

Interview with Chauncy Alexander #1

Conducted by Frances Feldman at the USC School of Social Work
on September 27, 1990.

FELDMAN: Chauncey, I remember the first time that we met you were a fieldwork student at Family Service in Los Angeles – that must have been in the early 1940s?

ALEXANDER: Yes, it was about 1941.

FELDMAN: You were a social work student in the Master's program at USC. What led you to the field of social work?

ALEXANDER: Two things. First, when I graduated from UCLA in the summer of 1938, the dean of the sociology department, where I had taken some courses, called me to ask what I was doing after I got out of school. I told him that I would be looking for a job. He advised me to go down and look for work at the State Relief Administration, where they needed social workers. I will tell you a funny incident connected with that. I went down and applied for a job and then was brought in for an interview. I had just graduated with a baccalaureate degree in psychology. I was interviewed by the woman who was later to become the Director of the Family Service Agency – do you remember her?

FELDMAN: Blythe Francis?

ALEXANDER: Yes, I am pretty sure it was her. At any rate, she asked me about my experience. All my experience had been in industry as I had worked my way through school. She finally said that she did not believe that I had enough experience that was relevant to the social work field. She expressed her regrets and I went home very depressed. My mother asked me, "What's the problem? You seem kind of depressed?" and so I told her the story. She replied, "We'll see about that." So she called Supervisor Knudsen, who was a County supervisor at that time, he told her to send me down to his office. I went to his office and he called me in. . .

FELDMAN: Did she call him because she was a constituent?

ALEXANDER: Yes, she knew him; she was active in politics. So I went down to his office where he asked me what I wanted to do. I told him, "I think it would be nice to have this interesting job over at the State Relief Administration." Supervisor Knudsen then picked up his phone and called. After finishing his call, he turned to me and told me to return to the State office at a specified time the following day. I returned to the State Relief Administration and saw Blythe Francis once again. She was now very happy to see me and wanted to give me a job. That is the way I got into social work – through the State Relief Administration.

FELDMAN: Was that in Los Angeles?

ALEXANDER: Yes, it was in downtown Los Angeles. I was then assigned for a short time to the District Office in Pasadena. Later, I was sent to the Metro Single Men's District. At any rate, the second piece of how I got into social work was that I had some very strong social work supervisors down there. One was Edith Reese; do you remember her?

FELDMAN: Yes.

ALEXANDER: There was another supervisor who had worked for Traveler's Aid for many years - a big, tall, husky woman. Both of them were very strong social workers, who immediately locked onto me and told me that I had to go back to school. That is what got me into social work.

FELDMAN: So you came to SC?

ALEXANDER: I came to SC and just took part-time courses at night for a period of years. I started in 1939, and by 1941 had a job at Patton State Hospital I was traveling back and forth about three times a week from San Bernardino to night classes.

FELDMAN: That is where you lived, in San Bernardino?

ALEXANDER: I was living in San Bernardino for about a year and a half. It was during that time that I was in field placement at the Family Service Agency with . . . it is difficult to remember all of these names . . . a casework teacher, a marvelous woman . . .

FELDMAN: Ruby Inlow?

ALEXANDER: Ruby Inlow was my supervisor, so I was very lucky.

FELDMAN: Yes, you were.

ALEXANDER: That was how I got into social work; I just continued going to school part-time. I finished my MA in the first year, 1941 or 1942 and then went into the Army.

FELDMAN: When you were in the Army, did you do anything connected to social work?

ALEXANDER: Oh, yes. The day I went into the Army I was grabbed by a psychiatrist, Phil Shapiro; he was a psychoanalyst from San Francisco. He was a captain and he saw my record of having worked at Patton State Hospital so he grabbed hold of me. I then spent about a year and a half at Terminal Island, the induction center. Our job was to try to keep people who had problems out of the service. Subsequent to that time, he and I were both transferred to set up a psychiatric reconditioning program at an Army camp. It was a psychiatric reconditioning hospital, which we initiated – we set the whole thing up.

FELDMAN: What is a reconditioning hospital? Do you get people who are misfits and then you recondition them?

ALEXANDER: No. This was a part of the African campaign. We had about 50% mentally ill, psychiatric casualties during that campaign. It was about that time that Bill

Menninger came in as the Surgeon General. The Army set this up as the first center where they could bring psychiatric casualties from all over the world. They came in from both the Pacific and from the European theater.

FELDMAN: Where was it located?

ALEXANDER: It was located about 60 miles outside of San Diego. They picked a spot that was considered to have the most sunshine of any place in the United States. It was beautiful, lovely – a former Cavalry camp, that we converted into a psychiatric hospital; we set up a program there. I was classified as a psychiatric social worker, although there was no military occupational specialty at that time except for an MOS – a psychiatric social worker; but they did not have an official number attached to it. I was assigned with him; he and I set up the whole shooting match, although I did most of the work because I knew administration.

We finally wound up with about twelve social workers, three or four psychologists, and half a dozen psychiatrists. The reconditioning center was established to take men who were psychiatric casualties and recondition them for civilian life or to go back into the service. We had a complete educational system there; they could graduate from high school or go to college. We had a whole series of educators; an art program; we had physical and mental reconditioning; morale conditioning programs, a whole series of things.

FELDMAN: How long did they stay on the average?

ALEXANDER: We developed an eight-week program, which finally was very successful. We did individual therapy and initiated a lot of new group therapy, which was just coming into play at that time, narco-synthesis and so forth. I also trained a lot of psychiatrists there, these 90-day wonders that they were getting through at the time. Additionally, we developed a whole psychiatric reconditioning manual that I sent to Bill Menninger. They started to use some of that in their programs. It was an exciting, new

adventure and tremendous training because we were dealing with all kinds of psychiatric problems. Each was different; dependent on the theatre they had come from.

FELDMAN: What interests me about this aside from your early promise of your organizational skills, is how much emphasis there was at that time on rehabilitation in terms of mental health.

ALEXANDER: Well, it was just starting at that time. It was because of the crisis they had in the North Africa campaign, you see. That is why they had started this in the Army. They had some of this type of work in the Air Force because of the selection problem. It turned out that there were about thirteen of us who were working as psychiatric social workers throughout the country. We developed a little core group that corresponded with one another. The American Association of Psychiatric Social Workers developed a kind of center for us. They had bulletins, which would come out thereby providing a means for us to share our experiences. People like Al Commoner and Whitman and the fellow at University of Pennsylvania who was the big psychotherapist (I do not remember his name) – a number of us were all corresponding with one another. We organized quite a program and had considerable adventures there at the hospital. I do not know how much you want to get into these types of things?

