion, trying to bring together these somewhat competing or conflicting modalities of religion and psychoanalysis as ways of treating human emotional problems, mental health. Improving the quality of life.

MR. BERGMAN: That's nicely said.

MR. McELHINNEY: Thanks. How did you then come to leave the Institutes and Academy? What's the segue into Pollock-Krasner?

MR. BERGMAN: The segue is something that gives me enormous pleasure to reflect on. While executive vice president of the Academy, and later executive vice president of the Institutes, I had as a fellow board member a remarkable man whom I loved and respected, who became the mentor of my life: Gerry Dickler, a distinguished lawyer who was the lawyer to everybody under the sun, from Norman Vincent Peale to Buckminster Fuller to Georgia O'Keeffe to John Marin and a talented Abstract Expressionist painter by the name of Lee Krasner.

And Gerry Dickler, who could be very secretive, invited me to lunch one day. We were fast friends. And over the luncheon table at the Friars' Club, Gerry, who used a dismissive gesture of his hand when he talked, said, "Chaz," which is what he called me, "I was Lee Krasner's lawyer." And I used to tease him by taking my other hand and waving it in the same manner that he did. And I said, "I read that in the *New York Times* when she died." He said, "That's right." And he said, "Under her will, which I wrote, I have to create a foundation. And I'd like to have you set it up. And if you run the thing properly, I'll fire you and make you the chief operating officer." I said, "That's great, Gerry, but what the hell is it?" He said, "Oh, I forgot to mention." He said, "It will be the largest private foundation ever created to aid visual artists internationally." And I, exhausted by the raising of money at IAFA, looked upon this as God's gift to me. And I said to Gerry, "I would be honored to be considered for this." And he said, "Well, you'd better meet [Eugene] Gene Thaw. He's co-trustee of the estate with me, and he's got to approve this." And the rest of it is history. I met Gene Thaw a few days later. To my knowledge, I never said a word. I walked back from Gene's office to my apartment on 37th Street, and when I got home, there was a message on my machine that said something like this: "Chaz, Gene Thaw is as bad a judge of character as I am. The job's yours if you want it. I love you, Gerry."

And that began my—there are no words to describe what it meant to me to be able to create, from scratch, an instrument of this generosity and impact on the lives of others. I'm thrilled just recalling this. And I never cease to be grateful. I might add that Kerrie Buitrago sitting next to me here in this interview, our executive vice president, who has done profoundly much to make this foundation what it is, Kerrie and I continue. Gerry died how many years ago?

MS. BUITRAGO: Nineteen ninety-nine.

MR. BERGMAN: Nineteen ninety-nine. Kerrie and I are devoted to his widow, Ruth Dickler. And we continue to see her, to lunch or dine with her. She's now 96?

MS. BUITRAGO: Ninety-six years old and a philanthropist in her own right.

MR. BERGMAN: In her own right. Absolutely.

MR. McELHINNEY: Excellent. So what year was this conversation that you had with Gerry Dickler that launched all of this?

MR. BERGMAN: That I can accurately tell you. It was in the spring of '84. Lee died in 1984.

Unknown, in 1982, Gerry wrote the will for Lee Krasner, setting up the foundation, because she really wasn't interested in doing anything. And he had me in mind, in 1982. He had me in mind that when she died, I would be the person to activate her wishes as he had persuaded her to set up this foundation. And that's the real story.

MR. McELHINNEY: What did he tell you about, sort of, the genesis of the concept behind the foundation? He must have been very much an influence on her to persuade her to do this.

MR. BERGMAN: He was a profound influence on her. She trusted him; she leaned on him. As she trusted and leaned on Gene Thaw, who Gerry brought into the picture. In '56, when Jackson died tragically in the auto accident, Lee was confronted with the fact that she was now a widow, with a body of art of her own and of her late husband's. And what to do with it? And she turned to Gerry Dickler, who was her lawyer, and asked Gerry to help her. And Gerry brought in Gene Thaw.

MR. McELHINNEY: When I interviewed MR. Thaw, he did share some stories about the friendship between Lee Krasner and his wife, Clare.

MR. BERGMAN: Absolutely.

MR. McELHINNEY: They were very close. And that something about Lee Krasner didn't want to stay in the house in East Hampton [NY] unless somebody was in the house with her.

MR. BERGMAN: Never once spent a night in that house after Pollock's death.

MR. McELHINNEY: That's what he said. And that Clare Thaw was often the houseguest.

MR. BERGMAN: At the last minute.

MR. McELHINNEY: Right. Yes.

MR. BERGMAN: Lee would call and, in a more than ungracious way, would say, "Clare, you've got to come over here and stay with me."

MR. McELHINNEY: Why was that, do you think?

MR. BERGMAN: My own suspicion, confirmed by nobody, is that the betrayal of Jackson with his mistress, Ruth Kligman, was so offensive to Lee, who was in Europe at the time of Pollock's death, that the house was contaminated for her with painful memories of his alcoholism and his—

MR. McELHINNEY: Infidelity.

MR. BERGMAN: And his despicable infidelity. I never met Lee Krasner.

MR. McELHINNEY: She carried it to her grave. I did once, at Yale when she came to give a lecture and walked around studios and spoke to the students, in 1975, I guess.

MR. BERGMAN: May I have a little break?

MR. McELHINNEY: By all means. Let's take a quick break.

[END TRACK 02.]

Okay. Let's resume.

MR. BERGMAN: Please.

MR. McELHINNEY: So Gerry Dickler had this idea for a foundation; it was not Lee Krasner. Or did she have the idea?

MR. BERGMAN: In all candor, it really was Gerry's idea. Because when he broached, in 1982, the fact that she was rich, old, and sick, and had no children, he said to her, "If you do not have a will, Lee, your money will end up going to New York State." And she did not like that prospect. And said, "Well, what do you expect me to do?" And he said, "You could create a foundation, for example, Lee, to aid worthy and needy artists. But for the grace of God, had you not been married to this awful man, you might have needed such a foundation to support and undergird your own career." She said, "Well, what should I do?" And he said, "How about creating a foundation to aid worthy and needy artists in disciplines that you have an interest in?"

MR. McELHINNEY: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

MR. BERGMAN: Such as painting, sculpture, printmaking. And she said in a rather unenthusiastic tone, Gerry told me years later, "Well, go ahead. Set it up." And he asked her what it should be called. And she said, "You call it the Pollock Foundation." And Gerry, who had a high sense of righteous propriety, said, "That's absurd, Lee. Your late husband would have never done anything to help another person. This is your estate, your money, your will, your capacity to be of service." She said, "All right. Call it the Pollock Foundation." Gerry said, "Suppose it's registered, and you can't have it?" And she said, "We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. I pay you to do what I ask you to do." And he said, "I will look into the matter." He looked into the matter and came back and told her the name the Pollock Foundation was registered. So she said, "Well, what do we do?" And he said, "How about calling it the Pollock-Krasner Foundation." And she agreed that that would be permissible. And that is why we bear the name that we do. This foundation has nothing to do with Pollock, except the fortuitous good fortune that he left a body of work that became part of the assets.

MR. McELHINNEY: Extremely valuable now.

MR. BERGMAN: Not so valuable when he died.

MR. McELHINNEY: And so that was established in 1982, before Lee Krasner died. Or it was established after she died?

MR. BERGMAN: The foundation was established in '84 when she died. And on April 1 of '85, we got the tax ruling. And I was summarily dismissed as a consultant to the estate of the late Lee Krasner and made executive vice president of the newly formed foundation, and Kerrie Buitrago took on that role very shortly afterwards. And she has been here with distinction ever since.

MR. McELHINNEY: And how do you come to the foundation?

MS. BUITRAGO: I came to the foundation when I read about the foundation in the *Wall Street Journal* and was looking for something in philanthropy and in the arts. And I came, and I met Charlie Bergman, and we talked, and hit it off. And that was the end of it. We began a long journey.

