

Barrett Oral History Project
Interview with Dr. John Lynch
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KHAN: Hello, this is Myra Khan interviewing Dr. John Lynch on November 29th at 10 am in Sage North in the Barrett Complex. This interview is part of Barrett Oral History Project. Our goal is to preserve a record of Barrett's history in honor of our 30th anniversary. Thank you so much for taking the time to sit down with us and share your experience. So, I'll begin with the questions. Can you please begin by telling me how you got started with Barrett?

LYNCH: Okay, so I'll start with how I ended up at ASU. I ended up at ASU in 1994 doing a postdoc. My PhD was in evolutionary biology. And I did a postdoc in the Department of Zoology, which is now the School of Life Sciences, so that's changed. And after a couple of years of doing the postdoc, I ended up getting a position as an academic advisor, but also as a faculty associate teaching classes for a program called the Interdisciplinary Humanities Program, which is really cool because it had folks who were interested in sort of modern cultural theory as well as sort of old-style classics and all that sort of stuff. And it actually turned into Film and Media Studies through a long, strange process. So, I ended up teaching there, and then in 2000, a job came up, a job app came up for Barrett, and I had a good experience with Barrett students. I had been, at that time, I had a couple of Barrett students that I was directing their honors thesis. So, I decided to apply, and 18 years later, here I am.

KHAN: All right, thank you. So, what differences do you see between teaching then and then teaching now with Barrett students?

LYNCH: Oh boy, well the biggest thing I think were class sizes. Class sizes back then were a lot smaller. I mean, they were, some classes would only be 12 students, but they were tapped out at 15. And we were in Old Irish Hall and the classrooms weren't that good. It was kind of like, you know, it was what it was. And really, I mean, a lot of what we've done has stayed the same in many senses. I mean, a Socratic seminar based on primary texts, all that sort of good stuff. There's some not so good stuff as far as the students would be concerned, of course, in the papers, but those have stayed more or less, you know, the same since. If anything has changed substantially, it's actually, we sort of drifted away from the sort of notional idea that this was a sort of a great books course, that every written text had to be, usually by some dead white guy or something like that. And just sort of a semi-conscious process, people started bringing in greater diversity of voices, whether it's people of color or underrepresented in voices. So I think it's fair to say that if you looked at the syllabi, say from this past semester in 171 and certainly, definitely in 272, you'd notice a fairly radical difference in the sorts of readings that were being used, the sorts of voices that are being heard, uses of art and imagery and video, for example, and even music, like some jazz pieces, for example, that probably wouldn't have occurred 20 years ago. So, the student, I think that was sort of incremental, that was just sort of like it slowly happened.

It wasn't like everybody woke up one day and said, well, everybody woke up woke, as it were, and suddenly decided what they wanted to do was change everything and let's do this. It just happened. So, it's kind of interesting to look at in that sense because the framework, the papers, the way discussions are run, all that sort of stuff stays the same, but the content has shifted in, I think, very interesting ways.

KHAN: So, what do you think Barrett students can- or how do you think they can benefit from being exposed to more diverse pieces in their Human Event courses?

LYNCH: I won't pause for too long. I think one of the things about it is, so I grew up in Ireland, and so therefore I was exposed to that beast that's known as European culture, you know, there's a lot of different voices and a lot of different cultural influences and languages, and by the time I was certainly, 20, I'd been through a lot of Europe and spent time there working and stuff like that. And I think that gives you a certain perspective, right? And certainly, at the start of when I started, the students were largely, I'll be honest about this, sort of fairly well-to-do white kids. The vast, vast majority of them. And they had one sort of perspective. And, you know, walking them slowly through something like the Tao Te Ching or Confucius or the Bhagavad Gita or something like that was an interesting experience. So, I guess to get to your question, I will do it eventually, is that I think it's a way of giving a certain amount of cultural perspective, a diverse perspective that I think particularly, maybe I shouldn't get too political about this, given the current political climate, is a very good thing. I don't think exposing, you know, some right-leaning, seventeen-year-old engineer is to the Tao is suddenly going to make them, change their political views and something like that, but it can't hurt, I think it's that way. So, I mean, I think cultural exposure to cultural diversity for the student, but I also think it's, there's some great writers, for example, that most people haven't heard of. So to sort of get, whether it's their minority voice or whatever, so to get them, if you have four classes and one student goes, this is the best writer I've ever had, I want to read more of their stuff and whatever, that's always a good thing as well, if you see what I'm saying. So, I think there's, I mean, one of the things, this is somewhat tangential, but the danger is always then when you're teaching something that you really love yourself. So, there's been sort of some Irish authors that I've over the years thrown in there and this class flat lines. And I'm like, okay, and that's like soul destroying because you're like, oh, okay, why can't you get? And then you realize it's because there's so much cultural knowledge expected by the author. It's just all packed in there that all the things that were triggering for me, oh, that's beautiful because it reflects this aspect of Irish politics or something like that. The students, of course, have no hope of getting at it. So, there's always those dangers, whether it's either you're bringing in something for a different culture or even something you really like yourself. I mean, there are many works, you know, which are more classic works that I love and don't go down too well in class and it's like, well, I will never do that again because it's broken my heart, you know. So that can make sort of choosing texts kind of interesting.