FELDMAN: I think it is especially relevant when you consider today's times and what is happening in the Middle East with American forces.

ALEXANDER: Well, we had a real problem there because we had a psychopathic colonel in charge of the camp.

FELDMAN: He was not a patient?

ALEXANDER: No, he was an old-time Medical Corps colonel; he was really a very sick man. He did all kinds of things that created problems with the patients. In a sense in our whole operation, we were fighting to get a new concept into the Army about how you deal with people and rehabilitate them. We had a lot of old-time military people who were assigned to do the administrative work. We had situations where people were brought in from the Pacific theater right out of fighting. They were supposed to immediately get two weeks furlough to go home and then come back for reconditioning. The people who were in administration would hold up their leave, so then we would have to go down and fight with the administrative staff. I was fortunate that I had an experienced social worker, Curly Wilson, who was one of the people who set up the Social Security program in the western United States. He had a lot of experience; he knew everybody on a national level. He was a tremendous person, very principled. So, between the two of us: we were constantly battling for these patients. It was a battle in effect against administrative rigidity, which the Army had. They just did not know how to deal with these kinds of things. I became very expert at Army regulations because I found that was the most important way to deal with problems: make them live up to their own regulations. That was an early lesson for me on how you use existing administrative procedures for the benefit of patients and clients. That was a useful period. I made lots of friends in the psychiatric field. When I came out of the service, as a result of my experiences, I was hired as a research and public relations director for the Veteran's Service Center.

FELDMAN: Was that in California, too?

ALEXANDER: That was in Los Angeles. We had 19 agencies located in a single place down on Third and Spring streets. Do you remember that?

FELDMAN: Yes, I do remember that.

ALEXANDER: I did not know a thing about public relations, but I was really hired because they wanted a social worker in the job who could kind of represent the United Way or the Community Chest. They had Art Campion, you may remember Art? ✓ ;

FELDMAN: Oh yes, indeed.

ALEXANDER: He was the go-between, between the County and the Veteran's organizations. I made Art famous as part of my job in public relations; he did a lot of good things for veterans. I was able to use a lot of what I had learned from my first year in the social work program, to deal with a lot of the issues they had there. We were essentially advocates for the veterans. We had to coordinate these 19 agencies that were located in the building.

FELDMAN: Wasn't that an early development of agencies collaborating in a single place on a particular client group?

ALEXANDER: Oh, yes. We eventually established 17 local centers in which the decentralized pieces of the various agencies such as: the Family Service Agency; the Veteran's Administration; the AFL-CIO, which had a big program for veterans; all of the veterans organizations and all of the major agencies, such as the Red Cross and so forth, were located centrally. Then we had 17 locations throughout Los Angeles County; this was a big operation. I learned a great deal there about research, public relations and politics, because the director was an alcoholic and was really a low-level political hack. I learned a lot about the inside . . .

FELDMAN: But he was a veteran, wasn't he?

ALEXANDER: Oh yes, he had been a WPA crossing guard and had worked his way up in the veteran's organization. He was really, in a way, a kind of despicable figure but I could use the implied influence of the Community Chest to get decent social work approaches to how do you deal with veterans. It was a constant battle. They kept me

only because I was good for them: I made the program visible; I made it nationally known; as a consequence I was able to stay, plus there was Lynn Mowalt's influence. We did a lot of marvelous things for veterans.

FELDMAN: Lynn Mowalt was then the director of the Community Chest?

ALEXANDER: Yes. We initiated a number of programs. We got into such things as dealing with housing problems for veterans. We had all kinds of problems, like veterans were being ripped off with all of this cheap housing. I learned a great deal from that set of experiences. I finally got a contact in the state bureau that licenses contractors, so that when we kept running into the problem of veterans buying houses where the porches would fall off or the roofs would not hold together and so forth, we could report this to our contact. He was also a veteran and so he would really clamp down on these contractors and make them honor their contracts. We had a regular thing going: we would get a complaint, we would notify him and bingo, we would get a response just like that! Finally a big problem came in with one of the major developers, I then called and asked for this fellow, but it was a different person now in that position. I asked for help from this new person, who replied, "I can't help you." I asked him why not? He responded, "We are just not doing that kind of thing anymore." I asked once again for my previous contact and was told that he had been assigned to Lancaster, which was the Siberia of that agency.

FELDMAN: That was for giving too much help?

ALEXANDER: Right. Those were the kinds of things we ran into – political problems. Car dealers were ripping off the veterans particularly, so we hired an investigator. This is another technique I had learned, that is, to get the information. We hired an investigator, an old-timer who had been around City Hall for a long time. He worked for me and I would send him out on missions to get the proper information and get things taken care of. That was a very practical experience too.

We started a number of programs; for example, I put together a listing of veteran's benefits in every state. I got the Los Angeles Examiner to finance that. When we announced that we had compiled this information and would distribute it, we had veterans lined up for two blocks looking to get that kind of information on the day that it was available. We had a constant flow of people moving through the agency, so I also got a lot of experience there dealing with some of the top people in the country and began to see they were just like other people. That made it easy for me in the future to deal with boards, directors and so on.

FELDMAN: Now these veterans of World War II really had a different kind of reception generally in the community than . . .

ALEXANDER: Yes, it was extremely favorable for them. When I started out to do public relations and did not know anything about it, I simply went to the newspapers and talked to the reporters. I asked them, "How do you do this?" If I had a particular idea or potential story, I went to them and they were extremely helpful – really terrific. I made a number of friends among all of them including John Goodman, one of the key reporters on the old Daily News. There was also Harry Nelson, the medical writer for the LA Times, people like that. They were extremely helpful if I just asked them for direction.

FELDMAN: How long did you stay with that job?

ALEXANDER: Oh, I was there I think for about two and a half years.

FELDMAN: Then where did you go?

ALEXANDER: I left there and went into business with Ed Flynn, who was a public relations man. I had the idea of developing public relations for social work agencies, so I had a few little contracts around with social agencies, but principally with the Southern California Society for Mental Hygiene. I wish I could remember the name of the woman who ran that, but it seems to be that your memory is much better than mine is.

FELDMAN: I can see her: Kate Booker?

ALEXANDER: She was a very charming person. She was the one who hired me as the research and public relations director at the Veteran's Service Center. I should have looked up some of these things. At any rate, she hired me on contract to do this public relations work for the Southern California Society for Mental Hygiene. Then I did a number of other things: I set up a number of psychologists and social workers who were in independent practice; that is, I did their public relations work for them. I was working with Ed Flynn, who had the contract for CARE in the western states. He also had other contracts, one with a company that made peppermills and salad bowls. We did things together at the office, which was over at the Crossroads of the World in Hollywood. That is the story of how I started the use of peppermills in the United States.