MR. McELHINNEY: And what was your experience prior to that?

MS. BUITRAGO: Well, I, actually, had worked on Wall Street for a number of banking firms. And then with the delegation of European communities to the UN. So I had a lot of strong financial and administrative background, which would really buttress his public relations background. So we were a duo from the very beginning.

MR. McELHINNEY: A good team. A good team from the beginning.

MR. BERGMAN: The best.

MR. McELHINNEY: The best, the best team. And still going strong.

MR. BERGMAN: Devotedly so.

MR. McELHINNEY: So in 1985 you got the tax papers and as a 501c3 tax exempt organization?

MR. BERGMAN: That is correct. With a special ruling, I might add, to permit us to give grants to individual artists.

MR. McELHINNEY: Now, how is that a distinction from—I know a lot of foundations are—or a lot of organizations—confine themselves to grants to—

MR. BERGMAN: —institutions and organizations.

MR. McELHINNEY: Institutions and other organizations, yes.

MR. BERGMAN: That's right.

MR. McELHINNEY: Like the Pew Charitable Trust does that, except for artists within the Philadelphia area.

MR. BERGMAN: Philadelphia area. And they do a splendid job.

MR. McELHINNEY: So what, has the tax law changed since—

MR. BERGMAN: In this regard?

MR. McELHINNEY: Yes.

MR. BERGMAN: No, not particularly.

MS. BUITRAGO: I don't think so.

MR. McELHINNEY: It's the same, and the business form is the same.

MS. BUITRAGO: I think our Foundation was set up in a simple manner by stating: "To aid worthy and needy visual artists."

MR. BERGMAN: And that was it.

MR. McELHINNEY: That was the mission.

MR. BERGMAN: Those were the operative words in the will. And everything else has been created by us to interpret what we think Lee would have wanted.

MR. McELHINNEY: Well, there were, then, two of you in 1985. A new foundation. And as I understand the requirements of a 501c3, there has to also be a board and other officers. Who were the other officers with the board?

MR. BERGMAN: This is an interesting story. I alluded earlier to the fact that Lee relied heavily on Gerry and Gene Thaw. She also was somewhat cynical and uneasy trusting other people. And these two men combined to give her a sense of security and being protected. Her will made it very clear that she wanted two trustees and two trustees only, and they were named in the will: Gerry as chairman of the board—I was to succeed him in that role when he died—and Gene Thaw as president. And Sam Sachs succeeded Gene Thaw when Gene stepped down after some 20 years of serving in that capacity. The officers of the corporation are, therefore, myself as chairman, Sam as president, Kerrie as executive vice president. There are no other officers, and there are no other trustees but Sam and me. Gene is now emeritus, and Gerry is deceased.

MR. McELHINNEY: So there was no treasurer, no secretary, no—

MR. BERGMAN: Actually there was. Gerry was secretary.

MR. McELHINNEY: Small group, very small, tight-knit group.

MS. BUITRAGO: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.] Which gave us great flexibility. Mm-hm. [Affirmative.] Which gave us great flexibility.

MR. McELHINNEY: Where were your offices initially?

MR. BERGMAN: Out of a cubbyhole initially at Hall, Dickler, Lawler, Kent, and Friedman, Gerry Dickler's law firm at 57th and Park. We moved from there to the Asia Society in—

MS. BUITRAGO: I guess it was probably 1986, and stayed there—

MR. BERGMAN: And stayed at the Asia Society until—we had half a floor in that museum. And we left it when they needed the space, and [we] moved to 863 Park in—

MS. BUITRAGO: In 1998.

MR. BERGMAN: Nineteen eighty-eight. And we own this space.

MR. McELHINNEY: It's an apartment?

MR. BERGMAN: It's a duplex.

MR. McELHINNEY: Office suite. And how is it organized? I've seen a few people. There's an office across the hall, which is your office.

MS. BUITRAGO: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

MR. McELHINNEY: And we're holding the interview—

MR. BERGMAN: —in my office.

MR. McELHINNEY: In your office. And then the adjoining office—

MR. BERGMAN: Two assistants to Kerrie and me.

MR. McELHINNEY: Right. Mm-hm.Mm-hm.

MR. BERGMAN: And then upstairs are the program staff. And we have our program officer, Caroline Black, and two additional colleagues.

MS. BUITRAGO: We also have the conference room, where the big decisions get made.

MR. McELHINNEY: Where you conduct meetings and carry on the business of the foundation. Perhaps since we had agreed for these installments to be of roughly one hour duration, now would be a good time to take a break, since we're going to meet again after lunch tomorrow, right?

MR. BERGMAN: Yes.

MR. McELHINNEY: And tell the story from the beginning up to the present of the Pollock-Krasner Foundation.

MR. BERGMAN: Good.

MR. McELHINNEY: And all of its programs, the genesis, evolution, transformation, changes over the years.

MR. BERGMAN: Sure.

MR. McELHINNEY: And hopes for the future.

MR. BERGMAN: Be happy to.

MS. BUITRAGO: Sounds like a program.

MR. McELHINNEY: Would either of you care to add anything to what we've been speaking about for the last hour?

MS. BUITRAGO: I think we can reserve that for tomorrow.

MR. McELHINNEY: I think so. That would be good. Thank you so much.

MR. BERGMAN: Thank you.

MS. BUITRAGO: Thank you.

[END TRACK 03.]

MR. McELHINNEY: This is James McElhinney speaking with Charles Bergman and Kerrie Buitrago at the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, 863 Park Avenue in New York City on Thursday, July 22, 2010.

Good afternoon, again.

MR. BERGMAN: Welcome back to the foundation, Jim and Jill.

MS. BUITRAGO: Yes, indeed.

MR. BERGMAN: We are in business for perpetuity. Secondly, the needs of the individual artists in our society, and indeed internationally, will always be a priority of anybody who cares about the creation of art. Because without

the work and diligence and commitment of the individual artists, how the hell can you get art to be produced? So a foundation like ours, established with one core mission and mandate, to nurture and undergird the individual artists in terms of their personal, professional—or both—needs, is a very legitimate mandate.

Since our inception in 1985, April 1 of '85, as I referenced yesterday, we have been international from the very outset. We have given grants in 72 countries. And we have given away more than \$54 million to painters, sculptors, artists who work on paper, printmakers, internationally. We do not, regrettably, give grants to fine art still photographers, but we do, however, support artists who incorporate photography within their painting, sculpture, or printmaking. We did set up an experimental, modest photography program. And then September 11th occurred, and we diverted money to our core mission of painters, sculptors, and printmakers, feeling that this was, in light of the magnitude of the terrible disaster, not the appropriate time to resume photography. And then [Hurricane] Katrina and other things intervened, and we've never changed that stipulation. I think, Kerrie, that we will someday resume photography grants.

MS. BUITRAGO: Yes, I think there are definitely other media that should be supported, and I know photography is one.

MR. BERGMAN: We don't support film, video, or crafts.

MS. BUITRAGO: And video has become very big.

MR. BERGMAN: Very much so.

MS. BUITRAGO: But the art world is changing somewhat. But don't forget at 9/11, that was really the beginning of our time to fund artists' organizations.

MR. BERGMAN: That's right.

MS. BUITRAGO: Artists' organizations that directly support individuals.

MR. BERGMAN: We have made a substantial number of grants in that regard. We have given away \$1,533,000 to approximately 71 organizations and institutions such as the MacDowell Colony, the Byrdecliffe Guild in Woodstock, New York, and the American Academy in Rome.

MS. BUITRAGO: But it really began with the Santa Fe Art Institute.

MR. BERGMAN: That's right.

MS. BUITRAGO: They took a lot of the artists from 9/11 into their residency program. And rather than process each one individually, we gave a grant to the Santa Fe Art Institute, who administered it.

MR. McELHINNEY: I see.

MS. BUITRAGO: And that began the idea that we could help a number of artists by supporting an organization.

MR. BERGMAN: By such grants.