KHAN: So, kind of along the same line, what does The Human Event course mean to you?

LYNCH: Lots of grading. I'll tell you what it means to me now in the sense, sort of pushing, going back a little bit to something I said earlier. I think it's an opportunity for me to try and encourage students to talk among themselves about important issues in a sort of factual, evidence-driven kind of way. And the reason I say that is, again, I think we're at a moment in time in American political culture where I think that's really, really important. Twenty years ago, I would probably have said something about what, well, the payoff is we're teaching students how to write, you know, in certain ways. And I'm a little bit more skeptical about the value of that now, for not only the political reasons. I doubt a six-page Human Event paper will ever change the world, but I could be wrong. But I also think for technological reasons, where people are now more used to screen time and stuff like that and communicating in short bursts rather than extended things. I always thought we should get rid of the Human Event papers and just make a series of Tweets. Sort of, if you can explain Nietzsche to me in a set of Tweets, then, which is an art in and of itself. I mean, you can make an argument that that's equally as valid in some ways. So, I mean, so I think there's been a shift in the way that I see the value of it, the value for the student. The value for me, we've got the best job in the world, except for the grading. You're going to hear that quite a lot in the sense that we get to walk into a class and talk about something that's interesting. And as long as everybody's done the reading and as everybody's sort of prepared and engaged, it's a quick 75 minutes. And it always leaves more open questions than it does. And I think that's one of the things that some of the students find somewhat frustrating, the sort of, there's the expectation that there's a big answer, right? That somehow after 75 minutes you're going to understand, you know, Cicero or something like that. Or what it's like to be, you know, an underrepresented individual in a certain culture or something like that. And that's not going to happen, right? I guess one of the things I find it's sort of like the STEM majors that tend to struggle most against it, because these sort of humanities sort of majors are a little bit more sort of okay about ambiguity and not figuring stuff, but the engineers, there's an answer and they're going to find it. So, I always find that a little bit fun, you know, in that sense. And it just makes for great conversations, you know, as long as you're willing to accept the ambiguity of what's going on. It's like the other thing that always gets me is that occasionally a student complains, "So, what actually is The Human Event?" I didn't change-use the name. I have no idea what it means, which it makes it sort of feel a little bit like a fraud of some kind, right? That's, we're hiding this thing, the event that happened around maybe noon, in like 404 BC or something like that. Oh, that's the human event. Okay, right. You know, so I just find that really, really interesting. We're not terribly sure what it even means, but we've been carrying this tag, and it's actually funny because other honors colleges have sort of taken the sort of name and they can't use the name. So, there's an honors college whose equivalent is called The Human Situation, which just sounds awkward, right? I mean, and it's like, it's like flattery and it's like, oh, that's nice, thank you very much. And strangely enough, I'd be able to tell you what the human situation is. You know what I mean? But you ask me what the human event is, and I'm like, anyway, that was a little tangential, I apologize. But so, but I mean, I think it's one of the things I also say to the students, primarily students that are having problems talking in class for