FELDMAN: I did not know about that.

ALEXANDER: He and I were working on this thing. We just had got this contract, but I wanted to go to the National Conference on Social Welfare in Cleveland. So we decided that I would work my way there. I went down to this company where they had these delightful peppermills but nobody had ever heard of peppermills at that time.

I then went down to the library and got every recipe I could find that had pepper in it. I rewrote the recipes and put whole pepper in each one, instead of ground pepper. We then we went out and took photographs of breakfasts, lunches, dinners, meats and each photograph had a peppermill featured in it. I now had a large file with all of these recipes and pictures along with my samples of peppermills. I started from here and covered 41 major cities, working my way towards Cleveland. That is how I got to the conference.

Then I went all of the way to the East Coast, down to the South and finally back here. It must have taken about six to eight weeks. I would go in and put those peppermills on

the desks of the food editors and ask them "How do you like those?" The editors did not know what they were initially, but I ended up getting double-spreads and displays in every major newspaper in the country, as a bonus, I had established a relationship with every food editor in the major cities.

Meanwhile Ed was working on the various associations such as the Meat Institute and so forth. He got these pictures placed in national magazines in cooperation with this group, which is how we started the use of whole ground pepper in this country. You did not know that story, did you?

FELDMAN: No, I did not know that. Did your social work experience and education help with that?

ALEXANDER: Well, it helped with approach, because basically I was always dealing with what was the person starting with? Where were they? That was a very good lesson in starting where the other person is – a basic skill, I think. I always found a connection.

That job also led into the Southern California Society for Mental Hygiene asking me to take over. I still cannot remember the name of the woman who was there, but when she left, they asked me to come in and replace her. Prior to that time, what we had done . . . by the way this is another story that very few people know about. I developed a public relations program relative to the mental hospitals because I had worked there and I had seen what had happened. I developed an expose; I got all of the facts about what was going on in the hospitals: such as putting patients into nursing homes, and so forth. We went to the fellow who was the editorial writer at the Daily News; he used to sign his editorials TER. He was very famous here at that time, what was his name? At any rate, we went to him and gave him a whole series of information. He began to write editorials about the hospitals, plus I planted several columns on the conditions at state hospitals. These stories got picked up all up and down the state and we were front-page news for about a month and a half – the bad conditions at state hospitals.

As a result of that Governor Warren fired the woman who was the head of the department; she had been a political appointee. We were able to mobilize a lot of the sentiment and we forced Governor Warren to make the deans of the medical schools responsible for identifying the replacement. That is how we brought Collins to California, because he had a big record in Ohio of developing a good mental hospital system. So we forced that selection and got the first psychiatrist to head the Department of Mental Hygiene. No, he was the second because there had been Rosanott earlier. Then our agency, along with the Northern California Society for Mental Hygiene, supported Collins total restructuring of the state's mental hygiene program. He worked me to death, I was up and down the state all of the time. We conducted campaigns from the outside to push him relative to these programs. For example, we conducted a campaign to get a piece of meat on a patient's plate.

I was keeping the Southern California Society for Mental Hygiene alive by running these community lectures and forums and so forth and raising the money that way principally. We only got a little pittance from the Community Chest and so I developed income that way. We began to bring in really top-notch people. I had known Bill Menninger, so I got him out here. He used to come out here every year for us. I would get Franz Alexander and all of the big names in psychiatry; we introduced the fellow who was the guru of gerontology. He was a New York psychologist. It was through people like that, that I kept the agency alive. I took them out of the Community Chest.

FELDMAN: Was there a disadvantage to being in the Community Chest?

ALEXANDER: Yes, because the Community Chest had rules on how you could raise money, all of which were difficult. In effect, they did not allow you access to free money. At first we spent a year or so going after the Community Chest to give us an appropriate share. We did get a small increase, but it really didn't deal with the problem of financing a mental health program.

Through all of this I was going to school. As a matter of fact when I was working at the public relations organization, I had to make a decision as to whether or not I was going to stay in social work or go into the public relations field. Our commercial accounts were bringing us a lot more money than the social welfare accounts and at some point I had a very hard decision to make. By this time, I had about 12 years of experience in social work and I decided that I could not throw all of that away. I decided that I was dedicated to this type of work and so I quit that job and came to work at the Southern California Mental Hygiene Society. It was an important decision in my life to stay in the field.

Subsequent to that time I left the Southern California Mental Hygiene Society to go back to school and finish up my master's. In 1954 I came back to work on my doctorate. That was when I took a job with the Heart Association, working on a research project for two years.

FELDMAN: What did that research project consist of?

ALEXANDER: The research project was doing a study of coronary patients in industry. It was called the, "Cardiacs in Industry". What we did, was to convince a number of the major companies in Los Angeles to cooperate with us. We took patients who had been diagnosed with cardiac disease and coronary disease and we put them through a very detailed examination for that time. It involved the use of a treadmill, pulmonary tests and so forth. We had a combination of a social worker, a physician – who was a research physician, a technician and a couple of other physicians assigned. I did detailed life histories on these people including a 15-minute monitoring of their lives for a period of a week or month to see what kind of energy expenditure they had. We built the whole thing around the concept of the 'degree of energy requirement'.

Lee Horowitz came in and finished it, after I left; I had hired him as a second person. Eventually over 1,00 patients from all of these companies including Lockheed were included in the study.

Feldman: Were you already the Director or did that come later?

ALEXANDER: No, that was one of the three jobs that I had while I was going to school. We made some very important discoveries: we discovered that 25% of the patients who were diagnosed as having coronary disease, by the best people in town, did not have coronary disease. It was principally that their physical examinations were not as precise as the procedure we were using. We used tread mill for stress testing, placing the individuals on monitors as well as dealing with some of the social and family issues – things of that sort. In that project we were able to demonstrate that 85% of the patients who had coronary disease and that were working in industry, could go back to work and work greater than they had done before – a very important topic. That was a demonstration to the industries themselves, that they could in effect rehabilitate and save very important employees that they had. So we worked with all of the major industries here in Los Angeles: Union Oil, Lockheed, and all of the big ones; we started with them. We had to overcome a number of problems. We also did these energy measurements. We were able to demonstrate that clerks in the normal office do more work than do the people on the production line; they actually expend more energy.

FELDMAN: That is surprising, isn't it?

ALEXANDER: Yes, it comes from the very simple fact that clerks in an office are constantly getting up from a desk, bending over and getting into files, and so forth. They are often carrying things as well. Whereas on the production line, most people are standing and working, but they are not moving their body through space very much.