MR. McELHINNEY: Who do you mean when you say, "the artists of 9/11"?

MS. BUITRAGO: They were all the artists who were affected below 14th Street, I would say.

MR. McELHINNEY: I see.

MR. BERGMAN: Yes.

MR. McELHINNEY: So it was the artists whose homes and studios were affected by the attack and collapse of the towers.

MS. BUITRAGO: The World Trade Towers. But especially those that were actually in the Towers. And of those—not many—but a few were photographers, and they did get funding.

MR. BERGMAN: Yes.

MS. BUITRAGO: In this instance we did make an exception.

MR. BERGMAN: Yes.

MR. McELHINNEY: There was a program, I recall, of studio space in the World Trade Towers.

MR. BERGMAN: Yes. And I'm trying to recall the name of the organization: Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.

MS. BUITRAGO: They had 14 or 15 artists in that program.

MR. BERGMAN: Yes.

MR. McELHINNEY: So—

MR. BERGMAN: Some of them died.

MR. McELHINNEY: So what was, you know, the program specifically that you created to help these people?

MR. BERGMAN: The same program that we have ongoing since our inception, to examine their needs for personal or professional expenses, including everything from health care to studio restoration to getting a babysitter so that a single parent could spend more time in his or her studio. The usual needs of artists—supplies, casting materials, et cetera. But the extra element in that program, if you will, was the fact that September 11th uprooted lives so vividly and poignantly.

MR. McELHINNEY: Can you share a few specific stories of artists whose lives were changed as a result of this calamity?

MS. BUITRAGO: Well, I don't think we would want to name particular names.

MR. McELHINNEY: No.

MS. BUITRAGO: Many did go out to the Santa Fe Art Institute for a number of months, got their lives back together. They came back and really began again. And the same thing happened with Katrina. The Santa Fe Art Institute, again, took a lot of these artists in their program. And many of them didn't go back to New Orleans. They dispersed to other parts of the country and remained there, because it was just so difficult to start again. I think in the case of 9/11, artists did come back to New York.

MR. BERGMAN: I'd like to say something at this juncture that Kerrie and I are particularly proud of. Many foundations are rigid, formal, cold in their way of dealing with supplicants for their money. We have, since our inception, been particularly human, warm, and sensitive to the fact that artists are hurting as they apply to us. They're hurting out of futility, erosion of their self-esteem, their self-worth. They are demoralized at times, depressed at times. It's a hard struggle to be an individual artist in any discipline, not just the visual arts. In the case of Katrina and September 11th, we had to be flexible that an artist might not be able to give us all the documentation that we require, such as tax returns, for the current year and the year that precedes the grant application. But we wanted to do what Lee Krasner would have wanted us to do, and that is to be flexible in our usual insistence that we receive the normal documentation we require. We gave grants, therefore, to people who we trusted to render accurate information to us.

MS. BUITRAGO: And a final report.

MR. BERGMAN: And a final report. And to our knowledge, there was not a single case of abuse, misuse of that permissiveness on our part. And we have a reputation, well-earned and well-deserved, of being an unusually courteous and compassionate philanthropy, treating all artists with utmost respect, even when we reject their application.

MR. McELHINNEY: Going back to April of 1985, what was the discussion about that shaped the mission at that moment, launch point? What was the vision of art and society, and the value of art and with people who create it, to the society as a whole, and the benefit that would derive from the philanthropy of the Pollock-Krasner Foundation? And how it supports artists in their individual enterprises.

MR. BERGMAN: I think 1985, similar to today, as one looked at the horizon of art philanthropy—artist philanthropy—there was a singular lack of interest, concern, and indeed funding for the individual artist. There were programs all over the country where institutions and organizations, like museums or alternative spaces, could apply for support. But the individual artist was given short shrift in '85. The NEA was still in business. But grants to individual artists were limited. State arts councils were giving some money toward individual artists. And in our own state here, the New York State Council on the Arts [NYSCA], which I served on for many years, was the primary funder of the New York Foundation for the Arts [NYFA], where I chair their Leadership Council. NYSCA gave substantial money to NYFA for individual artists.

But at the time of our inception, there were just a handful of foundations that were doing anything for the individual artist: the Pew Foundation, which no longer gives grants to individuals except in the Philadelphia area; the Bush Foundation in Minneapolis; the Jerome Foundation; and most particularly, the Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation, which preceded us.

MR. BERGMAN: They have an outstanding individual grant program, but much smaller than ours. But they are particularly sensitive to emergencies, as we are.

MS. BUITRAGO: And to the older artists.

MR. BERGMAN: And to the older artists, as we are. We have a particular soft spot, if you will, for the artists in their 70s, 80s, 90s, and artists like Will Barnet have been so helpful to us in identifying older artists of merit and need.

MR. McELHINNEY: There are other organizations, like Artists Equity, and they're small amounts of money.

MR. BERGMAN: Minute amounts of money.

MR. McELHINNEY: Minute amounts of money.

MR. BERGMAN: Robert Rauschenberg, for example, created something called Change, which was literally change: grants of \$100 or \$500.

MR. McELHINNEY: Oh, I see. Yes.

MR. BERGMAN: Which hardly could be very helpful. Now with his demise, there will be the possibility of major support. And the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, while cash-poor at the moment, may become one of the largest foundations ever created.

MR. McELHINNEY: So when you were organizing, when you were launching the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, did you look to other organizations for a model? Did you look at Gottlieb. Did you look at—

MR. BERGMAN: Very much so.

MR. McELHINNEY: And what did you take away from those organizations? And what did you invent on your own as a unique part of your operation mission?

MR. BERGMAN: I wouldn't say that we are unique, in terms of comparison to Gottlieb. But I would say that [Sanford] Sandy Hirsch, their executive director, was a major resource to me in creating this foundation for Gene and Gerry. Very much so.

MS. BUITRAGO: As you were with the Marie Walsh Foundation.

MR. BERGMAN: And in turn, shortly after its inception—I was an advisor to Joyce Robinson in Colorado Springs, where they created the now-celebrated studio program of the Marie Walsh Sharp Foundation here in New York City. And I have, from time to time, been an advisor, as has Kerrie, in helping others to create programs that related to the well-being of original artists.

MR. McELHINNEY: So you looked at the Gottlieb Foundation. What did you learn from that? How did that help you identify goals, identify priorities, what to do first, what to do next. How did they flag the minefield moving ahead? What did you learn from that?

MR. BERGMAN: In all candor, I felt that the Gottlieb Foundation, while serving the constituency of artists well, was a little too permissive on the one hand—for example, they don't require tax returns.

MS. BUITRAGO: I don't think they do, even today.

MR. BERGMAN: Even today. But they do have great flexibility—

MS. BUITRAGO: And great compassion.

MR. BERGMAN: And real compassion, in their grant-making activities.

MS. BUITRAGO: And I think what we also took away from looking at the Gottlieb Foundation [was] the element of time and being able to respond quickly to any kind of emergency or just to have the time frame be a shorter one whenever possible.

MR. BERGMAN: We don't have deadlines. The Gottlieb Foundation has very stringent deadlines that you either make or don't make. We give away money all year round, and we have an interesting policy that we created, which is quite special, relating to second grants or third grants or even reapplication. We believe strongly that if you've been turned down by us for a grant, you should wait a year to reapply, hopefully in that year generating new work that might be seen by new members of a rotating committee, on selection [of] which I will get into in

a minute.

MR. McELHINNEY: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

MR. BERGMAN: But like everything else that we do around here, our rules are meant to be modified in terms of need and other variables. So that if you apply for normal studio expenses and are turned down, and the next day have a catastrophic fire or a catastrophic illness diagnosed and you need money, you can reapply to us the very next day and have all the attention to your application and concern on our part.

MR. McELHINNEY: However, you should wait another year to ask for help in the studio.

MR. BERGMAN: Yes.

MR. McELHINNEY: So that's reasonable. I think one of the maxims among artists and scholars is, if you're not receiving a rejection letter every week, you're not applying to enough prospects.

