

**Barrett Oral History Project**  
**Interview with Mark Jacobs**

December 16, 2025, Barrett, The Honors College

Interviewer: Dr. Stephanie deLusé

Transcribed by: Nathan DeJonge

**JACOBS:** Hi Stephanie, can you hear me?

**DELUSÉ:** Hello, Mark. Yes, I can hear you.

**JACOBS:** Good.

**DELUSÉ:** Are you ready to begin?

**JACOBS:** Excuse me?

**DELUSÉ:** Are you ready to begin?

**JACOBS:** Yes, I can begin now.

**DELUSÉ:** All right. Hello. For the recording of this oral history, I, Dr. Stephanie deLusé, a teaching professor and Honors Faculty Fellow at Barrett, The Honors College at Arizona State University, am talking with Dr. Mark Jacobs, former dean of Barrett. He has kindly agreed to be recorded as we add voice and texture via these conversations to honor and learn from a few of the many wonderful people that have served Barrett, and or have been served by Barrett. There are many from whom we can learn about the development and evolution of Barrett over the years, and Dr. Jacobs is surely one of the absolute best, given his role and longevity. While I could say more about him, it'd be much better if we heard from him, in his voice, as much or more than mine. So, Mark, would you please share some about your educational and professional background before you came to Barrett? So, we can get to know you a little bit more, and otherwise, introduce yourself as you wish.

**JACOBS:** Sure, I'd be happy to. Um, well, I grew up in Princeton, New Jersey, the son of a professor at Princeton, and I went to Harvard as an undergrad. Class of '71. Um, then I went- I was a biology major, I loved biology. My father was a biologist also, so I had a good relationship with him, and that let me feel confident about being a biology major in college. Then I applied to graduate school at Stanford and went there as a PhD candidate in biological sciences from '71 to '75. When I finished my PhD at Stanford, working under Dr. Peter Ray, I got a job at Swarthmore College in the fall of 1975, and I was there until 2003. So, I was there for something like 28 years, which was longer than most faculty had been there for their whole lifetimes before they retired.

**DELUSÉ:** Wow.

**JACOBS:** But in 2003, I was approached for the job at Barrett Honors College at ASU. I was only 53 then. So, I had some more miles on my tires, and I wanted to try some administration, I

realized I liked administration, I was good at it in different capacities at Swarthmore. I had been the chair of the biology department, and I liked that. I've been the vice provost of- the associate provost of Swarthmore. There was only one associate provost, the provost and the associate provost, and we ran the academic side of Swarthmore College pretty much together. So, I knew I was- I liked doing that sort of thing, and I was pretty good at it, so I started to apply for a couple other places, but I was approached by a search firm that Michael Crow had hired during his first year as president of ASU to find someone who had been- who had experience at something like, as he said, an elite eastern- or not necessarily eastern, but an elite college, like Amherst, Swarthmore, Williams. He had been on the Board of Trustees at Bowdoin, and he knew what he wanted. He wanted someone who had experience running a college like that, but who could come out today and ensue, and sort of install some of the quality controls at ASU's honors college, which has just been named Barrett Honors College in the year 2000, when the Barretts gave it gave a very hefty donation. And he wanted, he wanted someone who would be interested in doing that, and there was a stage in my career where I really was sort of fulfilled everything I could at Swarthmore. I was an endowed professor there, and when I thought about things, I had to realize that I was either going to stay there for another 20 years, or move and do something new and exciting, and that's why I decided to take the job at ASU. So, I came out to ASU in the fall of 2003 and I served there as a dean through 2022, so 19 years, but I then took a year of sort of terminal leave to think and write and ponder great questions of life, before I was actually forced- not forced, but before I decided to retire at 73 in 2023. So, I was at ASU for 20 years, I'm an emeritus dean and emeritus professor of biology now. And that sort of brings us up to date, if that's what you meant by my timeline.

**DELUSÉ:** Well, I'm glad you shared that. I'm sure it will be an inspiration to any students who listen to this and provide good context for any others who listen to this. So, once you came here, who was already at Barrett that helped you get into gear, and what did you start doing right away?

**JACOBS:** Well, first of all, there were eight faculty at the time I came. There are now something like 48 or something like that, I think, if you count everybody on all four Barrett campuses, but there were eight faculty. The chair of the faculty was a guy who was a philosopher. I don't know, when did you come, Stephanie? When did you arrive?