FELDMAN: That really is a fascinating finding because we think of sedentary workers as not having that kind of stress.

ALEXANDER: What we were doing was measuring the energy requirements and if you think about it, it is very simple. When you get up from a desk you raise your weight through approximately two to three feet; that is an expenditure of energy. It is much

greater than anything you may be doing in a parallel plane, in other words walking, things like that. You are using much more energy to push that weight through space. People who work on a production line generally have very low levels of energy expenditure. For example, housewives at home expend probably four to five more times energy than do their husbands who work on a production line. Making a bed, for example, you have to bend, lift, stretch, those kinds of things.

We were measuring those acts; we actually put equipment on people. We used a technique for the first time, radio telemetry, where we would have this equipment and put it on somebody. The person could be on a production line and we would be somewhere off in the distance measuring those actions by radio telemetry so that we would not interfere with the work process. It was a very fascinating study. We published a number of things on that study.

As a result of that study, we started a campaign at the Heart Association to get physicians to use treadmills in their office. We also discovered that people had silent heart attacks, for example. People had heart attacks while they were on the treadmill, but they did not experience any pain. Some people do not have a pain mechanism. There were all kinds of interesting things that grew out of that project.

FELDMAN: Now, were there physicians on the Board of the agency?

ALEXANDER: Oh yes, it was dominated by physicians. That is a whole different story.

FELDMAN: I think we should hear how you worked with the members of the Board. Were they advocates for doing something with these findings?

ALEXANDER: Oh yes, eventually after it was all explained to them and after we overcame . . .

FELDMAN: They did not accept the findings immediately?

ALEXANDER: No, we had a special problem with Dr. Bullock.

FELDMAN: Well, everybody had a special problem with Dr. [Lewis] Bullock.

ALEXANDER: I was the director of this research project and we had an Executive Director who was a chronic alcoholic. The agency was going downhill very fast. They had just terminated this fellow after a big fight. They had an election and they elected a doctor who was a businessman at the same time. They had a chairman of the Board, Robertson, who was an attorney. His father had been the attorney at Westinghouse; he was interested in business mostly. They called me in and asked me to take over the directorship of the agency because they had seen what I had done with this research project and so forth. I said I could not assume the directorship under contentious conditions. They were still fighting over what they were going to do with the former director. I continued on with the research project for another six months, when they came back and asked me once again to come in and reorganize the agency. They said they would support me but that I would have to come in amidst a number of problems that were plaguing the agency.

Dr. Bullock principally controlled the agency; he had controlled the agency by virtue of controlling the Research Committee. He controlled the expenditure of the major portion of the funds that the Heart Association raised. He was the czar of cardiology research in Los Angeles because of his control of money. He was a very typical czar too, as you know.

FELDMAN: He did not know very much about research.

ALEXANDER: Well, he thought he did. His main thing was power; he would control these guys by doing favors for those who kowtowed to him. There had been a big battle two or three years before, in which George Griffith tried to come in and really move Bullock out. Bullock gave him a terrible whipping. The Board was made up of 60 – 65% physicians and they all principally went along with this because of the money that was

going into research. He had done a very clever thing; he had the Board pass a policy that 50% of the funds that were taken would go to research. The program mission of the agency was research, education, and community service; but the other two endeavors got virtually nothing. After a fundraising campaign was over, Dr. Bullock typically would demand 50% of the gross receipts. Well, after you take out the administrative and fund-raising costs, plus 50% of the gross; then the agency would go into debt. This agency was in debt about \$400,000 at the time; they were bankrupt.

FELDMAN: Considering the value of a dollar at that time, that is a tremendous amount of money.

ALEXANDER: They had gone into debt and the Executive Director was really incompetent; he could not deal with the situation. He was able to retain his position only because he had kowtowed to Bullock and a little group consisting of a couple of others, who in effect controlled the agency. I was brought in to break the whole thing up. It took me about four years to accomplish that. Bullock had all of the records in his personal office. There were all kinds of things like that.

Once I came in, I had to go the bank and borrow money to keep the agency alive for about three months, that is, until we had concluded another fundraising campaign. I then had to develop a reconsideration of this policy and interpret it to the Board what was fiscally happening to the agency. That was a consistent fight month after month. I had to work 14 - 16 hours a day. First I had to spend six weeks going through the books to figure out what was wrong, but they did not have good records.

As we moved along, I began to move towards a concept of a balanced program. That meant that education and community service had to be brought up front. I found some physicians, principally Dr. Dick Call, who was medical director for Union Oil. I got him on the Board: he was a strong advocate for community service programs because he had experienced this research project. Union Oil was concerned about providing community services to employees. That kind of a force needed to be developed within

the agency. We initiated that by proposing research projects that were socially oriented research. The first one was the iatrogenic effect on children in cardiac surgery. We developed projects that were research-oriented but built around rehabilitation purposes. That served as an initial counter to the type of research that had been going on previously.

Then we initiated some educational programs. We expanded the Board from 25 members to 125.

FELDMAN: How could you use 125 people? Were you trying to crowd out Louis Bullock?

ALEXANDER: We brought in a lot of people to overcome the dominance of a small group of physicians; it was built around the concept of developing a community Board.

FELDMAN: This was a county wide agency, so that you needed more than the City of Los Angeles represented?

ALEXANDER: Exactly, we also had to develop local offices. We started that by opening local offices for fund-raising campaign purposes. We built those offices into service offices for people who were in the local community. We eventually had eleven or twelve offices throughout the county with professional staff. However, we first had to overcome this total dominance and focus on rather narrow research. We weakened Bullock's control by introducing other kinds of research, broader research, and basic research. We initiated the idea of basic cardiovascular laboratories with lifetime appointments for their directors. We brought (inaudible) to head that. We also supported a laboratory for the fellow who had been the research scientist on our project "Cardiacs in Industry", Sid Sova, at USC. Things like that were introduced to gradually weaken Bullock's control.

Finally, it took a courageous position to come in and wipe out Bullock's control: he had been the chair of the Research Committee for eons. I had found Dr. Kobell, who

eventually became a close friend and my personal physician, at the first Research Committee meeting I had attended. I was sitting next to him and noticed that he was predicting who would get research funds and who would not. I got interested in his predictions: it was clear that he had a handle on exactly what was going on and so forth. Bullock had a terrible practice; he would make these guys come in and plead for money. He was very dominant with his control of those funds. When I saw how sharp Dr. Kobell was, I immediately tried to move him into a broader leadership position. Eventually he became President of the Association and when he did, he appointed a new chair for the Research Committee. That action was akin to turning the agency upside down. It happened about five years after I had assumed the directorship. We were then able to move on from there to achieve a much more balanced program.