MS. BUITRAGO: [Laughs] I love it.

MR. BERGMAN: That's terrible, Jim.

MR. McELHINNEY: Well, that's what my wife says. But I think she tells her students that—is that not correct, Jillie? But the vetting process is based frequently upon a jury of review of people from the field, each of whom, as we know, can have wildly diverse, competing, contrasting points of view, agendas, priorities, beliefs.

MR. BERGMAN: Prejudices.

MR. McELHINNEY: Prejudices. Let's cut to the quick. And the other old maxim is that a camel is a horse designed by a committee. So that a jury of selection—I've served on a few—frequently arrives at outcomes that individually no one on the committee would ever dream of. And if there's a dynamic—yes.

MS. BUITRAGO: Well, hopefully that's the case. [Inaudible.]

MR. McELHINNEY: So that there's something that gets beyond the collective prejudices of all the members of the jury and actually finds merit and acts accordingly.

MS. BUITRAGO: For both reasons, that's why we have a rotating committee.

MR. McELHINNEY: Right.

MR. BERGMAN: Let me address, if I may now, the formation, purpose, and operation of our committee of selection. The committee is four people. We keep their identity decidedly anonymous because our feeling is that, were it known who serves on our illustrious committee, those folks could not use a restaurant without being besieged by people demanding help or influence to get a grant from us. We have been, since our inception, blessed with extraordinary talent and diversity, cross-culturally sophisticated men and women, and they have been artists, of course, patrons, museum directors or curators, art historians, critics. What have I left out?

MS. BUITRAGO: Art dealers.

MR. BERGMAN: My goodness, forgive me. Art dealers. In one case, Gene Thaw, of course, was our president. I mention just a few examples who served with great distinction on our committee for years: the late George Segal, the sculptor; the late Robert Rosenblum, one of the finest art historians—

MS. BUITRAGO: What an eye!

MR. BERGMAN: What an eye, indeed, Kerrie. What an eye. Andre Emmerich, one of the most respected and distinguished art dealers in U.S. history. Let me see, who else could I mention? Kurt Varnedoe of MoMA. Bill Lieberman, who ran the 20th-century department at the Metropolitan Museum and prior to that was with Bill Rubin at MoMA.

MR. McELHINNEY: Well, that's an illustrious roster.

MR. BERGMAN: The committee needs to determine one thing and one thing only: they do not address financial need. They only address the artistic merit, talent, innovation, creativity, or the artist as exemplified by, first, slides and, now, digital images.

MS. BUITRAGO: Gone into the technological era.

MR. McELHINNEY: It's so much easier.

MS. BUITRAGO: It's wonderful.

MR. BERGMAN: And we meet perhaps three times, four times a year, the committee of selection, that is. I preside over that committee but do not vote. The committee is self-contained, very dynamic, very committed. And here's how they operate: each member of the committee, each of the four individuals, sees the images—in preview with a member of our professional program staff. Then those artists who survive the previews are then brought to the full committee for another judging. Out of that full committee meeting emerge artists that receive, obviously, three votes. If there's a tie, we try to break it before moving on to the next artist.

MS. BUITRAGO: They talk it out, and that's where the spirit of compromise enters.

MR. McELHINNEY: Have you ever had occasion to step in to break a tie?

MR. BERGMAN: Yes. The committee understands that they are advisory and consultative to the board of directors and to the officers. The officers, as I indicated yesterday, are myself, Sam Sachs, and Kerrie Buitrago.

Now, I wanted to say something about the flexibility of the committee's operation. Even though mathematics would dictate that you need three votes to survive the committee's scrutiny and review, should some member of the committee of four feel strongly enough that an artist deserves to be investigated by the program staff, they invoke what we call the executive privilege, which means that that one individual says to his or her colleagues: I don't care what the vote is. I want this artist investigated because I see merit and talent here that deserves recognition and reward. And that artist passes the committee by virtue of the invoking of executive privilege by that committee member.

MS. BUITRAGO: Mind you, this is not invoked capriciously. It's very rarely done.

MR. BERGMAN: Good point.

MR. McELHINNEY: It's not done in a way that we've all seen happen in other environments, where someone says, "Well, if you let me have my favorite candidate, I'll let you have yours."

MR. BERGMAN: We've had none of that—

MS. BUITRAGO: None of it.

MR. BERGMAN: —whatsoever. Categorically.

MR. McELHINNEY: Well, there's very high standards for the selection process.

MR. BERGMAN: You're damned right!

MR. McELHINNEY: And I can see in your eye that you would not tolerate that.

MR. BERGMAN: Thank you for your judgment and perception.

MR. McELHINNEY: And therefore I may also assume that someone who is on the committee, who is looking at an artist who perhaps is a relative or an intimate friend or a protégé, how would they be expected to handle themselves in a situation where there's a potential conflict of interest?

MR. BERGMAN: They should identify how they know the artist. And if they know something about the candidate, fine and dandy. If they can contribute knowledge to the committee, fine. If they wish to recuse themselves, that's their prerogative. But we have no conflict here because we have turned down many, many—I would say that 90 percent of the artists who apply to us are turned down for artistic merit reasons. But the 25-year history of this foundation reveals a very impressive statistic. That of that roughly 10 percent who survive the committee's scrutiny and review, of that 10 percent, I would say 95 percent end up getting grants. Which, in summary, means if you are a good artist with a legitimate need for money, personal, professional, or both, you have a good chance of getting a grant from this foundation. And if that isn't an incentive for good artists to apply, I don't know what is.

MR. McELHINNEY: How do you track applicants, and how do you track grant recipients? Is there a means that you use to sort of follow their progress after they've entered the sphere?

MS. BUITRAGO: They follow us.

MR. McELHINNEY: They follow you.

MS. BUITRAGO: They come to us with—they want us to follow their careers. And they are constantly sending us updates and information.

MR. McELHINNEY: So it works almost like a college alumni.

MR. BERGMAN: In a way, this operation is analogous to the scholarship office of an international university. Now we do require, by law, a final report at the end of your grant period. So that gives us a very accurate picture of how you used your grant, and what transpired during the year of the grant period. For example, did you have any individual or group exhibitions? Did you receive any honors, awards, or prizes? Did you have any articles or a publicity written about your career and your work? And as Kerrie just said, we hope that that will be an ongoing relationship of giving us updates in those areas.

MS. BUITRAGO: In fact, we've often had artists who come to us years later and say: It really was the grant from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation that began this part of my career and the success that I have now. It's very interesting how that happens.

MR. McELHINNEY: I want to do a little housekeeping here. And while it's extremely interesting to understand the review process, could you illuminate a little bit the application process? What does an artist have to do in order to apply? They learn about the foundation through grants registries or online.

MR. BERGMAN: From our website; we have an excellent website which we're very proud of. Which, among other virtues, gives four images for every artist who got a grant from this foundation since its inception: two when you got your grant, and two images currently when you send us the four images for our grantee collection.

MR. McELHINNEY: So you maintain a visual archive—

MR. BERGMAN: We do indeed.

MR. McELHINNEY: —of all the beneficiaries of your—

MS. BUITRAGO: Which can be used by museum curators, dealers, galleries.

MR. BERGMAN: Collectors.

MS. BUITRAGO: I even had someone call me from California wanting contact information for an artist, wanting to purchase some of the work.

MR. McELHINNEY: So it's a database. It's sort of a go-to place for people hunting for talent, for artists of note who have been recognized in some way. What does the application require? Say an artist finds out about your organization, wishes to apply, what must they do?

MR. BERGMAN: Kerrie, why don't you describe the application, which is a somewhat formidable document?

MS. BUITRAGO: It is. We've revised it over the years, and it's evolved into a rather formidable document. But we try to keep it as simple as we can. And they do have to do the application and send 10 images. They have to, eventually, at the second stage, do a budget and submit financial information, but not initially.