whatever reason, is what it also is this is probably the safest space that they're going to have to learn how to interact with other students. So, no matter, occasionally the STEM, computer engineering, computer systems engineering, computer science, whatever major, and he's like, oh, I won't have to work with people. I'm just going to be in my office coding and stuff like that. I'm like, that isn't how it works. There's no solitary genius on the hill creating the next Facebook. And you're going to have to interact with people and you're going to have to be able to convince them of your position and you're going to have to do this. So, if you want to be a better engineer or a better historian or a better whatever, you're going to have to learn these skills. And this is the place we, yeah, we're not talking about engineering, we're talking about Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or something like that, but the skills are transferable. So, this is your way to learn those skills as a freshman, and you will be better throughout your college career and beyond because of. And usually when you sort of coach in those terms, students who are a little bit, "I don't know why I'm here," are a lot more receptive to what's going on. And that usually works remarkably well actually to get some of the quieter students to start coming out of their shell because they can see a real payback for themselves in the short term, medium term, or long term. I don't know if that was actually an answer to the question.

KHAN: No, yeah, that was perfect. Can you tell me a little bit more about other courses that you teach at Barrett?

LYNCH: Well, yeah. So, one of the great things about this job is there's probably very few places that have an evolutionary biologist who teaches classes on Greek drama because Biology programs aren't going to allow you to do that and classics programs aren't going to bring in a biologist to do it. And so, my passion in many ways is Greek history and culture, ancient Greek history and culture. So, I teach a course, various versions of it on Greek tragedy in particular. And so, one version is, we work our way through the works, a drama day kind of thing, and just talk about them and talk about the history and talk about ways of what we may learn about ancient Greek culture from the surviving works. And that's really good because some of the students who like love *The Human Event*, love that going back and doing that sort of thing. And it sort of then developed, as a course I'm teaching at the, I'm just finishing teaching at the moment, on tragedy, trauma, and war, which looks at how people have been using, over the last couple of years, Greek tragedies to work with veterans with PTSD to help them start a dialogue about what's going on and all these, and their families, equally as important. And then that subsequently has been expanded to work with incarcerated prisoners and prison officers to deal with end-of-life issues and stuff like that. So that course is really interesting because we still study the dramas that they use and try and understand what's going on then, before we talk about how they get used and stuff like that. So, I had just, yeah, on Tuesday, yeah, in our last class this fantastic discussion about end-of-life issues. And there were very diametrically opposed opinions in the room, as you can well imagine with an issue like that. And using the tragedies as your starting off point, they ended up- I don't think anybody's mind was changed, you know what I mean? But there was a middle ground found and the realization that this was complicated and

there had to be an ongoing discussion and all that sort of stuff, which is exactly what you want, right? You know, get started thinking about these things and they are tough issues and stuff like that. And if we're using Greek drama, for example, as a way to get us in there, that's great, right? You could use other things, obviously, but this happens to work for me. So that's largely a lot of what I've been teaching, but in the past, I've done stuff about, of course, about the interface between science and religion and philosophy. I've done, I'm blanking on it now, sections, honor sections, of course, in the history of science and things like that. But I mean, that's the great thing. I mean, for whatever reason, the decision was made that when we teach those upper division courses, it doesn't have to be within our necessary area of specialization. So, you can teach a class in something that is your hobby or your passion or something like that. And that's fairly unique because in most places there are upper division courses that have to be taught, so intro to programming or something like that. And somebody's going to have to teach it, so you have to do it and all that sort of stuff. But here, if you look at the list of upper division courses, it's just everybody has chosen to do that topic because they like that topic. And the beauty of it is if the class bonds totally and clearly, you're more interested in it than the students, then you never have to teach it again. You can develop something else. That's a very good thing, a very nice thing. And then there are classes we teach on study abroad. So, I've taught in London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Greece and Italy. So those are also fun as well because there's that element of teaching the stuff, for want of a better expression, in the field, where they can see, you know, the stuff, where's the Roman Forum or something like that. And then I add some extra sort of dimension to all of that as well. You know, the first time I have very strong memories of I was teaching in Athens. We took the students at the Acropolis and they're coming over and they're asking me questions and, you know, I'm pointing out things and all this sort of stuff, and I started getting emotional. It was like, this is it. This is, you know, how it's supposed to be. You know, both for me as a teacher, but I also think for the students to be able to expose, to be exposed to seeing these things and not just hearing about them or seeing them on video. If you stand in the Acropolis and look out over Athens and the Bay of Salamis, a lot of things that you've read about suddenly start making sense in ways that you can't explain. So that's why I think one of the things, the study abroad opportunities and all that sort of stuff, I think are deeply valuable, both for us as educators, but also for the students. I mean, if I could wave a magic wand and become a teen, and we had a donor of some kind, I'd basically make sure that every Barrett student got to do a study abroad, whether it's 10 days or four weeks or something like that, at no cost to them, and it's part of the deal. You just have to do it. We have a whole bunch of programs, whatever. But because I think it's a really important thing for, not only students in general, but Barrett students in particular, to be exposed to other cultures, not as a tourist, not as a just, I saw the Eiffel Tower, sort of thing, but do the sorts of things that we do, for example, when we take students to Rome and put them into apartments surrounded by Romans, modern Romans, not ancient Romans, surrounded by Romans, and having to do daily shopping and having to negotiate living in the city themselves. You do that for three weeks, you'll come back changed, but you'll come back with a set of skills that you can use anywhere. I mean, I've seen students go