FELDMAN: Did Bullock ever leave that Board?

ALEXANDER: Yes, he did. In fact, he went over to the American Cancer Society and gave them fits.

FELDMAN: I remember that because I was doing some research projects for them and also was a member of their State Board.

ALEXANDER: Well, I had dealt with Bullock before because I had been on the Health and Welfare Committee of the Community Chest. Bullock was also on that committee and we were constantly at loggerheads with the positions he took on various programs and agencies. He represented the most reactionary kind of approach. He did not want me at the Heart Association; he tried to keep me from becoming the executive director and he later went on to attack me several times politically to try to get me out of there. I survived, however, through it all. We developed that agency and dealt with lots of fascinating policy problems there. I made the agency the largest Heart Association in the country with the best programs and the most money. We did not have any representation in the American Heart Association, but we had to give a sizable chunk of our money to the national offices and to the state offices. We were being represented

through the state. We constituted approximately 80% of the state's income, but we had no direct representation.

FELDMAN: How did you deal with that?

ALEXANDER: We started out with attempting to get recognition by changing policies. The American Heart Association had initially developed as a result of local developments. They eventually moved on to a program with state chapters, however, New York and Chicago were exceptions; they were direct affiliates. So we applied for direct affiliate status and they had a policy against any new affiliates. They whipped us a couple of times on that. We were going through the California Association. The representation was there, but the San Francisco office principally controlled the Association. So, we initiated a drive to re-examine the structure and organization of the American Heart Association. Dick Dotts, who was the President of the Pacific Mutual Insurance Company, took the leadership position on that. He was a very good man to have in charge; he was very sound organizationally. I did an analysis of the money and program relationships and so forth within the Heart Association. Within the Delegate Assembly, we were able to force the American Heart Association to set up a committee to look at this situation. As a result of that committee work, the policy was changed and Los Angeles was able to become a direct affiliate of the American Heart Association and now had a great deal of power within the organizational structure.

FELDMAN: That sounds like a very exciting period.

ALEXANDER: The whole thing was exciting, to bring in other professions such as social work and nursing, for example. We gradually began to move towards a professional education committee. The doctors had always had these annual forums which we were now able to turn into moneymakers too, through registration and so forth. We were then able to demonstrate that we could make money, and pushed to extend these forums to other professions as well. Nurses need to know more about heart disease and social workers also need to know more about heart disease. So we were able to set up

another professional education committee. We got strong people from the nursing and social work groups. We started with an annual forum one for nurses and another for social workers.

From there we moved to offering a combination of cancer and TB forums which we combined with our own efforts. We did joint programs for years; in fact, I think that they still do joint programs with the three agencies. From there, we were able to move on to other professions proposing research projects, which penetrated this research dominance. Once we got one in, then we could lay the groundwork for others. We kept taking the reports of what had happened to the Board and the benefits derived from them. Gradually, the physicians themselves began to see the agency in a different fashion. They began to see the significance of the social aspects of heart disease. For example, the kitchen had been designed by an architect for people who had heart disease. I picked that up and promoted that and we began to offer training classes for cardiac patients. Doctors began to see that their patients benefited from this kind of activity, so they began to broaden their outlook in this way. They began to support these types of programs. In each case it took a period of time, a year or two to educate enough of the doctors active in the Association to have them start to make demands on the agency to do more of these kinds of things.

We had another big run-in with Bullock, when several of our doctors went to Johns Hopkins Hospital and heard the first ideas about cardiac resuscitation. We were running a training program for doctors here in Los Angeles about how to slash open the chest, reach in and squeeze the heart. A couple of our physicians including Dr. Feinfield and others, saw this and were very excited. So we developed a program and introduced it to the community. There were mixed reviews, but we continued with it and began to train physicians in this technique. We brought the original research people out here and from there we expanded it to lifesaving personnel such as firemen, policemen and so forth. We started in an interesting place with this training – in the movie industry. The studios were very concerned about their stars, so we began with training movie industry firemen and policemen. Well, we got terrific opposition from the County

Medical Association because we were teaching people other than doctors this technique. As it so happened, Bullock was the president of the County Medical Association at that time. He opposed it, but at the same time, we were asked to come onto television with this thing. Bullock called up all of the doctors on the teaching committee and told them that if they appeared on television that they would be hauled up before the Medical Association for unethical practice among other things. Seventeen of the doctors hung tight with us and we then developed training for firemen throughout the county. We went on to the nurses and continued to expand, it eventually became common public knowledge. They ultimately developed those plastic dummies for people to practice on. In the beginning, though it was a battle against the status quo: only doctors were believed to be the ones who should have this type of knowledge.

FELDMAN: So you really had a double target: to re-educate the doctors and also reach the community.

ALEXANDER: Exactly, but we also had to develop the counter-forces in these policy considerations. We brought ethnic minorities onto the Board.

FELDMAN: That was unusual at that time.

ALEXANDER: Yes. There was a big battle about that.

FELDMAN: Do you mean among Board members?

ALEXANDER: Yes, Board members were resisting, particularly the small group who had been dominant within the Association because, in effect, this was diluting their authority. We were able to argue, however, that as we developed the regional offices in Watts and other places, that these people were helping us with fund-raising campaigns and so deserved a voice within the agency. This was the way we were able to bring them in, by using the power of money. We told the Board that if they wanted to raise money then they would need help from all of these people who were willing to help.

FELDMAN: That was pretty sneaky.

ALEXANDER: That was the way we had to do it. As a result, that was the way we began to get our local organization focused on the local offices that we had. This is where I learned another lesson: I started out hiring social workers in all of these offices. I felt that we needed professional people to answer questions, but they also needed to be organizers. They had to see what were the needs in those communities and how they could advance the education program and so forth. They also had to be part of fundraising efforts.

I found, however, that we had failures. I began to find that it took an attitude, mentality, and a nascent ability to organize. If a person had that mentality and approach where they could take things apart and analyze, they would be good directors in these community offices. I had some good social workers that were in there and successful, but some of them I had to get rid of. Eventually, I had a mix of people, some of whom were in education, some were psychologists, and I began to see that the basic requirement was the ability to organize and to have a professional approach to it. That taught me a lesson about looking for something other than just a degree. I was so dedicated to social work, that I tried every way possible to find social workers who would do this; but it began to settle down to the fact that the basic requirements of the job had to match the basic qualities or abilities of the person. This was an important lesson to me.

FELDMAN: I would think so. How long did you stay there?

ALEXANDER: I was there for 13 years. I could have stayed there with a good salary and retired there because we were successful. I chose not to stay because it was all coming up around and around again.