MR. BERGMAN: And references are required for people.

MS. BUITRAGO: And references, which will not be contacted unless they make it through the first phase, make it through the committee.

MR. BERGMAN: If your references are approached, it means that you are being considered for a grant. Those references should not be personal. They should be professional references. And I might add that, unlike some foundations, where influence or pull is rampant, you could have the President of the United States as a reference, and it wouldn't mean a thing for our grant application process. We really want people who know your work or who know your situation or both.

MS. BUITRAGO: And it doesn't have to be a name person.

MR. BERGMAN: Exactly.

MS. BUITRAGO: Someone that well-known in the field. It has to be someone who really knows and appreciates

your work and what your situation currently is.

MR. McELHINNEY: Hopefully an eloquent advocate.

MR. BERGMAN: Yes. We don't support students, by the way, nor do we support artists fresh out of academia. We do support artists of all ages. And we have no restrictions whatsoever about style, technique, school, or, most important, subject matter. This is not a foundation for "emerging artists." It is for artists who have a track record, an exhibition record, who are launched on their careers.

MS. BUITRAGO: Which is not to say that we haven't supported emerging artists, though. Once in a while there's an artist who has something really original and is young.

MR. BERGMAN: And exceptional.

MS. BUITRAGO: And is emerging, and they are considered.

MR. BERGMAN: But it's fairly rare that an artist in their 20s, for example, would get a grant from us.

MR. McELHINNEY: So the rationale there would be that you want someone who had proved a dedication to their work already.

MS. BUITRAGO: Who knows that he or she is an artist, wants to be an artist, and has pursued a career.

MR. BERGMAN: Even though most artists have other means of earning a living besides doing their art, we don't penalize an artist who is a part-time teacher, a part-time bartender, a part-time taxi driver.

MR. McELHINNEY: Interviewer. [They laugh.] Scribbler. Whatever. But we all have to wear a lot of hats. I mean, everybody, a lot of artists, do wear—many are in academia. Is there a ratio that you're aware of, the number of artists whom you've supported who are also teaching? Is there a large number?

MS. BUITRAGO: We don't keep statistics of that sort.

MR. BERGMAN: I'd say a good many.

MS. BUITRAGO: But we see it on many applications.

MR. McELHINNEY: Right, right. So that it's a fairly common—

MS. BUITRAGO: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

MR. McELHINNEY: —alternate income source.

MS. BUITRAGO: Exactly.

MR. McELHINNEY: The so-called day job. Well, it's interesting. So is there a written component. Do they have to write a statement of purpose?

MS. BUITRAGO: The artist can write a statement—

MR. BERGMAN: To accompany the images.

MS. BUITRAGO: To accompany their images. But it's optional.

MR. McELHINNEY: Or not.

MS. BUITRAGO: Yes.

MR. McELHINNEY: So they're not expected to argue their case, except perhaps if they have a particular new form they're trying to develop—

MR. BERGMAN: Yes.

MR. McELHINNEY: —and they need to buy equipment to exhibit it and so forth.

MR. BERGMAN: Absolutely.

MR. McELHINNEY: Then they should explain that.

MS. BUITRAGO: Sometimes it's helpful, too, for the committee to have an explanation of what the work is about

if it's not evident. But it's not necessary; it's optional.

MR. McELHINNEY: How many applicants would the committee be expected to consider during the course of a day?

MS. BUITRAGO: We do have a cutoff point. We don't expect the committee to look at any more than 350 per session.

MR. McELHINNEY: And for how long would the committee—for how long would a session be convened?

MR. BERGMAN: The full committee?

MR. McELHINNEY: Yes.

MS. BUITRAGO: At the preview, they can come and stay as long as they want looking at these slides or images now. But for the full committee, it generally breaks down to, I would say, no more than 200.

MR. BERGMAN: Yes. And it's a three-hour meeting, four-hour meeting.

MS. BUITRAGO: Three- or four-hour meeting.

MR. McELHINNEY: So is there a ballot form where it's yes, no, maybe or—

MS. BUITRAGO: It's really, for the whole committee, it's in or out, and they vote.

MR. McELHINNEY: Right. And how about the preview?

MS. BUITRAGO: This they do in or out, but some in-plus or in-minus. They have their own coding for this. And we expect comments from the committee. All of our staff take notes at the committee meetings and elicit comments from the committee.

MR. McELHINNEY: So the voting is all verbal.

MS. BUITRAGO: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

MR. BERGMAN: And if you do invoke the executive privilege, you must tell us why you are doing so. You just don't simply say glibly, I like this artist; let's investigate them. It's, I like this artist because—

MS. BUITRAGO: For the following reasons.

MR. BERGMAN: Exactly.

MR. McELHINNEY: Have to provide some—

MR. BERGMAN: Rationale.

MR. McELHINNEY: Rationale. And how often does the committee convene every year? I think you said three or four—

MR. BERGMAN and MS. BUITRAGO: Three or four times.

MR. McELHINNEY: Okay.

MS. BUITRAGO: It depends how many applications.

MR. McELHINNEY: So, quarterly.

MS. BUITRAGO: Once we have 350, we have a meeting, generally.

MR. BERGMAN: One other stipulation: if, God forbid, you need brain surgery or something of that compelling magnitude, we will process the grant immediately by sending the images to one member of the committee. So that we can, without a formal meeting, process that application to save a life for example. But we do not do this for the normal slings and arrows of outrageous fortune that beset the life and times of most artists. We can't do that. But we can be flexible enough to respond to an emergency with quick action. And I'm very proud that we do this.

MR. McELHINNEY: What percentage of the grants that you award every year would be for this kind of emergency?

MR. BERGMAN: What would you say?

MS. BUITRAGO: A very small percentage.

MR. BERGMAN: Very small.

MS. BUITRAGO: Very small.

MR. McELHINNEY: Less than 10?

MS. BUITRAGO: Yes.

MR. BERGMAN: When we started this foundation in 1985, HIV/AIDS was a compelling reason for many artists to apply to us. Now we hardly see an example of an artist coming to us with the huge expense of HIV/AIDS. All of us know that the climate of HIV/AIDS is still serious and of epic proportion. But we don't see it anymore, which is very curious. We see a lot of cancer cases of all kinds.

MS. BUITRAGO: But I would say that most applicants are simply artists who are perfectly healthy, but really need money for doing their work.

MR. BERGMAN: To buy a truck to move your sculpture, to refurbish a studio that desperately needs a new kiln or something.

MS. BUITRAGO: Initially, we had to combat journalistic explanations of the foundation, because they would write pieces that explained that the foundation gives grants to artists who are on their deathbed. This isn't really the case. We do respond to emergencies, but we do have just a roster of artists who simply need money to do their art.

MR. McELHINNEY: Have any artists ever applied for help with their family because they're unable to provide?

MR. BERGMAN: All the time. And those are perfectly legitimate reasons for seeking support for us.

MR. McELHINNEY: So where did these journalists get the idea that this was the mission of the foundation?

MS. BUITRAGO: I think because the examples that they had were so poignant and so moving that they wanted to write about them. And other journalists don't come to the source. They pick up from other journalists, and they just multiply.

MR. BERGMAN: This is a sore point with me because, while we have had some wonderful articles written about us, about our work, there has been—there are examples of media that have never written a word about what we do. For example, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal* did major, major stories on the creation of this somewhat unique foundation. But the *International Herald Tribune* has never written a word. And after futile attempts to get a story placed, we just simply gave up on them. *ArtNews* has covered us and the *Art Newspaper*, but not the *International Herald Tribune*.

MR. McELHINNEY: And why is that do you think?

MR. BERGMAN: I have no idea.

MS. BUITRAGO: I think, though, that our greatest source, as you frequently point out, of information about the foundation is from artists who have been given grants and talk to other artists. And it's really word of mouth.

MR. BERGMAN: Worldwide.