**DELUSÉ:** I came to Barrett in 2010, but I've been on the faculty since 1999 at ASU in general, yeah.

**JACOBS:** Oh, okay, so you were, yeah, okay, well, anyway, um, yeah, so you, so, 2010, boy, okay. Well, I should fill you in on some of the stuff that happened then. Yeah, so I came out, it was very important to meet. The biggest supporter actually was President Crow from the start, and he's been a great support all the way through my career. He was always supporting me and the college, he wanted it badly to- he wanted badly for the college to succeed in its newest form, and he always had my back, so that was very important. The provost at the time was Milt Glick,

who was a biochemist, and he was also very helpful at the start. The people who were-, but really, I was sort of on my own a little bit. Kristen Nielsen, as she was called then, because she hadn't married Bill Herman yet. Kristen Nielsen was the assistant dean. I didn't have an associate dean, although the former dean, Ted Humphrey, had had an associate dean he worked with. So, I was aware that I would be allowed to, excuse me, I'd be allowed to do whatever I wanted. Hiring an associate dean or hiring other people. Also, President Crow told me that if I wanted to, I could just ask every one of the eight faculty to resign, and then rehire only tenure-track faculty, if that's what I believed I should do, or hire other ones back that I wanted. I didn't want to come in and do that at all, right away. I wanted to see how it went for the first year. So, I lived with all the faculty, got to know them very well, got to like them, didn't fire anybody, and realized that it was very good for Barrett's students, if in fact, the faculty, excuse me, were instructors, as they were called then, or lecturers, um, because they didn't have to work on research to get tenure. Because of that, they could do things like lead trips to wonderful places during the summer, with the Barrett students, and so after the first year when I had already hired Peggy Nelson as the Associate Dean, she and I decided that we didn't want to change the faculty, just wanted to add to it, which we did eventually. But I won't go into that right now, but that's how we started off.

**DELUSÉ:** Okay, so, was Don Beggs the chair of the faculty at the time?

**JACOBS:** Yes. Yes, yes, that's right.

**DELUSÉ:** Alright.

**JACOBS:** Don Beggs, sorry.

**DELUSÉ:** And Ted Humphrey was the founding dean, and I believe his vice dean or associate dean was Janet Burke, is that correct?

**JACOBS:** That's correct, yes.

**DELUSÉ:** And then you came in, Kristen Nielsen Herman was already here, and then, how did you select to work with Peggy Nelson?

**JACOBS:** Well, I had an advisory council that Ted Humphrey had set up. Ted, by the way, was taking a terminal leave himself, and he was going to come back, he could decide whether to retire or to stay on, and he decided to stay on for at least the next, I don't know, 15 or 16 years, so Ted was another great help, because once he was back from his one-year leave, so it was the beginning of my second year, he and I went to lunch every month. And I got to ask him a lot of good questions, and he gave me very good advice through the years. So, Ted was important also, but he had, yeah, he had hired Janet Burke, as an associate dean. And she was, she was going to step back to being "just faculty," I think. I think that's how that worked, because she wanted to stop being Associate Dean also. So, I had to hire a new associate dean if I wanted to have someone to work with like that. But sorry, what was your question again, Stephanie? Sorry.

**DELUSÉ:** So, you, how you found Peggy Nelson.

**JACOBS:** Oh yeah, that's right.

**DELUSÉ:** And yeah.

**JACOBS:** Oh yeah, that's right. So, Ted had set up an Honors Faculty Council. It was an advisory council, and on it was a professor of biology named Jane Maienschein, and Jane came into my office one day and very forcefully, which was sort of her nature, suggested that I look up Peggy Nelson, who was in the anthropology department. And Jane liked Peggy very much, she thought she'd be a great person to help run the Honors College, and so I made a lunch date with Peggy. We instantly liked each other and agreed on almost everything we talked about, and she agreed to be the associate dean starting in January of my first year. Excuse me. So, from that point on, from January of 2004 on, we had me as the dean, the associate dean of Peggy Nelson, and then. Within another year, we decided to move Kristen from being sort of an ombudsman who ran the college under Ted, so Ted and Janet would have more time to do things of their own teaching and such. We asked her to be the dean of students, basically. And we promoted her to associate dean from assistant dean. And from that point on, the three of us sort of collaborated in running the college. I don't want to say run it, because it was run by the faculty and staff, too, who were very important, all very nice people, but we were sort of the triumvirate that made major decisions.

**DELUSÉ:** Yes, I always thought of you and Peggy as a dynamic duo, and then, as time went on, I realized how important Kristen was, and as you just referred to it, as more or less a triumvirate. Um, can you expand on some key examples of how you worked together as a team? The division of labor, your relative strengths.

**JACOBS:** Sure, I'd be happy to. Kristen was, as dean of students, Kristen was overseeing all the student services part of the college, so that means things like advising, all the activities that were student-related activities, things, any issue that came up with students from the faculty. If they had a problem student in their class. It would filter through Kristen's system to Kristen herself. We had weekly meetings, several- two weekly meetings with Kristen, Peggy and I did. Peggy and I had several meetings each week with just ourselves, two-hour meetings sometimes, very often two-hour meetings, but a couple of them each week. So, we really got to know each other and know how the other one thought, and we ran the rest of the college, sort of, which meant Peggy focused on the faculty, I would say. She was from the- she had been at ASU for 11 years before she became the associate dean, and eventually called vice dean for Barrett, and so she knew a lot of the faculty that were outside Barrett. She'd handled those faculty as friends, and even as clients, so to speak, when she was an officer within the Department of Anthropology. Her husband was another anthropologist in that same department, so she knew a lot of the faculty in that department at the larger ASU, it made sense that she would take the lead in faculty relations. I did a lot of the budgeting; I did all the representing to other deans and other colleges. When we needed to do things like ask engineering for a favor, I would go ask the dean for a favor, I went to all the meetings with the provost, and the business officer for the whole of ASU, the Chief