FELDMAN: You needed a change?

ALEXANDER: Right. So Mickey Kobell, who I had worked with when he was president, came to me to offer a position where I would run the regional medical programs for UCLA. There was a fellow who was in charge, Dr. Don Drake, who was a surgeon; but who was really more interested in professional education than anything else. He really needed help in how to organize this program, which operated under the responsibility of UCLA's medical school and included nine counties in their territory.

I was brought in as the associate director and worked with Dr. Drake and Dr. Kobell. It was the best job that I ever had. It was a combination of organizing in the community and teaching. I was teaching in the School of Public Health and in the School of Social Work; I taught community organization. Stimulation came from having to investigate research and know what you are talking about in class, plus the fact that we were organizing. We started with doctors, organizing community committees in each of these counties to plan health services; it was a marvelous program funded through federal monies. We organized these groups and broke into the medical profession by hiring doctors that were mostly retired or near retirement. These doctors were looking for something to do that was broader in scope than their individual practices had been. I had to train these guys to be community organizers and I backed them up with social workers, Al Torribio, Lee Horowitz – we got the whole crew in there. We developed some marvelous programs, such as community clinics, but we had to break through the resistance of the medical professionals in these conservative counties in the Central Valley about doing anything such as planning for the community. We had to get them involved with other citizens and get them involved in planning and to realize that they were not the only people who knew what was needed in the community.

FELDMAN: Was this through the School of Public Health primarily?

ALEXANDER: No, the medical school was in control. We worked directly for Rappaport, the dean there. There was a funny incident about that too. We were organizing in Watts to form a new school of medicine there. We were working with that committee of physicians named after the black doctor.

FELDMAN: Drew?

ALEXANDER: Drew. So Al Torribio and I had a vocal committee down in Watts. We were trying to get the dean to understand what this was all about, but he was very ivory tower – he was just interested in research. He had never dealt with the community at all. So we took him down to meet with the committee one night. He got to the committee meeting and gave them a little talk about how important what they were doing was and so forth. Then they unloaded on him about what UCLA was not doing and how they needed this program and all of their needs, which were of paramount importance. The dean had never experienced anything like that before. He was used to being treated like royalty and these people were chewing him to pieces. He blanched and so Al and I kind of stepped in and smoothed things out. After we got out of there, he met with us the next day and told us that he did not know that we were dealing with this kind of thing and admitted that he was scared to death at that meeting. After that, every time that I saw him he would say something about this visit. It was kind of funny to see him exposed to the sentiments of the community.

FELDMAN: It is especially interesting because he was one of the several deans of the medical school who were to be responsible for setting up that hospital. The members of his own faculty had been the primary ones to make this recommendation to the McCone Commission after the Watts riot. He had never really felt a part of it.

ALEXANDER: He never understood it.

FELDMAN: That is interesting.

ALEXANDER: Donald (inaudible) was the one who carried the lead on that and was strong for it because he was having to mobilize the medical community to support this thing as well as deal with problems with the black doctors. You know there was power struggles and things like that. Don was very happy that we had given Rappaport this education.

FELDMAN: It suggests the importance of really having a personal exposure to the area of the problem and the people involved.

ALEXANDER: Exactly. I loved that job. It was so much fun, it was the combination of teaching and organizing.

FELDMAN: Why did you leave it?

ALEXANDER: I was offered the NASW job in 1968 or 1969. When DeJong came to me and asked me to apply for that . . . Skip Taylor do you remember him?

FELDMAN: Oh, sure.

ALEXANDER: Skip Taylor was on the committee and was pushing for somebody who could come in and reorganize NASW.

FELDMAN: Didn't you have something between UCLA and NASW?

ALEXANDER: I went directly to NASW from UCLA. December 1st, 1969 I landed in New York.

FELDMAN: Maybe this is the point at which we should stop and then pick up again, if you have the patience and can work out the time.

ALEXANDER: It is kind of fun to reminisce about these things.

FELDMAN: I think it is very useful for anyone who is researching what a social worker does and what kinds of conditions there are in the community that make it possible to do things.

ALEXANDER: Well, in a sense I feel as if we have skimmed the surface. It has been kind of a resume review because in each one of these areas there are very specific problems that I had to deal with in which there were questions of strategies and ethics. At the same time I was going to school, which helped me a great deal because I was able to project a lot of what I was running into back to school and get help from the faculty and my classes. I also did papers related to what I was doing, so it was a good combination there.

FELDMAN: It sounds as if it was hard, but it was a real benefit.

ALEXANDER: Each one of these problems involved analysis of the situation, determining some kind of plan or approach to it, and then execution of the whole business.

FELDMAN: Chauncey, I think this is extremely valuable. This interview will continue on another cassette.

Chauncey Alexander

Interviewed by Frances Lomas Feldman

On November 15, 1991 in the School of Social Work Office, and continued

On June 23, 1993 in the Arlien Johnson Social Work Library

November 15, 1991

(9/27/90)

insert
date

FELDMAN: There has been a delay since the first interview due to your illness and surgery.

ALEXANDER: Do you want me to start from the beginning?

FELDMAN: Yes, why not.

ALEXANDER: I was born May 11, 1916 in Kansas City, Missouri to a middle class family. My father was a bank examiner during the early years of my life, and then he became a very successful car salesman. As a result of his success, we came to Glendale, California in 1927. I started in the Glendale public school system in the 6th grade. In those early days, it was a conservative community. My father was something of an inventor, and he manufactured operating lamps and infra red ray lamps and had them in most of the state hospitals in California at that time. Then the Depression hit, and he gradually sold off all of the equipment to stay alive. Eventually, my folks went on welfare. My mother kept trying to keep it away from us – the children. I remember that I had one pair of pants for the entire year and that I pressed those pants every night so that I looked decent.

My parents were both active in the Democratic party and, finally as a result of their activity, my father got a job in the Post Office. He spent the next 35 years there. My mother continued to be active in the Democratic Party. She was also a professional volunteer: she was the head of the March of Dimes in Glendale for 20 years; she was on the Salvation Army Board for at least that long; the Red Cross; really, anything in the community. Glendale was a Republican community and she was the accepted Democrat in the community because of her work. I remember at an early age, I was ten

or eleven, stuffing literature for a Democratic candidate for governor all summer. That was also my first disappointment because I never got paid a meager wage.

FELDMAN: Why didn't you get paid; did they run out of money?

ALEXANDER: I do not remember why; I think they just ran out of money. It was a big disappointment in my life and it led me to not trust politicians. Glendale was also a narrow community: white, upper middle class generally, and I was lower middle class. There was always a dual group of kids at school: the wealthy kids, and the poor kids. As a matter of fact there were two gangs, one for the upper class and one for the lower class.