MS. BUITRAGO: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

MR. McELHINNEY: Since—again a little housekeeping—since the foundation was organized in 1985, or was launched in 1985, to the present, when you've explained the application process and review process, you know, the awarding process, was it the same from the beginning, or was there an evolution? Was there trial and error?

MR. BERGMAN: We started out pretty much the way we currently operate today, and it has worked extremely well. You will always have in a process, an open process, like this, not nomination—but I will get into nomination in a moment, the Lee Krasner Awards, which we want to speak about. There is a more understanding climate out there as the result of 25 years of service that we will not be receptive to Sunday painters, hobbyists. We are not interested in that kind of subsidy. We are interested in professional artists. And in that regard, we created the Lee Krasner Awards, which go to older artists of merit and distinction who need money. The same criteria used for all our grants, with one exception: this is a nomination, not an open application process. These Lee Krasner

Awards are quite generous. They're [\$]30,000 a year for three years, with the understanding that you don't get the second or third installment if for some reason you don't need the money. And would you be surprised if I told you that everybody has needed their second or third installment?

MR. McELHINNEY: How does one receive a nomination?

MR. BERGMAN: You receive a nomination by having somebody like a Will Barnet, like a George Segal, recommend. We have a wide circle of museum directors and curators of, above all, fellow artists, of dealers, critics, journalists, who are—

MS. BUITRAGO: And also the committee itself frequently will single someone out who has applied, who might be a candidate for a Lee Krasner Award.

MR. McELHINNEY: And that might happen during the normal course of the review process.

MS. BUITRAGO: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

MR. BERGMAN: I might add that I have been blessed by having colleagues like Kerrie Buitrago, like Caroline Black, our program officer, who are so passionately committed to seeing what's out there that by their studio visits, by their reading, by their own rich networks, they know of artists that are worthy of that kind of recognition. So I would say, Kerrie, you are a little modest here. You and Caroline have often taken a grant application and said to me, "This is an artist that deserves not only a grant but maybe a Lee Krasner Award."

MS. BUITRAGO: Absolutely.

MR. BERGMAN: And we've had an extraordinary group of people receive them. I'll just take a moment and share some names: Mary Frank, Robert Goodnough, Charles Ginnever, Joe Stefanelli, Nancy Grossman, Irving Kriesberg, Dorothea Rockburne, Jack Beal, George Ortman, Carmen Cicero, and recently, who just died, Nicolas Carone.

MR. McELHINNEY: Oh, yes. I knew Nick. A great guy.

MR. BERGMAN: Yes.

MS. BUITRAGO: Very sad.

MR. BERGMAN: June Wayne, Nancy Randall, Antonio Frasconi. These are artists of enormous depth and quality, distinction. We're honored to have made Lee Krasner Awards to them.

MS. BUITRAGO: You know, you might want to share with Jim how you, from the beginning when the foundation was established, took trips to many countries and talked about the foundation and really got the word out. Especially when the Soviet Union broke up, we had a tremendous number of applicants from that area.

MR. BERGMAN: Thank you, Kerrie, that's a nice story. With the patronage of Mrs. [Mikhail] Gorbachev, I made a trip in 1989 to Russia, where, with her backing, we were able to bypass the bureaucracy, including the KGB, to meet with artists who were non-union and unofficial artists. And we gave grants to some of these good people using the Soros Foundation to get the money to the artists.

MS. BUITRAGO: It's the Open Society Network [Open Society Foundations].

MR. BERGMAN: We made an historic breakthrough in that regard. Kerrie and I went to Cuba on a similar mission. And even though our government under the [President George H. W.] Bush Administration put stringent restrictions on how much money you could give a Cuban artist, whether they were domiciled in Cuba or elsewhere, we managed to give grants to Cuban artists.

MS. BUITRAGO: Sadly, no longer.

MR. BERGMAN: I made trips to Hungary, to Czechoslovakia—to the Czech Republic—later.

MS. BUITRAGO: To Argentina.

MR. BERGMAN: Argentina, Australia, Japan, Poland, a whole plethora of countries, meeting with ministers of culture, key museum people, wealthy patrons of the artists of their respective countries. And there's a joke among the staff that if we get a huge batch of applicants from a country, it must mean that I—

MS. BUITRAGO: —just came back from a trip. [Laughs.]

MR. BERGMAN: But I haven't done any official trips for a few years.

MR. McELHINNEY: Earlier in this conversation, you shared that, when organizing the foundation, other foundations were looked to as paradigms, as models, like the Gottlieb. And you also shared your expectation that the Robert Rauschenberg Estate would ultimately lead to the creation of a very powerful foundation for the future. Have you discovered any peer organizations abroad, either that existed before the organization of Pollock-Krasner, or that have been sort of inspired by the example of the Pollock-Krasner Foundation to try to join the effort to empower the same sorts of outcomes that you've been doing for the past 25 years?

MR. BERGMAN: This is a source of great regret and disappointment to me. A side venture of my career for many years has been to serve as an advisor to wealthy families here and abroad, in Europe, Latin America, et cetera. I have tried abtortedly, unsuccessfully, to get some of these families to create a foundation like our own, with a grant mission like ours. And I have not had much success in this regard. The only overseas foundations that I know of are not particularly interested in making grants to individuals. Now, government agencies is an entirely different story. For example, take Holland, or take France.

MS. BUITRAGO: Germany [inaudible].

MR. BERGMAN: Germany. The DAAD [German Academic Exchange] program in Germany, the British Arts Council, the Canadian Arts Council. These are entities that have been very generous to individual artists. But there is a real lack of awareness and concern, for the well-being of the individual artist. If Sandy Hirsch, my colleague who runs Gottlieb, were in this room, he would commiserate even more so, because he's been in this business longer than I have.

MR. McELHINNEY: So why is that? Do you think it's just because [of] the differences in financial culture, tax laws? I mean, one imagines that somebody like Francis Bacon, for instance, had to have left a huge amount of money. Or Joan Miro or Picasso. And I'm unaware of anything from these artists' estates in Europe to benefit artists the way that Pollock-Krasner does. I do know the Chateau de la Napoule.

MR. BERGMAN: I know it well. It's the castle on the Riviera.

MR. McELHINNEY: This very right-wing sculptor who owned it, an American artist [Henry Clews, Jr.].

MR. BERGMAN: I know the foundation well. I've been there, I've visited with their officers. And they don't have any money at the moment. It's tied up in real estate.

MR. McELHINNEY: Yes, they were working through NEA [National Endowment for the Arts] for a while as a venue for artists to use part of their grant to go to.

MR. BERGMAN: There is the Joan Mitchell Foundation, which has begun a grant program. There is U.S. Artists—

MR. McELHINNEY: And Giverney.

MR. BERGMAN: Yes, that's their latest initiative. There's the Creative Capital Foundation, which the [Andy] Warhol Foundation [for the Visual Arts] supports, which gives grants to artists to help them in their career development, teaching artists how to be fund-raisers, how to make presentations.

MS. BUITRAGO: Professional development. It's a very big area now.

MR. BERGMAN: Yes. The Studio Program of the Elizabeth Foundation, also The Marie Walsh Sharp Foundation. And the Ford Foundation has one program now: U.S. Artists, which is an award program, and a generous one.

MS. BUITRAGO: I think the Ford Foundation now is interested in giving grants for artists' spaces.

MR. BERGMAN: To refurbish real estate. I'm having lunch tomorrow with Susan Berresford to talk about all this, who used to be their president. The Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation gives a few grants a year. The Nancy Graves Foundation gives a few grants a year. I mentioned Jerome—

[END TRACK 04.]

MR. BERGMAN: We pray for Obama and his potential leadership. But in this particular area, with great disappointment, there's no strong support of the arts in this administration. It's modest.

MR. McELHINNEY: There was, during the campaign, a kind of sanguine attempt to compare him with FDR. I don't think he's risen to that—

MR. BERGMAN: No, certainly not.

MR. McELHINNEY: —potential, yet.

MR. BERGMAN: I'd vote for him again tomorrow.