Financial Officer, people like that. And I went around and represented the college to high school students, too. Whenever we were asked to come and do a program at a high school, I would be the one who went out, sallied forth, and told them all about Barrett and why they should come to Barrett if they were so motivated. So, three of us met several times each week. I met more with Peggy. Peggy and I really talked about almost every decision, if the need for a decision boiled up from below. If there was a decision about the budget, for instance, which I was keeping an eye on with Erika Ladewig, that was the business manager, but if an issue came up, I would bring it up with Peggy. If an issue came up with the faculty, she would bring it up with me, and we would make a joint decision. So, it worked very smoothly, mostly because we all liked each other. Three of us really liked each other and got along very well.

**DELUSÉ:** Well, as a faculty member, I can say from my personal experience, that the good relationship that the three of you had, I felt, made it a welcoming and stable college to shift to from another college at ASU, so I thank you for that, and I do think that you did a wonderful job on building on the foundation that Ted laid, and perhaps we could talk a little bit more about how you matured the college. Why don't we begin with ways that you matured The Human Event and how you feel like The Human Event relates to the success of the college?

**JACOBS:** Okay, sure. First of all, I'd like to say that I was visited by a delegation of people- of faculty from the business school, who were very disturbed to hear that I wasn't- well, let me back up a little. At the end of the fall semester, my first semester at ASU, and before Peggy had been hired. A student came into my office to say he was sorry he was leaving The Honors College, but he just wanted to say he enjoyed it, and he didn't hold any grudge. I said, grudge about what? He said, well, about this letter. Showed me a letter that was signed by me, and it wasn't a letter I had ever seen that was dismissing him from the college, which turned out to be an automatic letter that went out from the two-person advising office that was then at Barrett to any student who fell below a certain GPA in any semester. If they fell below it, they were just summarily dismissed.

**DELUSÉ:** Wow.

**JACOBS:** That had been a policy before. So, I immediately changed the policy, and I had a- I met with the faculty and the staff of the college and explained to them that the entrance requirement to the college, the decision to admit a student was the main thing, the main hurdle they had to get over. After they were admitted, we weren't going to bother them unless they fell below, you know, a really low GPA, and we would try for, excuse me, at least a semester or two to help them overcome that low GPA anyway, but we would never summarily dismiss someone. So, I say that because. I was then visited by a delegation of business faculty, faculty from the Carey School of Business, who wanted to tell me that they didn't like that I had relaxed the requirements because I had studied what the GPAs of students were in Barrett. And what I was saying was, I didn't want them to be dismissed summarily, certainly, unless- I never want them to be dismissed summarily without any consideration, but I didn't even want them to be considered for dismissal, unless they were below, you know, a C, or a 2.0 for two semesters or something.

And all I said was that what we were going to do was be very careful when we let people in, that we picked the top students that applied. Once we did, we wanted to just let them spread their wings and not hassle them, certainly not on a semester-by-semester basis, to hassle them again and again to try to keep their grade point up, so it turned out that this delegation thought- that they interpreted my change in rules as softening the rules. And I said, no, I'm actually hardening them. It's going to be harder to get in, but we're going to trust the students to work hard once they're in. So that had happened already by the time the first semester was over. Now, what was your question, Stephanie?

**DELUSÉ:** Well, my question was about ways that you matured The Human Event, but let's pause on that for a second and follow up on what you were just saying about how you made it harder to get in, but then giving people the space to have- spread their wings, as you put it, to have an off-semester, perhaps to have some ups and downs in their life before they felt in peril about being able to stay in Barrett. I think this brings up the question of the size of the student population when you joined versus when you left. You mentioned the size of the faculty, but perhaps before we get into the nature and value of The Human Event, you could expand more on how those earlier shifts you made around admissions or retention affected the college.