from, in Athens on day one, not being able to read the language, not being able to do anything, just totally paralyzed, not being willing to go into like a cafe and buy some food because he didn't recognize anything, he didn't know what was going on, to five weeks later in Rome, basically totally able to deal with anything that was thrown at them, going to Naples for the weekend on their own kind of thing. And that's a huge, that's an amazing thing to see, and it's amazing for the students as well. So, in an ideal world, everybody would get to do that. Everybody would be exposed to that. And financial need wouldn't be an issue. That's my dream.

KHAN: So, do you have a specific favorite memory or something from a study abroad trip?

LYNCH: Probably that first time on the Acropolis with students. There are some photos of it somewhere. But yeah, that was, that was, that was very powerful. I mean, one of the things, it's, yeah, I mean, distilling 18 years down to give you one good memory. I don't know if I could do that. I had a memory that wasn't actually, it's Barrett-related, but it wasn't in The Human Event or it wasn't thing. It was that there were a number of students who have become good friends of mine, who have now long graduated and are now like professional lawyers and doctors and stuff like that, whom when they come into town, get in contact with me and we go out and I would buy tea and a drink or something like that and just catch up. And so, these are in their, early to mid-30s now, and that's fun. And then watching them have kids, it's like really sort of, I don't know how to phrase it, long-term project kind of thing. You know what I mean? You're like seeing all these things. And then there was an ex-student of mine, a Barrett student, who asked me to be a groomsman at his wedding, which was an interesting experience because all the other groomsmen were the same age as he was, late 20s, and at the time I was in my late 40s. I was like, okay. They're like, yes, we're going out partying before the wedding. I'm getting too old for that, which is unfortunately true, but so those sorts of things I think, so that's not as much a single memory as a cluster of things, you know? There's, without naming names, and there's a student of mine who's now, she's got a PhD in anthropology, and she was working in Europe and all that sort of stuff, and she, we stay in touch, and when she's in town we meet up and she's like, I need your advice about life and where I should go from here and all that sort of stuff, and that's deeply touching that somebody still cares what you think. It's one thing to have a 20-year-old come into your office and go, I'm thinking of taking this class, or I'm thinking of changing my major, please help me, right? But then when you have like a 30-something year old going, I'm thinking of making a major life decision, and I still value what you think, that's kind of cool. So anyway, so yeah, if I was looking for a single memory on study abroad, it certainly was that first time on the Acropolis with the students. If I'm thinking about everything else, it's just that interwoven sort of sets of things. I mean, the other thing I would say is that feeling of sort of almost pride, for lack of a better word, every time I see one of my students walk across the stage at graduation, my thesis students, because you know how hard they've worked and you've helped them along and it's been rough, and that just the sense of they did it. That's an ongoing memory as it were. It's an ongoing thing because it happens twice a year occasionally, so yeah.

KHAN: So given your scientific background, how do you bring that to humanities courses like The Human Event and your Greek classics courses?