MS. BUITRAGO: He's had a lot on his plate.

MR. BERGMAN: Absolutely.

MR. McELHINNEY: I think anyone stepping into the maelstrom into which he found himself—

MR. BERGMAN: The chaos.

MR. McELHINNEY: —would be hard pressed to succeed.

MR. BERGMAN: Absolutely.

MS. BUITRAGO: And the coffers are empty for this kind of thing.

MR. BERGMAN: Absolutely.

MR. McELHINNEY: Right, right, right. And this is another thing, perhaps that I asked you earlier about. But to reinforce the whole idea of the value of art to society, we exist in a time now, as I observed—we've heard from art dealers and others whom I've interviewed—that art is something that has come under the influence of commerce, to the point where ideas and issues of taste and, sort of, the idea of public salubrity elevating the spirit, are things that are maybe discussed privately, but everybody, in a splashy way, in all the magazines, talks about auction results and high prices—

MR. BERGMAN: And money.

MR. McELHINNEY: And money. The M word. So would you say that the Pollock-Krasner Foundation is based on—in some ways this is a rhetorical question—the idea that art is a valuable force of social change and human well-being?

MR. BERGMAN: Absolutely. And I find it very ironic that, moving as I do in some very wealthy circles here and abroad, there are people who are obsessed with collecting the art of living artists who will not do a damned thing to help the lives of living artists, and who would look askance at creating a foundation to do this kind of work. Or who have foundations and want no part of giving grants to individuals.

I'm asked this all the time. And my reply is not cynical, but it is heartfelt concern. There are people in this city of Medici wealth who will spend a fortune buying the art of living artists, and who will not give a dime to the lives of the very artists whose work their collect. I could tell—which I won't—horror stories in this regard.

And by the way, a misperception is that this support of individual artists is a difficult form of philanthropy. Twenty-five years have shown us that if you have good organization, good accountants and lawyers, dedicated staff, this kind of philanthropy is highly manageable. You don't have to give grants just to institutions or organizations, as commendable and valid as that may be.

MR. McELHINNEY: Even organizations that then give away money to individual artists. Well, it just occurred to me that, you know, the foundation was born in the go-go '80s, which was a time that was not unlike the time we may just have seen the end of, or not.

MR. BERGMAN: Or not.

MR. McELHINNEY: Or not. But the '80s was a decade of high commerce in the art world.

MS. BUITRAGO: Which was fortunate for us.

MR. McELHINNEY: Right.

MS. BUITRAGO: Because we were selling Pollocks to set up this foundation.

MR. McELHINNEY: So that was—

MR. BERGMAN: We went through a period of halcyon largesse that ain't in existence now, as we get dismal reports from our financial advisors on a monthly basis.

MR. McELHINNEY: Well, not that you need to share that, but how do you invest your holdings? Do you continue to fund-raise?

MR. BERGMAN: No.

MS. BUITRAGO: We don't fund-raise at all.

MR. BERGMAN: We don't fund-raise. Theoretically, we could receive money from any legitimate source. But we've never raised money, and we've never received outside money. We've lived on our endowment. And I can speak to that with some pride. And this is an area where Kerrie has been enormously diligent in monitoring and supervising our financial affairs.

We began in 1985 with basically three things: the blessing of Gene Thaw and Gerry Dickler, a small inventory of early Pollock paintings and drawings, and a very nice inventory of Krasners, including some very valuable ones later, and a fairly nondiscriminate investment portfolio that was worth about \$10 million. Today, 25 years later, we have, I said earlier, given away \$52 million. We still have a few early Pollocks and some drawings, and we still have some valuable Krasners. And we have an investment portfolio worth—what is the latest word today?

MS. BUITRAGO: Well, about [\$]45 million.

MR. BERGMAN: Which is attributable to the fact that we have a very good advisory firm monitoring the performance of managers, about eight of them.

MS. BUITRAGO: And we're also very highly diversified.

MR. BERGMAN: In growth, in value, international, and in hedge funds. And at one time in the '80s, we did handsomely—royally—on our investments. But this is a different ball game, and I fear this economy—as I said to the *Art Newspaper* the other day, "I don't see optimistic times ahead for the economy or the stock market."

MR. McELHINNEY: A lot of people are saying that we've hit a kind of plateau on the way to bottom; we haven't hit bottom yet. But I'm out of my expertise in this. And I just—but I know there's still a lot of anxiety.

MS. BUITRAGO: I hope that's not the case.

MR. McELHINNEY: We all do. But I think there's still a lot of anxiety and uncertainty, aggravated by things like oil spills in the Gulf [of Mexico] and an unstable international scene, with a lot of small wars going on and unresolved.

MR. BERGMAN: Not so small.

MR. McELHINNEY: Not so small, not so small. Well, small compared to the great wars of the last 100 years. But still troubling. And the Pollock-Krasner Foundation also has other holdings. I think we spoke about them a little bit last time but not in depth. The house in East Hampton.

MS. BUITRAGO: We don't own the house.

MR. McELHINNEY: Oh, you don't own the house.

MS. BUITRAGO: No.

MR. BERGMAN: We gave it to the State University [of New York] at Stony Brook.

MR. McELHINNEY: At Stony Brook.

MR. BERGMAN: To operate and maintain, which they do admirably, Helen Harrison being the director. The conferences, seminars, symposia, exhibitions that are held there are outstanding. They deal not only with Pollock and Krasner, but with artists of the New York School. We've given a substantial amount of money to the house and study center, as well as the gift of the house and studio itself. We've given about \$750,000 to support the operations of the house. It's National Trust Monument now. People come from all over the world to visit it and see where Jackson and Lee lived.

MR. McELHINNEY: So how long ago did you make the gift?

MS. BUITRAGO: That was back in 1987.

MR. McELHINNEY: So, shortly after the organization was launched.

MS. BUITRAGO: Yes. Lee did not leave an endowment for the house.

MR. McELHINNEY: She did not?

MS. BUITRAGO: No.

MR. BERGMAN: And did not want it to be a source of draining support from the foundation to be created on her death. She had ambivalent feelings about that house.

MR. McELHINNEY: We spoke about that a little bit.

MR. BERGMAN: Yes, we did.

MR. McELHINNEY: Yes.

MR. BERGMAN: And Stony Book and its foundation, private foundation, have been an excellent depository.

MR. McELHINNEY: So their holdings are their holdings. They're the property of the State University of New York.

MR. BERGMAN: Excuse me. I'll be right back.

[END TRACK 05.]

MR. McELHINNEY: So in 25 years, basically, the model that the foundation has followed hasn't really changed.

MR. BERGMAN: That's correct.

MR. McELHINNEY: It was launched, immediately successful, and it's a durable model: if it ain't broke, don't fix it. It's still working.

MS. BUITRAGO: Continues to be successful.

MR. McELHINNEY: And so you were saying aside, when the machine was turned off, that the kind of attention we spoke a little bit about, the attention from journalists being attracted to, sort of, the catastrophic story of the person on their deathbed or being saved from some calamity as a result of a grant, that just, in a funny way, Pollock-Krasner is not news because nothing changes.

MS. BUITRAGO: We've truly remained basically to our core mission.

MR. McELHINNEY: But that, I would say, is news in itself. That's a successful model; a mission that has legs and keeps working and keeps helping people is.

MR. BERGMAN: The only time we have ever felt we had a story was September 11th and our response to Katrina. We have been privileged to know some of the top PR people in the art and cultural arena. They have told us that we deserve press recognition but do not consider our story sexy, to merely talk about what has been going on for 25 years, even if it has filled a tremendous need, and even if the need continues to be as valid and compelling as it was 25 years ago.

MS. BUITRAGO: Exactly.

MR. BERGMAN: We could hire all the PR firms in the country and put them all together, and they would give us that sobering reality. So we trust that our network, which is constantly expanding, will continue to feed good candidates worthy of our support. And I, personally, and Kerrie continue to be committed to helping anybody who wants to have the benefit of our experience and our expertise.