**JACOBS:** Yeah, well, I wanted to change the spirit of the college, to be one in which- to be one more like a Swarthmore or Williams or an Amherst, where students tried very hard to do the best job they could to get in, but once they were in, they were supported and encouraged to take their own path, and not be so cognizant of what exactly their GPA was. It turned out- we found out that there were very few Barrett students who ever had a GPA below a B, a 3.0 anyway, and we decided to not really have a bottom- a lowest GPA below which a student could not get in from high school, so that- we wanted, so we were, we were looking- we changed the admissions applications to have more essays, more chances to- more reliance on some of the teachers that they had in high school, which I worked out with Keith Southergill, who became the dean of admissions, or the director of admissions for Barrett, but that was just part of the things we did. We also were looking at The Human Event and what it stood for. And it took me a while to get that, because when I first came out for an interview, when I was one of the three final candidates, they had me go to a Human Event class. I went to Jackie Scott Lynch's class, and I was bowled over by how good the students were. I had just- I was teaching an advanced seminar at Swarthmore at the time, and students were easily as good as Swarthmore students, and Jackie was masterful at running that class. So, I knew that The Human Event had really a good core, but when I looked at the qualifications of the faculty, they were almost all humanities-related faculty, and Peggy and I, I was a biologist, Peggy was an anthropologist. We thought it would be good to have some faculty who, even though they were teaching The Human Event and teaching great ideas humans have had since the beginning of recorded history to the present, which was sort of the way of describing Human Event, it would be good to have their backgrounds and their knowledge be from different PhD origins, so we would have more social scientists and more natural scientists. So, when we talk about maturing The Human Event, we didn't want to change

the basic structure of it, because Ted Humphrey had done a great job of installing a great structure, and that structure included the faculty members' own ideas of what the best works were from the beginning of recorded history to the Renaissance or so, and then the Renaissance to the present in the second semester, but also, a chronological sequence, and we knew that the background of the faculty member couldn't help but affect how they taught something, so even when they were teaching the same thing, like Charles Darwin's Origin of Species or Dante, they would have different takes on it, and we thought that was a healthy way to have The Human Event be taught, and we also knew that students would find out in advance who the teachers who were sort of sympathetic in their areas of expertise to the student, each individual student, and hunt them out and try to get in their sections, too. Although that didn't always work, because often students who had a good time with a professor when they were randomly placed as a first semester freshman, wanted to stay with that person just because they knew them, but it did help expand it to quite an extent, and we needed to expand the number of faculty because we went from 24 or 500 total students, which meant something like an entering class of 500, when I came in '03, to a total of over 7,000 honors students when I left, where we were having an entering class of 1,800 or so. Really quite amazing, quite an amazing change, but one of the main things I had to proselytize for with the provost and the president was to keep the ratios of students to faculty in each Human Event section the same through all those years, which meant, of course, hiring a lot more faculty.

**DELUSÉ:** Yeah, so it also means needing more space.

**JACOBS:** Yes.

**DELUSÉ:** So, before we move on to space, I guess I would comment that, in my experience teaching The Human Event, I would say that building on the foundations of the people that went before us, it was a challenge, the first year or two, but when you really leaned into it, it helped the faculty member grow in amazing ways as well, as we learn from each other on that hallway about different texts that we might include, and largely being chronological, maybe not perfectly so, but it really did help students get the idea of a general arc of The Human Event. It's kind of built in the name, when you start early and end in modern, so I think the founding thinkers on this. put together something that helped with the success of the college. Do you have experience with that as an administrator in terms of people considering The Human Event a key component?

**JACOBS:** Sure, I mean, first of all, it turned out that having everyone along the same hallway, so to speak, by the time you came, Stephanie, I guess, there was a modern hallway with all the offices off of it, but there was a long hallway on the old building, too, that was there when I was, when I first came in '03 and '04 that had all the faculty offices together, so there was a- the structure of the hall, I don't know if this was planned or if it was just the building that Ted inherited when he moved the Honors College to the campus where it was, when I came, which was next to Gammage Auditorium, but whatever it was, whether he planned that or not, the faculty being along the same hall was a huge addition, and a good situation for them, because it

did encourage them to talk to each other, and they have ever since, and I think that was sort of important. The other thing I wanted to say about Human Event, though, is that different faculty came in with different goals for their careers. They all had to understand what their primary job was to teach The Human Event and to be, in essence, another layer that was 4 years long, of advisors to bear our students who came in and stayed for 4 years through to their senior year. It wasn't ever- it's never been a formal advising capacity, but when a student comes in and takes a Human Event, they bond with- hopefully they would bond with the faculty member and use them as a good advisor for other years, even though they weren't their formal honors advisor or their formal major advisor in the majors that they went into, in the big outside university, but the faculty could vary quite a bit. We had some faculty members who came in and wanted to do research, and they met their obligations to The Human Event. They would stack them all in two days. They would teach four sections, three or four sections of a Human Event on Monday and three or four on Wednesday, or Tuesday and Thursday, and then have the other five days of the week to themselves. And they could either- some of the faculty realized that they would be promoted and given higher and higher salaries, no matter what they did, and with their non-in-class time, as long as they got very good teaching ratings, because that's what really mattered, but others just filled their extra time with research. They allied themselves to departments in the bigger university outside, they asked for support to help pay for some of the instrumentation they were using, and I even had one guy come in to see me and he said, you know- he had a German accent, this was Achim Herrmann, but I don't know if you remember him. Was he there?