Glendale was also infused with prejudice, although I did not realize it at the time. I was experiencing conflict because I had a strong religious upbringing, Methodist, ten years of perfect attendance at Wednesday night classes for youth. I left the Church at 13 or 14 years of age because of what I thought was the hypocrisy of the people involved in the Church. I would see people in their daily life doing things that I did not think were proper. It was finally consummated by an open trial of one of the elders of the Church, who was a grocery clerk in the community. There was an open trial about the relationship he had with another woman, but I knew that there were other men in the community who had also been consorting with the same woman. That incident, along with the questions I was raising, led me to break away from the church. I particularly had more questions as I was learning more about science in school. From the time I was four or five years old, I had wanted to be a doctor because my grandfather was a country physician. I was headed that way, so I have studied medicine all of my life.

Also, I remember that there were two Jewish boys in our entire school and there were no blacks. Blacks were not allowed to stay overnight in Glendale. I had all the prejudices of a middle-class, southern, mid-western family. My family was originally from Virginia and a runaway slave had killed my great-grandfather, which had always been a big part of our family's history. I was always conflicted in my feelings because,

according to my religious background, you are supposed to accept everyone for who they are and be kind to everyone. Although I had those prejudices, I was constantly questioning myself and people around me, who were constantly making remarks about blacks or Jews or whoever. There was a constant problem that I felt with these contradictions.

At any rate, I had worked the last two years in high school at night in a machine shop because my folks did not have any money. After high school, I was looking for a job, so a pal of mine and I shipped out in the summer of 1934. We were on a freighter that got stopped in San Francisco because of the 1934 dockworker's strike. After eleven days, we got off of that freighter because all of the men, who were strike breakers, felt that they were not getting any where and instead could earn more money working on the docks. So I went along with them and worked on the docks that summer. I was among a combination of professionals, businessmen, farmers, and so forth. Also among them were the riff-raff: convicts and professional strikebreakers, and so forth.

FELDMAN: How old were you at that time?

ALEXANDER: I was 17. I learned a good deal at that time working on the docks, loading and unloading the ships. Finally, as the strike wound down, we escaped through the picket lines; we were followed by the strikers. We got out of San Francisco and came back. Looking back at that experience, it seemed like a radical change. I started my two years at Glendale Community College and I was fortunate. At first I had a part-time job through the student aid program. Then I got a job through my father's friend, working nights at Philco Corporation in Downey, shoveling clay. I shoveled ten tons of clay every night and then went to school during the daytime. The last two years, I went to UCLA. I would get up at 5:00 every morning and make the 7:00 class at UCLA, and then I would leave UCLA at 3:00 to get to Downey and work until midnight.

FELDMAN: I hope that you had a car.

ALEXANDER: Yes, by that time I had. I worked 4 ½ years at night. There were a lot of learning experiences, working at that plant. It was very difficult work, hard, physical labor for the first two years; then I got to work the machinery and repair it. When I graduated from UCLA, I wanted to get a good job, so I went to my sociology professor. He recommended that I go to the State Relief Administration because they were hiring social workers.

FELDMAN: You qualified because you had a degree?

ALEXANDER: I had a bachelor's degree in psychology. I went down to apply and was interviewed by a very nice woman who interviewed me for a while and then told me that I was not qualified. She did not feel that I was qualified because I had mostly been working in factories and the fact that I had a degree did not make a difference. I went home, and I was very depressed about the interview. My mother asked me what was wrong and I told her. She replied, "Well we'll have to see about that." The next day she called County Board Supervisor Knudsen and told him that I was looking for a job and she wanted his help. She sent me down to see him. Supervisor Knudsen said, "What are you interested in?" I told him that I was interested in this social work job although I did not know anything about it. It sounded like something that I would like to do; it involved working with people. He picked up the telephone and made a call and, after completing this call, he turned to me and told me to return to the same office where I had been before.

FELDMAN: Was it the same woman?

ALEXANDER: It was the same woman, I think it was Blythe Francis who was there at that time.

FELDMAN: No, she was in Family Service.

ALEXANDER: At any rate when I came in, the same woman welcomed me with open arms and told me how great it was that I was going to be there. It was an important lesson for me.

FELDMAN: What district were you in?

ALEXANDER: I started out in Pasadena, but was just there for three or four months and then I was transferred to the Metropolitan District down in Siberia, as it was called.

FELDMAN: Very tough area.

ALEXANDER: It was a marvelous work experience. I loved it. We were working out of an old warehouse with about 1,000 men coming in there every day. There were three of us. At first I was interviewing, and pretty soon they put me up front. Two other men and I were the first contacts that people had as they were coming in; we would get them to the right place real fast. I loved it because it was hard and fast and you had to fight with the accountants to get somebody shoes, and so forth. We would have four or five epileptic seizures every day – it was just one fascinating thing after another. I was imbued with this idea of studying human beings, working with them, and developing relationships. I had two very good women supervisors who were very strong social workers.

FELDMAN: Do you remember who they were?

ALEXANDER: One was a heavy-set woman who was just terrific; she had worked for Traveler's Aid for many years, and you may recall her.

FELDMAN: Was it Anita Tidball?

ALEXANDER: No. At any rate, that was a great experience. I was then introduced to the whole concept of unions. I remember another telling incident was when I was invited to go to lunch by Dr. Ed Mock. Do you remember him?

FELDMAN: Yes, I do.

ALEXANDER: He took me to lunch and started telling me about the union and how poor our conditions were at work. The conditions were terrible; we had to sit on boxes. The idea of people getting together and helping themselves appealed to me; maybe it was my religious background. At any rate, I listened to him and said that I thought that a union sounded like a very good idea. I had never thought of or heard of unions before; Glendale was an anti-union town. At any rate, I told him that I would have to think about it. In another week, we went out for lunch again and I told him that I had thought about it and that I thought it was a very good idea for people to get together and do something about their own conditions. I asked him how I could join such an organization and participate in it. From then on, I was a convert.

FELDMAN: What year was this?

ALEXANDER: That would have been 1938 or 1939. I started on several committees; Ed had taken me under his wing. He was the chair of the Grievance Committee for the entire county. So he would take me to these meetings and show me what they did and so forth. After he left, I inherited the committee as its chair, with very little background or knowledge other than what I had gleaned from watching Ed work. That brought me into the center of what the union was doing at that time. I was very much involved in the union's development: there were meetings galore and all that goes with them. We were engaged in a battle to keep the politicians out of the State Relief Administration; there was a very strong movement to retain professional workers. Meanwhile, my supervisors had urged me to go to school, so I immediately registered at USC and began taking classes there: some were downtown and some were at the University

Park campus. I was taking courses, one class at a time. I was getting a lot of ideas about developing my professional outlook on things.