I am right now heavily involved as a senior advisor to the Aspen Institute, concluding a major study of artist-endowed foundations. So that the best practices in governance, management, program development, creation of catalogues raisonnés, exhibitions will all be documented in several books that will be available to wealthy families, to their lawyers, to their accountants, and above all, to rich artists, so that they will have examples of how a foundation can be successfully created and maintained. The Aspen Institute study is of about 300 foundations created by artists. And I might just add how ironic that most foundations created by artists do not do anything to support individual artists, because they lack concern for their well being.

MS. BUITRAGO: Or lack of funds.

MR. BERGMAN: Or lack of funds. Absolutely. Many artists' foundations have no money and count only on the sale of art to generate some grant funding.

MS. BUITRAGO: Let's pretend for a moment that I'm a billionaire, and I want to start a foundation. What kind of advice would you give me?

MR. BERGMAN: The first advice that I would give you categorically is to hire lawyers and accountants who are

skilled in art foundation matters. The worst thing in the world is to be in the hands of lawyers and/or accountants who know nothing at all about some of the special needs and requirements of art foundation law and practice. This is the major thrust, I might add, of the Aspen study that I've just alluded to. That would be my first advice.

MR. McELHINNEY: So you're creating a road map for future philanthropists.

MR. BERGMAN: I will see that you get a copy of that report, by the way, Jim.

MR. McELHINNEY: Thank you. I'll try to get the billion by next year. [They laugh.]

MR. BERGMAN: It should be in by September, hopefully.

MR. McELHINNEY: Great. That'd be a great resource. Because I think that without a road map, I mean, a person even who has a desire and perhaps hesitates because they don't know how to begin, they don't know—

MS. BUITRAGO: Or what the pitfalls may be.

MR. McELHINNEY: Or how to flag the minefield or what—

MR. BERGMAN: This is a group of senior advisors in philanthropy that are among the most distinguished and successful in the country; people like Lowery Sims, like Alberta Arthurs, like [James] Jim Demetrion, Jim Smith, and myself.

MR. McELHINNEY: Well, let's pretend I've made a billion. I've hired the right lawyers and the right accountants. And launched a foundation. And we're having lunch and I say, "Charlie, give me some advice," what would you tell me to do day to day? What do I need to know, or to pay attention to really, keep this thing on the right track?

MR. BERGMAN: The first thing you need is to have a clear-cut mission statement.

MR. McELHINNEY: Right.

MR. BERGMAN: So you know precisely what your mandate and responsibility will be. And that mission statement obviously addresses such important factors as, who is your constituency, and what parameters are there on that constituency? What methodology will you use to fulfill your mission? What kind of operation; what kind of staffing? What kind of evaluation of the impact of what you're doing? What else?

MS. BUITRAGO: I think that fairly sums it up.

MR. McELHINNEY: It's also a way to proclaim to the world who you are.

MR. BERGMAN: Yes. And then, you see, you go out, you get somebody like a Kerrie Buitrago, and you bring them in to make this a reality. You sit back, and you don't do a damned thing as the CEO of the operation. You just hope you can keep that Kerrie Buitrago person happy, content, and fulfilled.

MR. McELHINNEY: So how did you find the other people in your staff?

MR. BERGMAN: Kerrie has a methodology and a process for recruitment that involves the *New York Times*, bulletin boards of organizations where—

MS. BUITRAGO: Like the Foundation Center. And we have a very big network.

MR. BERGMAN: Huge. Our network is international and formidable.

MR. McELHINNEY: You've got a person across the table from you, you know, had a lovely interview. What's the thing that says to you, this person's for us?

MS. BUITRAGO: I would say that it has to be a person who is both compassionate and competent. I think that's the unique combination. We don't want a drill sergeant here. We want someone who can relate to artists, but who's also able to do a lot of—there's a lot of paperwork involved. There's a lot of administration in running the foundation, just like any other business. And it has to be done well. Otherwise things fall apart.

MR. McELHINNEY: So they have to persuade you they're sold on the mission of the foundation.

MS. BUITRAGO: Absolutely.

MR. McELHINNEY: And willing to commit to it.

MS. BUITRAGO: Absolutely.

MR. BERGMAN: And so make a contribution in areas where we need buttressing and undergirding: such as follow-through, such as the very delicate matter of how you transmit funds to artists, and what are the requirements that you have before those funds can be released.

MS. BUITRAGO: And a real attention to detail. And certainly not shirking, and looking at all of those things that need to be done so that we don't run into any problems.

MR. BERGMAN: Imagine what would happen if you sent a grant check to the wrong artist. Or the wrong amount in a grant check. I mean, that would be a very awkward business, to ask an artist to return a check because you weren't supposed to get a grant—or worse, you weren't supposed to get the amount that was accidentally transmitted to you. That's the kind of detail that we're dealing with.

MS. BUITRAGO: There's a myriad of details in this organization.

MR. BERGMAN: Hundreds of them.

MR. McELHINNEY: So to what would you attribute the success and longevity of the Pollock-Krasner Foundation?

MR. BERGMAN: Very simply, the dedication of Gerry Dickler and Gene Thaw to give me a chance to develop a program and then, with Kerrie's help, staff the program to reach the level of credibility and respect that we enjoy. So basically, I am saying that the key people in the formation of this foundation and its impact, with Jerry and Gene, Sam Sachs, our president, who came in 2004 when Gene stepped down as our president. And first and foremost for 25 years, Kerrie Buitrago.

MS. BUITRAGO: And let's certainly not forget our program officer, Caroline Black, who is a gem.

MR. BERGMAN: Absolutely.

MR. McELHINNEY: How long has she been here?

MS. BUITRAGO: She's been here 13 years.

MR. BERGMAN: And you've been here, what, 25?

MS. BUITRAGO: Twenty-five. And Beth Cochems, our grants manager, has been here, I think, 10 years. Maybe more.

MR. McELHINNEY: It's a fairly small operation.

MS. BUITRAGO: It's so long I'm losing count. [Laughs.]

MR. McELHINNEY: There are not many people here. It's not—I mean, I haven't actually counted heads. But there are what, about eight or nine people here?

MR. BERGMAN: No, seven.

MR. McELHINNEY: Seven.

MR. McELHINNEY: So, a lot to accomplish with a small team.

MS. BUITRAGO: It's a small staff.

MR. McELHINNEY: And therefore I understand why they would have to be fully committed to the mission of the institution and the processes required of it.

MR. BERGMAN: And they have to be able to put up with my idiosyncratic maverick style of operating. Is that a fair way of putting it?

MS. BUITRAGO: Yes, indeed. [Laughs.]

MR. BERGMAN: Thank you.

MR. McELHINNEY: What are your plans for the future of the foundation?

MR. BERGMAN: To see that when Sam and I are gone—and Kerrie—that it is governed and staffed as it has been for 25 years. That the successor trustees be people of comparable merit and experience and expertise and sensitivity. But we're a long way off, I hope. I think we're basically in pretty good health around here. And we have made provision for the future, when and if Sam and I are no longer around.

MS. BUITRAGO: We certainly want the foundation to continue.

MR. BERGMAN: Absolutely.

MR. McELHINNEY: So you started this hour's conversation by saying that the foundation was here for perpetuity, to endure.

MR. BERGMAN: That is correct.

MR. McELHINNEY: Thank you for your time. And I think that would be a good coda to end this conversation.

MS. BUITRAGO: Thank you.

MR. BERGMAN: It's been a pleasure.

MS. BUITRAGO: Thank you.

MR. McELHINNEY: It's been a real pleasure for me, and thank you again. Thank you.

MS. BUITRAGO: Thank you.

MR. McELHINNEY: My pleasure, Kerrie.

MR. BERGMAN: Jim, thank you for the book, which we will treasure. Jill, we're very appreciative of your participation.

[END TRACK 06.]

[END OF INTERVIEW.]