**DELUSÉ:** I do, yeah.

**JACOBS:** He came in one time and said, you know, Mark, this is really quite easy. I can do lots of research in my spare time, and I still can teach, and he had some of the, well, he had lower teaching ratings, but the lowest rating of any faculty member at Barrett was higher than the average teaching for instructors or lecturers in the whole university. In other words, if you looked at the average rating for lecturers in the big ASU, even the lowest rated faculty member at Barrett was higher rated than the average, and in fact, they bunch together all the time, very closely, all at the top of the rating scale, so in other words, what Achim, what Dr. Herrmann illustrated was, you could do research, he did do research, he published research with collaborating faculty in larger departments outside Barrett, but he still met the conditions of his employment, which included, The Human Event and he still enjoyed teaching it, I think. It was good to have him, along with some superhumanness on the faculty, who spent their extra time planning, reading, and bringing in special speakers to enhance their knowledge of the books they were covering in The Human Event, in other words, doing all the homework, so to speak, that a faculty member would want to do to be a good family member teaching The Human Event, so we allowed that kind of variation to happen within the faculty, and I think that was also healthy.

**DELUSÉ:** Oh, I do think it's healthy. I think many people chose to still choose to focus exclusively on their teaching, and depending on how they approach grading or feedback, they may have quite a bit less “extra time” than some of their colleagues, but overall, I think letting

people adjust what they do to help keep their morale and scholarship and spiritual love for this job is a win-win for students, faculty, and administrators.

**JACOBS:** Absolutely, absolutely.

**DELUSÉ:** I guess what I was thinking about, though, is things I've heard you mention in the past of how different universities nationally and internationally have reached out to Barrett, seeing it as an example, as an exemplar of a successful honors college, and that having core faculty, as opposed to borrowing from other units, or that blend that Barrett achieved with core faculty teaching The Human Event and some senior seminars with some faculty in the larger university covering many other honors sections. That seems to be something that was a key ingredient for the success, but I think you also mentioned that the Human Event sequence itself was key in what some of the lookers wanted to learn from Barrett.

**JACOBS:** What some of the who wanted learn from Barrett? What was the word you said?

**DELUSÉ:** I said lookers.

**JACOBS:** Lookers, okay.

**DELUSÉ:** The people that came to you for advice about starting honors colleges.

**JACOBS:** Yes, they did. They were intrigued by the idea of our own faculty paid to teach a particular course, which was becoming, during the 20 years I was there, increasingly viewed as really important for any student in the world. Not just American students, but particularly American students, because they weren't learning much about history, and they weren't learning much about how to write. When I first came, there was a lot of complaints in the national media about how nobody could write well, and that was combined with the sense that students coming out of college didn't have a good sense of history either, and The Human Event teaches both history and great writing, particularly, of course, great writing, because of the whole setup of The Human Event with conversations in class, followed by submissions of written works that were all judged and supported and critiqued by a faculty member whose main job was to do that exact job, was to lead discussions in class and critique papers. So, that was a unique setup. It shouldn't have been, but it was a unique setup in the country, and even in the world, so this coincided with also universities around the world realizing, and in the U.S., too, particularly, that, public universities had a lot of really good students in them. Really good students. And there was a whole cohort of students who could have gotten into or did get into an Ivy or a Stanford sort of place, and yet came to ASU for a reason. Either their mother had cancer, they wanted to be near home, or they just, they just wanted the- they were an athlete in a sport that only a big university had, or they wanted to major in in one of the 400 choices of majors. Instead of just the 25 choices that the small college has. So, for example, one of my sons, who was at Harvard, wanted to be a major in Japanese. There is no major in Japanese at Harvard, you can't do that. But here, at ASU, you can do that. You can be a major in violin performance. There's an immense variety of majors. So, as students- but lots of other students who were coming to public didn't have the

structure to really let their minds go wild, and spread their wings intellectually for their basic training, so the idea of A, an honors college, B, a course like The Human Event, and C, The Human Event taught from the very first year, it's another important thing we haven't talked about yet, but I think it's really important that The Human Event is required during their first year here, and it's not a capstone thing. They fit into their other duties when they're a senior is something they get as background foundation work. So, it's that they get critiqued in their writing and their thinking- and their way of thinking early, and they also make a faculty friend who can be an advisor- an informal advisor for the next three years after The Human Event. So, for all those reasons, I thought it was a good structure.

**DELUSÉ:** Yes.

**JACOBS:** And I think foreign universities thought so, too, because they heard about it, and they came to visit. National University of Singapore, Chengdu's University from China, and others, or they invited us over to talk about our structure in their context sometimes.

**DELUSÉ:** You're completely right that, at least in my experience, The Human Event students often stay in touch with their first-year Human Event faculty as those kind of informal advisors, asking advice about theses, directions, or careers, or graduate school, or all kinds of things, and even if we can't answer them, we know who to point them to. So, there's several levels of wraparound care for these students once they get here. And, yeah, The Human Event's very unique. I tell my students it may use literature, but it's not a literature class. It may have some sacred texts in it, but it's not religious studies or political treatises, but it's not a political science class, it really is interdisciplinary in the learn to engage in polite civil discourse to use evidence-based exploration of these texts and learn from each other's perspectives, and how to disagree in a civil way, which Ted Humphrey often said the core of The Human Event had to do with developing citizens as much as students, and of course, all in the service of being better humans.