LYNCH: Yeah, I try not to. I try not to explicitly. So, years ago, I'd teach things like Darwin and Newton's Principia. My colleague, Professor Foy, still does all those sorts of things, and I did it. And then it turned into we had sort of a science-focused 273, I think we called it at the time, stream, and then there was a social science stream, and then there was a humanities stream. And I ended up doing the science-focused one, because, you know, it was like whatever. And I found that somewhat unsatisfying, both for me and the students, because, yeah, we were reading Galileo, we were reading some of the greatest hits in science, and some stuff, science fiction, and things that you can discuss from science, and the problem was, all the students in the section were like STEM majors, and they were expecting science. And I, compared to 171, which hadn't changed, which was a mix of STEM majors and humanities majors and stuff like that, and design folks and music therapy people and stuff like that, where you still got this diversity of perspectives and voices, it was becoming groupthink. And the idea actually was, originally when it was first put together, it wasn't for all the science majors to take the science version, but for, because there were only a few of us who could teach it, myself and Joe Foy being the two, and Tom Martin, but the idea that they would know that my background was in science, but there was some sort of miscommunication and that never got across to people. The only way I use it now is when I have a student, usually a STEM major, who goes, I can't do this, or this isn't interesting to me, or I see no value in this, and then I can unreel my life story. Look, I have a terminal degree in biology, I've published a lot of papers, and I can read The Iliad, and I can get something out of it, so you can do it as well. So, to use it more in that way, to use my background, not so much in the classroom, but it sort of was a pedagogical tool to be able to go, look, any of you can do this. There isn't something special about science and the humanities. I think that artificial construct has done way too much damage to the way I think students, not only get taught, but how they're sort of channeled into things at a very early age, and I think that's unfortunate. And I'm all for breaking down those things. So, other than me, on the first day of class telling the students, I got a PhD in biology, so here we go, and that's the last. And occasionally I'll talk about, I'll mention things like how certain aspects of quantum mechanics may fit in with something we're talking about. But that's more of a tangent rather than a, this is the main point I'm going to show you, quantum mechanics, how there may be multiple copies of you somewhere and all this sort of stuff. So, it hovers around the edges, but it's never in there. And it certainly doesn't play any part in the, well, in the Greek tragedy course, not so much in the trauma course a little bit in the sense that, being able to talk about aspects of PTSD and stuff like that in scientific terms. So, everybody knows what exactly we're talking about. But it, you know, anybody in the humanities, 20 minutes on Wikipedia could do the same thing. See what I'm saying? So that's about that.

KHAN: Alright. So, what value do you see in the honors thesis that seniors at Barrett must complete?

LYNCH: Absolutely none. That was a joke. I will give you a couple of things. So, I published with my thesis students. I said for them, applying to grad school with a publication ready to go or whatever is a good thing. So that's completely practical and stuff like that. But the vast majority of honors theses don't get published in any form or function. I really encourage students to do a thesis outside their major as a way of, in many cases, for some of them, scratching the itch that existed ever since The Human Event. So, STEM majors, for example, who did really like Greek tragedy, say, for example, and wanted to keep on doing something about it. This is their opportunity. It's probably the last opportunity they will have, particularly if they go on to grad school or something like that. For a lot of students, so a lot of the students that I work with on theses are pre-med, pre-health professions. And if you think about it, if you're in Barrett and you have a good GPA and probably good MCAT score, you're going to have some lab experience, maybe over in bio design or someplace like that, you've probably shadowed a doctor at some points, you may be involved with the Mayo program. That's a lot of good stuff. But if you're trying to get into a really good med school, there's going to be a whole bunch of students with the exact same profile. So how do you make yourself different? And I think the thesis is a great way to do that. So, for example, for the pre-health profession students that work with me, I'd say, you know, let's do something in bioethics or medical policy or history of medicine or something like that. And the reason I know this works is there is a student of mine from way back now. And she had thought that she had been at the Mayo and she had noticed, as it's unfortunately happening, that patient-doctor interactions were about 15 minutes stacked in. And if everything couldn't be answered in that time, basically the doctor ended up giving some literature to the patient and said, read this and get back to me if you have any questions. And she thought that was a little weird. So, she had a conversation with me, and she was a biochemistry major, and she had a conversation with me. And I said, well, let's see what we can do about this, and she said, well, what I want to do is analyze the literature that's been given out for just something as really simple as readability. You know that magic number you can get using Word or something like what grade level you're writing is. It always depresses people. Fourth grade, really? So that's all she did. She scanned them in, she analyzed them, whatever, and then looked at literacy values, right? And she found there was this huge disparity between the higher level that these literature was expecting versus the average literacy of folks in Arizona and nationwide. So, she then made some suggestions to the Mayo educational about how they should change things or whatever. So, she wrote this up as a thesis. What that gave her was two things. As she was writing it up, she was working on her statement for med school. So she was able to talk about, rather than turn around and say, I want to be a doctor because, which is the standard first draft that everybody does, she was able to talk explicitly about the importance of patient communication, doctor-patient communication, and how she realized that importance and how she's been studying it, et cetera, et cetera. So, she applied to a whole bunch of schools, some really good schools. And she got an interview for every one of them. And every single interview started with, so you're interested in doctor-patient communication? Talk to me about that. And she was the expert in the room. She had numbers. If she had a phone, she would have pulled out