**JACOBS:** Yeah, yep, I agree.

**DELUSÉ:** So, in terms of space, you talked about the space that existed when you arrived at Barrett. Perhaps you could talk a little bit about the process and your role when Barrett moved into the space that it is now.

**JACOBS:** You mean how those decisions were made, or how we got there?

**DELUSÉ:** Yeah.

**JACOBS:** Yeah, well, um, yeah, we were- when I came, you know, Barrett had started before it was called Barrett, when it was just the Honors College in a single square-shaped sort of fortress-shaped building elsewhere on campus that had a single central courtyard. It was like a single square building with rooms around the edges and central courtyard. That had about 100 students or 200 students in it. Ted Humphrey was the founding dean, and he was critical in lobbying for and receiving the chance to have a new campus, which is on land that's called Center Complex

now, but. And then, he moved into these dorms in Center Complex, which was a city block next to Gammage Auditorium and on one side and on the other side a parking structure for ASU, but he then added dorms to those existing dorms, he was able to- I don't know, I never heard the story of how he- whether the provost or the president voted to give him the money to build new dorms, or how he arranged that, but he oversaw the construction of new dorms- new-ish dorms in the late 90s. When he- when they moved, I think they moved in 1995 or 6 or so, into Center Complex, the number of honors students went up to about 800 beds in that complex. So, that's- in that complex, there was one building, the Irish Hall. It housed both the faculty along a single hallway up on the top, on the second floor, and the administration offices down on the first floor, so that was it. And then there were something like, I said there were eight or nine faculty, and there were something like, I don't know, 15 to 23 staff. The total advising office for Barrett for these 20- remember, the 800 students were just the ones living there, and you only had to live there for one year. So that there was- the total number of honors students was something like 2,400 or 2,800. For all those honor students, there was only 2 advisors in the advising office, and there was no required advising either. So, one of the other things I did right away was I required advising for three times at least during their careers. Their freshmen, sophomore, and then their junior year, so we can give them advice about courses to take and subjects for their senior theses, for example, much more frequently and in a required way, so we had a better handle on what they were all doing, but.

**DELUSÉ:** So, I know that you've just described well the previous complex, but you played an important role in some of the dimensions and features of the existing complex on Tempe campus and perhaps some other areas too, like the size of the courtyard and the dining hall.

**JACOBS:** Yeah.

**DELUSÉ:** Could you expand more on the physical aspects of the campuses that you cared about and were influential in?

**JACOBS:** Yeah, well, this is where President Crow's support came in. Incredibly importantly, he and the Chief Financial Officer of the university decided that they wanted to build a new honors campus, and that was something that they completely engineered. They helped find the firm- we put out a proposal request for RFP, a request for proposals, and 12 different entities in 2008. It was just before the 2008, um, sort of economic issues with sort of early 2008, put out an RFP for a whole honors campus, and 12 different entities submitted proposals. So, we had great choice. I asked one of the business managers of one of the entities that put in for a proposal, why did he think there were so many, that there were 12 groups that were in? These are each groups of sort of construction for- each group had a construction firm, a finance firm, and usually a student services firm. So, a Student Services Department within their proposal, that was proposing how to run the student services parts of these campuses that they were proposing, and I asked one of the business managers of one of these proposals- proposing groups, why so many would have come in? He said, well, so you know, Tempe's the biggest single undergraduate housing market

in the nation right now. So, I guess we were lucky in that sense. We had- we could pick from 12 different people, 12 different groups. We picked American Campus Communities, and from that point on, we had a committee that interacted with the main people in American Campus Communities, which was a vice president of the whole of ACC, but also people who were specialists in housing and student affairs sort of management stuff, and a group that I arranged to meet with them. It included Kristen as a student affairs person first, for Barrett, and me and Peggy and faculty and some students. So that was, we call it the Barrett Users Group, the BUG group, BUG, B-U-G. We met with them every week for more than a year, starting in '06, I guess. The new campus opened in '09, and it was a result of a lot of work by all those people. So, there are many stories about picking out the block for the walls of the new campus, there are stories about how we wangled the placement of the new campus and the placement of the new campus's dining hall. It was really going to be shared with one other building on the same new block, which was going to be dorms for non-honors students. And we were going to have one dining hall, and I just didn't like that. I wanted to have a dining hall all for ourselves. So that took a little arguing because it had to have a different loading dock and all that sort of stuff. We also had- we put the washing machines and dryers on the top floor instead of in a dingy basement, and there's all sorts of stories about that. There also was a battle I had with people who wanted to have crushed rock in all the courtyards which they had in all the other courtyards of every other building at ASU, basically, except maybe the front of Old Main, but I wanted grass, and I wanted palm trees, and I had these people who were sort of actually environmentally oriented from the big users group, which had some folks from the Physical Planet at ASU also on it, who said, you can't do that, you can't have- palm trees aren't a native species for Arizona. I said, look, we're trying to recruit National Merit Scholars from Minnesota, and part of their iconic image of where they want to be is a palm tree. We're going to have palm trees. And that was an example of one of the many different arguments I had to have to have grassy courtyards where kids could throw frisbees and palm trees, and Crow backed me up with all this stuff, and whenever it went up to Crow, he would just back me up. So, it started to- I wanted a central dining hall. I didn't want music piped into that thing, I didn't want television screens hanging from the ceiling of that. I just wanted to hear the clink of silverware and the sound of students discussing things over lunch or dinner. That's what we- that's what we got.

**DELUSÉ:** Yes, that's good, because they get enough screens everywhere else, it's nice to have a place for conversation.

**JACOBS:** Oh, yeah, yeah. And also, we wanted to- the architect- there were two architects, one Phoenix-based firm, and then one was from Princeton, New Jersey, called ikon.5, and I got to know those guys because I went to- I was going back to Princeton many times to visit my parents. So, I would walk into their office as many- I got to know them very well, and they were basically, they were working for us, and ACC let that happen because ACC had meanwhile gotten to trust us and our decisions about what we thought would be good for this new campus, and let us work directly with the architect, so it was as if someone had given us the money to hire

top-level architects who had designed lots of the buildings at Princeton University, but we got to talk to them just by ourselves, and with our own ideas. As we got to know them better, I became very good friends with the principal architect. He's now, he's also a photographer, he's retired now, but he sends me his notices of his showings at different places over his photographs. So, it was really great because I could talk to him and say, look, we want to have something where students can lounge around during the day and read books, and he came up with the flat-topped boulders idea, you know, the boulders in the courtyards are not round. They are flat tops, so students can lounge on them.

**DELUSÉ:** Yeah.

**JACOBS:** And stuff like that, all sorts of stuff like that. I told him I wanted to have columns the way Stanford had had columns around their courtyards, but instead of just sandstone, I wanted to have our columns made of the bougainvillea bushes, the bougainvillea vines growing up them, so that's how the bougainvillea columns of the academic court got put in place. So, there's just endless stuff, all sorts of things.

**DELUSÉ:** Yeah, those columns are beautiful, and the flat top boulders, especially if they're under trees. I think I've even seen posts that have been put in the ground for people to hang hammocks under trees where there are still trees.

**JACOBS:** Yeah, yeah. So, we spent a lot of time making those things very high quality, and we even had the artwork throughout the whole campus be from Barrett students or other students who are students at ASU.

**DELUSÉ:** So, I think you also had some hand in the specific size of the courtyards, or the way the dining hall, the special room in the dining hall was developed, and maybe some of the staircases or steps.

**JACOBS:** Yeah, well, we wanted to try to avoid as much as we could, but it wasn't... we were proposing to put 1,700 beds on nine acres, and to do that, you had- there was no way around having sort of block-like buildings to house the students. So, but we wanted to do whatever we could to ameliorate that look, so the architect had the waving wall of the dining hall, they had plantings and grass to make it softer seeming, and, sorry, what was the other thing you said?

**DELUSÉ:** I remember you used to tell stories about the courtyard size and this kind of dining hall you wanted, the separate room.

**JACOBS:** Yeah, yeah. Well, the dining hall, that was another happy coincidence that I went to visit the London, Dublin, Edinburgh trip from Barrett one summer, and I visited them when they were in London, and then my wife and daughter and I took a separate trip to Oxford, because she had gone to Oxford for a summer experience when she was in college. She wanted to show me the new college, which was built in 1300, so it wasn't very new, but it was called New College Oxford, and that's where she had stayed. She said I should see the garden, and I should see the

dining hall, the refectory, that is. And when she showed me the refectory, I took a picture of it, and I brought it back, and it was, the coincidental timing was, just that this is when the architects, who we, by now, we were very good friends with. They got right away what I wanted. I wanted to have one of the rooms that they were designing to be like this refectory, which people at ASU sometimes called the refectory, you know, but anyway, so I showed them the picture, and they- I said, could you do a sort of more modern version of this, but still with the clear story windows, the wood all around, the banners hanging down, the lighting, and the furniture. Well, President Crow really got interested in this. He picked out the tables and chairs from a Stickney's catalog or something, I don't know. I don't know the company, there's some company that makes really high-quality furniture called Stucky's or Stickney's or something. He picked out the chairs and tables. We have all wood floors in that room, and we have the clear story windows, and sort of modern-esque looking chandeliers. They're not like the ones at New College, but they're- but the look was definitely refectory-type look and they were able to put it into place because we, when I came back that summer from visiting London, Dublin, Edinburgh, they were just starting to plan that room, and they were willing to put a room like that into the place. It could have been- the whole dining hall could have just looked like the outside part. They had already decided to put the waving wall on it to break up the block-like nature of the interior part of Barrett Honors College at Tempe, but they were going to do that, but it could have been just more space for regular chairs and tables, but they put in, they fitted in a real refectory, and that was wonderful. I was behind many tours, I might have told you before, that were going through the college, once we opened, we had the refectory all set up, and I heard students talking to their parents. You know, I was listening, they didn't know I was behind them, I would just stop by and sort of take the tour a little bit for myself. And I heard them saying, when they saw the dining hall, that's when they would usually turn to their parents, and say, "I'm coming here." It was a huge recruiting tool, because in Arizona, there was nothing like that. The library at Vassar or the dining halls at Princeton looked like that, but kids from Arizona had never seen anything like that, so it was a huge recruiting tool.