a PowerPoint or something like that or whatever. She was totally in charge of every single interview. She got into every single one of those medical schools, right? That is the power of the thesis, right? It allows you to become the expert on something that you may be able to leverage, whether it's grad school applications or even, you know, med school or even just because you want to do it, you know. So that's, it's also, I'll flip it the other side and say, what's the value of it for me? I've worked on so many such diverse things. I've done scientific work with students. I've done, you know, doctor-patient communication. I've done historical stuff and whatever. My last student, who I just finished writing a letter of recommendation for, worked on rugby in American sports culture. For me, this is great. I'm like, give me all these things that I get to work on and you're going to have to do the hard work, right? I'm just there to make sure you don't say anything stupid or you're working in profitable directions or whatever, but so I learn quite a lot out of these things, so that's fun as well. So yeah, there are very few sort of more traditional departments, for example, I'm thinking like, say, in life sciences where you would have an opportunity to work with a student on rugby in American culture. So that's kind of fun.

KHAN: All right, so can you tell me a little bit about the duties you're given as faculty chair for Barrett and what that consists of?

LYNCH: Okay, so I'm no longer the faculty chair, but I was the faculty chair. Okay, so there's a bunch of things. There's sort of representational things where you represent the faculty, the deans in meetings. You represent the deans and the faculty in meetings. So, you're sort of a conduit for all those sorts of things. You're part of the sort of decision-making leadership team in Barrett as a whole. So that's not only the deans, but also various staff individuals and stuff like that. You represent Barrett to the university at large at various meetings. There's a lot of meetings. That's the take home from this, I think. And occasionally you'll also represent Barrett to outside parties that come in. So, Barrett is successful enough that we have individuals from university that either have existing honors programs or colleges or want to develop them for them to come in and attempt to steal our ideas as it were. But we're fairly welcoming, they come in, we meet with them. So, the chair usually gets to meet with groups of those as well and answer their specific questions about things. That's the meeting aspect of it. Then there's sort of the procedural stuff. There's a lot of paperwork. So, it's either meetings or paperwork. It's like something out of The Office. The chair ultimately does the annual evaluations of all faculty members. Everybody has an annual review. While there's a committee that does most of the hard work about it, the chair is the one who writes the final annual review. There's promotion work, the chair also writes letters for promotions and recommendations for promotions and contract renewal and all that sort of good stuff. And then there's everything from as mundane as authorizing grade changes to the hours worked by our faculty assistant. So, it's bureaucracy basically. It's got good things and bad things. But yeah, it sounds cynical, but paperwork and meetings, but it's also an opportunity. I mean, you can change things. I mean, it's not just, sort of like a civil servant where you have to do everything, and you're just a cog in a machine. You can alter the machine. And that's challenging. There are a lot of moving parts in the machine and you can't just tinker with one bit

and expect everything to keep on working the way it is, so it's an opportunity to do that. It's also an opportunity to help your colleagues, either when things go wrong or to encourage them and enable them to achieve things that either they had been thinking about or hadn't thought about. And that's particularly true, I think, for our more junior colleagues who are only starting doing all of this, they are sometimes like, I don't know, how to do X or I want to do Y and figure out ways to enable them to do that so they are satisfied with their job so they don't feel stress and encouraging them so they can, they can succeed not only in the classroom but as professionals in general. So that's a certain amount of work goes on as well.

KHAN: So why do you think so many other universities and colleges are so eager to model their honors colleges off of Barrett?

LYNCH: Because we're #1 in innovation. I was paid to say that. No, I think I'm not a huge fan of the gold standard thing because it just, to my ears, it doesn't sound right, but we are definitely the best honors college in the country. I think if I wasn't working here, I would already know it. And that's what those colleges and universities know. That over the last 30 years, consciously, and I think to a certain degree subconsciously, we've evolved into a unit where we're able to provide opportunities to students and at the same time remain relatively small. So, the thing we usually throw around is the idea that we're a small liberal arts college within a larger research university, and I think that's true. It became particularly more true when we moved into the new campus here, the new buildings, because Hogwarts are not, Gates are not, it still made it sort of feel like a smaller place. You walk down the breezeway, you run into students, and go to the dining hall, you run into students, and all that sort of stuff. Excuse me. But we're surrounded by this sea of resources. And so that enables a student to feel like they're part of a smaller community, yet at the same time have everything they could possibly want. And I think that's one of the reasons we do attract students, in-state students, for example, who could have gone to California schools or something like that because they wanted the individualized attention, but it was so expensive. So, I think it's that sort of combination thing that we've got to, we've somehow, we've consciously put together a educational experience that if, and I think this is really important, if a student decides to take advantage of it, right, can give wonderful things. So, if you, for example, see the thesis as an opportunity rather than something I have to do, right, you're going to have a radically different experience, and you know, it's fair enough. I mean, some students come in with the idea of checking all the boxes. I'm really only doing this so I can enroll for courses early, get registration early or something like that. We all know one of those students, right? And then there are students who just embrace the whole thing, get involved with, you know, service projects, get involved with the day-to-day running at the college, or like yourself doing this, for example, who say this is an opportunity to be part of something bigger and get these opportunities and all that sort of stuff. And then there are students in the middle, right? But I think one of the reasons we are the best honors college is also because I believe what's happened to ASU in my time here, my 24 years here, that change has been so radical. But it's enabled so many opportunities to exist as well. So, the sort of intersection between what

Barrett was able to do and what ASU has been able to do, I think makes both things better. And for us, it's the fact that we then have universities and colleges coming over here and trying to figure out how we do it. Does that make sense? Okay.

KHAN: So, what is the value of Barrett for Arizona in general, do you think?

LYNCH: I'm sure if you asked some administrator over in Fulton, they have a dollar value that they'd be able to give you. I think pragmatic, one of the things we do is we keep the best students from Arizona in Arizona. So, it's generally known that if you go away, you're less likely to come back. So, resources that, say, for example, the state, and unfortunately the state doesn't put enough resources into it, pump into a good student in high school, then those resources ultimately leave. And so if we get good high achieving students who, for whatever reason, could get into the Stanfords or Berkeley or, you know, whatever, and instead go, I'm going to stay in Arizona because I can get a similar or even better experience in many ways here at ASU because of our, because of all these resources that we have, because of the opportunities that we get, and I can do it cheaper, right, because I got a President's Scholarship or something like that. That's the value for Arizona, because I look at what some of our students do in the community, and because they're staying here, because they're not on the West Coast, because they're not on the East Coast. And I think that's the trickle down as well. So I was, one of the things that Barrett has put in place is it used to be the Circumnavigators Award, which was an outside group which would fund a student to go one way around the world in their summer between their junior and senior year. And they could stop off at up to six places and they had to do a research project. It's a fantastic experience for somebody, right? Well, the circumnavigators no longer did it, and Barrett stepped in and Dean Jacobs decided that we would fund one of these things. And then we got some outside, an outside donor to help as well. So just yesterday I was, along with two of my colleagues, deciding who the final winner for this year is. We had six great applicants, but one of them, for example, currently is working on urban farming here in the Valley with St. Vincent de Paul and all these sorts of things, doing great work, right? Here's the thing. If she hadn't stayed in the Valley, perhaps because of Barrett or something like that, and had gone off to California, then they're benefiting from that, right? So, there's the perceptible stuff. I think the argument can be made that, having Barrett here helps, radically, the, what's the word I want to use, the standing of ASU, just as an educational unit. But then there's all those little trickle out things, right? Some of them are immeasurable, some of them are not quantifiable, but are the sorts of things that you hear on a day-to-day basis when you're talking with students about what they're doing, when you're working with them on theses and stuff like that. Another simple example is, I can't remember what it's called again, but the Tuesdays when they bring students in from middle schools in Phoenix to experience university. Many of these kids would never be told that they could go to university or whatever, but to experience and then for the- oh, it's talent to match, that's what it's called. There we go. And then have the students teach the kids some skill or play music or soccer or something like that, and so that's positive mentoring and whatever. And if that inspires 5% of those kids to go, "I can go to college. I want to go to college." That's something