**DELUSÉ:** Well, it's a lovely space, and it gets used well in many different capacities, as do the courtyards, so thank you for all of your efforts to give us those usable outdoor spaces and some unique inside spaces as well. We're getting close to an hour, and there's so much more we could talk about, because I have a list of roughly 30 amazing achievements and innovations that you helped develop and advance the honors college, which rippled through into helping ASU and the wider Arizona community, so we'll certainly have to schedule another conversation at some point, but just as we wrap up this particular visit, I have two things that come to mind. One that relates to something we spoke about earlier, when you said that you arrived in Barrett, the faculty were called lecturers, but I know one of the things that you achieved was obtaining a different title for the Honors Faculty Fellows, in addition to the title that they carry as Honors Faculty Fellows, their title at ASU in a different administrative slot is Lecturer, and you got that changed to Teaching Assistant, Associate, and full professor kind of titles. After many years of championing that, could you explain why that was important and share more about that process?

**JACOBS:** Yeah, well, one of the things I knew from my experience before I came to ASU was that lecturers, at every place I'd been sort of had a raw deal because they did a lot of the teaching, up to most of the teaching, depending on the university or the college we're talking about, yet they never had the same title as professor, and professors were latching onto their titles as the one way to distinguish them from the lecturer, so they didn't want to seed ground, so to speak, to lecturers in most of these places, and so the lecturers were sort of in this limbo everywhere. So, I came to the job feeling that lecturers were getting sort of a bad deal, and that they should- they were doing a lot of very good teaching, but that combined- I have to give credit to Jackie Scott Lynch for this, because she was the one who really wrote, she's a great writer, she's a great writer of proposals to go to muckamucks higher up, like the president, and she wrote several different treatises about why the Barrett faculty should be elevated in pay and in titles. And it was a battle that went on for most of the 20 years I was there, but in the last year or so, and I kept- this was through 3 or 4 different provosts, too, but Mark, Mark Searle, was the provost who finally changed the wording on the diploma that Barrett students get, to have Barrett Honors College be on their ASU diploma, that was a major, wonderful change, but then the next provost, it was actually, it was Nancy, who was the person who finally agreed to change the titles. And she did it- I was using, I was using the arguments that Jackie had made. I even kept Jackie's written proposals from years earlier and showed them to Nancy Gonzalez, and she read them, and she, you know, sometimes you just have to, you just have to- they have to find your body by the wall enough times that they break the wall down. That's what it really was, but I kept bringing it up to new provosts, and they must have finally talked to Crow, or maybe they made a decision themselves, but we went from just being called Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, and Principal Lecturers, that was the first trio, to Honors Faculty Fellow, which was the argument we used when we got the pay scale to be different from other lecturers, which was maybe five years into my administration, and so we've had that for a long time. We've had a different pay scale, as you probably know, Stephanie, but, then the last step was the step you mentioned at the start of this little sub-conversation, which was the step of calling them. Teaching Assistant, Teaching Associate, and Teaching Professor, which I think they deserved for a long time, so I'm very happy that that happened. I think it's still the only, it's one of the only places where that has happened. I think something like it has happened down in U of A, and that helped convince Nancy, I think, to do it also, because if the hated U of A rivals were doing something like it, then we had to at least be like them, or be better than they were, so it might have helped.

**DELUSÉ:** Well, thank you for your perseverance and patience with that, not giving up.

**JACOBS:** Well, it was a very good principle, and we followed up on it, yeah.

**DELUSÉ:** Well, I do have, as I said, a number of things that we would benefit from learning more about from you, but I think we'll put a pin in those, including the last question I was hoping to talk about today was your relationship with the Barretts. You shared some about your relationship with Ted and Peggy and Kristen, and that dynamic that you had. I think maybe we'll start next time with what it was like to work with the Barretts as well, but thank you for your

time today, and for the wisdom and the shepherding you've given us over the years, and I look forward to our next conversation.

**JACOBS:** Well, I do, too. That'd be great. Well, we can set it up whenever you want.

**DELUSÉ:** Thanks, Mark.

**JACOBS:** Okay, thank you.