good for Arizona. So, I mean, there are all these little things that I don't think people possibly know that Barrett does. And certainly, you know, state legislature probably has no clue that, but I think adds value to the community, not only in Tempe, but I think in Arizona.

KHAN: Alright, so, what do you see in Barrett's future?

LYNCH: Hoverboards. They promised us hoverboards. I don't know. I'm remarkably bad at predicting the future. I think we're going to expand, but not here in Tempe. I think it's going to be Downtown, Poly, for example, West, where we literally have more space, although Downtown is a bit of an issue. I honestly don't know. I think one of the things that's going to be interesting is certainly over the next decade, given what's happening technologically and given the fact that the students are more sort of screen-based, I think there may very well be some tweaks that have to be made to what happens in the classroom and all these sorts of things. What they may look like, I have no clue. I think given what we're doing at the moment, encouraging students to travel in some form or function. So, we've got, and you know, the standard studies abroad, the summer, four or five weeks or whatever. We've got global intensive experiences, which are usually about 10 days. So, in May, I'm going to Iceland, for example. And we've also got, through a donor, we've got travel opportunities here within the States, which are cheaper, obviously, and less time commitment and all that sort of stuff. Given- I think definitely in the future is an expansion, further continued expansion, because I think all of us, certainly all the faculty and the administration and Dean Jacobs and Dean Foote do realize the value of travel and those sorts of experiences that we'd started talking about at the very beginning, right? So, I can see that expanding and becoming a thing. Now, whether it reaches sort of in a decade from now, say for example, it reaches what I would like, as I said, everybody's able to do it at no cost and whatever, that's, we'd have to see. But yeah, I mean, that's a tougher question than you can possibly think it is. That's what I was going to say to you.

KHAN: So, do you have any other additional comments you'd like to make or stories you'd like to share or anything?

LYNCH: Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy, oh boy. I don't know. I mean, the comment would be more, I'm the second or third longest serving faculty member. So, Mike Stanford left for law school and law practice for a while, so whether we count his time or not, right? So, but it, you know, Karen Bruhn, myself, and Mike Stanford are the top three faculty members. And when we started, there was nine of us and we were over in Irish Hall and it was this, it was a great thing don't get me wrong, and you know what Ted Humphrey had put together was just fantastic, even back then. Nobody would have told me in my wildest dreams that, you know, 18 years later we'd have 40 plus faculty, we'd have, you know, the number of students that we have, we have a place like the current building here. I would have probably called them insane. It was just like, nah, there's no way that could happen, you know, and I think between Ted Humphrey and Marc Jacobs, I think they've done amazing work to foster us through that. I mean, there's, you know, there's always, with any kind of expansion, there's moments of pressure and tension and how do we maintain

this and how do we do that and all that sort of stuff. So, being a part of that roller coaster ride has been kind of fun, totally unpredicted, right, but fun, and that's basically all I want to say about that. I don't think I have any cute story to tell, which is probably good. It's just been an interesting ride, a very interesting ride. Yeah, we'll see what the next decade holds.

KHAN: Alright, well, thank you so much for your participation. If you have any more thoughts to share later, please feel free to reach out. If you have any questions about this interview or the 30th Anniversary Oral History Project, please contact Vice Dean Nicola Foote. Alright.