I remember when they started putting politicians into the leadership offices. Harry White, was my district supervisor, he was an awfully nice chap - conservative to moderate. He was very fair and objective. At any rate, we had this redheaded woman who came in there, a big, tall, rawboned woman. It was said that her former occupation had been as a madam for prostitutes up on Bunker Hill. By this time I was a trouble-shooter for the office because I was considered to be the one who was 'up' on psychology, you see. I used to sit in front and this woman would come racing out of her office for the Worker's Alliance of America (a client-union group) and grab the first person she saw to get answers for problems because she really did not know anything. I was usually the first person she saw, she would literally grab me and literally pull me into her office. At one point, there was a problem, and she dragged me in, and Harry was there too. I listened to what was being said and then I explained what the policy was. They listened and then they raised some more questions; they had a legitimate grievance. I told them that, according to policy, they could get this and this, etc. They left and everything was fine; after they left Harry turned to her and said, "Chauncey handled that really well, didn't he?" She replied, "Well he ought to, he is one of them."

Well, then they were racing through the State Relief Administration, attacking people politically. Then the administration tried to fire or terminate the union leadership. They terminated me once or twice, but they could not keep me out because I had the highest rating for work, a 97% or 98%. According to the policy, they could not simply fire me because of my union activity. Finally, there was a period when we were picketing the administrator, and it had something to do with polls. The slogan was "Polecat Poulson".

FELDMAN: He was the mayor then.

ALEXANDER: No, he was the mayor much later.

FELDMAN: Oh, is that right? Is it the same Poulson?

ALEXANDER: No, he was an Assemblyman; he was heading the committee that was investigating the State Relief Administration.

FELDMAN: I did not remember that.

ALEXANDER: Yes. As a result of that, he and another administrator refused to meet with the union and the picketers. Whoever was the union leadership at that time, including myself, went up to the office and requested to meet with him. He refused to meet, so everybody just walked into his office. Then there was a big thing there and finally, out of that came an agreement to meet with the union. The press came and there were pictures taken of everybody – it was a big thing. Finally, they terminated me and as a result of that termination, I filed an appeal because I had the highest performance rating of anyone in the State Relief Administration. I went down to the hearing, but the hearing had nothing to do with my performance at all. This guy who was the staff man for the Poulson Committee attacked me, along with some other people. We were not allowed to make a presentation.

FELDMAN: Poulson was a municipal judge at the time that he was chairing these various activities, as I remember. It was because of his role as a judge, that he was thought to be impartial.

ALEXANDER: At any rate, that fellow attacked me and said that I had gone into this office without permission and had acted on behalf of union leadership. It was a direct attack on the union. After that hearing, I received a letter that said I had been terminated for “acts inimicable to the public service.” I was very fearful about this because how would I ever get a job? But later, when I worked for the state again, it was never a problem. The whole thing was illegal and after that whole period of disgusting activity was over, it was dismissed, I think. It was an exciting period and from the standpoint of social work, it was very interesting. On one hand I was very active in the

union, and on the other, I was going to school. I immediately joined the professional Association of American Social Workers and also the American Association of Psychiatric Social Workers. As a result, I was in the middle of this dialogue as to whether unionism was professional or not. That was a very interesting dialogue. I admired people on both sides of that issue because they were strong in their points of view and they had good reasons on both sides for adhering to their respective viewpoints. I was in on a lot of meetings and discussions about those kinds of things at that time. When I left the State Relief Administration, I got a job at Vega Aircraft Corporation in the personnel department because of my psychology background. Shortly after I was there, Lockheed absorbed them, so I went to Lockheed's personnel department. In one year we went from 5,000 employees to 80,000 employees. Because I had worked in welfare activity and had a psychology background, they put me in charge of all the service types of things: health insurance, etc. I would deal with all of those types of problems, answering employees' questions as an information sort of thing.

FELDMAN: So you had an early exposure to social policy?

ALEXANDER: Right. I was very unhappy with that position because I saw what was going on – it was such a boondoggle. This was at the start of the war in 1941. I got into the entire plant and it was a “cost plus” operation, so people were just ripping off the government. The fellow that I worked for just did not know one tenth of what I already knew by that time. He had married one of the Lockheed Board of Directors' daughters and so he was made the personnel manager – he made me do everything for him, you see. I really got disgusted with that kind of job and exploitation. I had taken some civil service exams and I finally got employment in the Department of Mental Hygiene as a psychiatric social worker. By that time I had almost a year of schooling and became the Chief Resident Social Worker at Patton State Hospital.

June 24, 1993

FELDMAN: In this continuation of the earlier interview, why don't we start back with your being at the UCLA Medical Center? Tell me about what you did there.

ALEXANDER: All right. I left the Heart Association job after 13 years in 1967 (see interview of 9/27/90) and went to the UCLA Medical School for two years. It was at that time that a former president of the Heart Association and a couple of people at the medical school recruited me. We were to initiate the regional medical programs as part of a national program federally financed through the states. It was a program where the medical schools were given the responsibility to develop new medical programs. I was brought in as the associate director to Dr. Donald Brayton who was the director of surgery there. He had been very active with professional education; he had done a lot of work preparing television shows for doctors on how to diagnose patients and all kinds of things like that. I was brought in to organize and plan the whole thing. It was a wonderful mission because it was a job to organize the community, to sponsor - through the local medical leadership - new programs in health care. It was one of President Johnson's thrusts. What we did basically was to recruit several social workers to work with us: Al Torribio, do you remember him?

FELDMAN: Oh yes, I have just received a letter from him.

ALEXANDER: Eventually Lee Horovitz also came. He had taken my place at the Heart Association for about a year or so, and then came over to this program. What we did essentially was to recruit the leadership in the medical profession from nine counties and teach them how to do community organization work. It was a very smart operation because we took physicians who were close to retirement, or had already retired, who were fed up with what they were doing. They tended to be the more progressive guys in the hospitals. We then worked with them to organize community advisory committees that were very broad-based: representing business leadership, labor minorities, civic organizations, the usual line up. It was a very rewarding thing, although it was tough to move those doctors from a command operation to a persuasion operation. We had to write grant proposals and get them passed to support these particular programs.

We organized the major community health clinic in the San Fernando Valley, built around the minority leadership in the Valley. We organized the Martin Luther King Hospital and Medical School operation, using the black doctor whose name is Charles Drew. We organized local community committees and I had an overall committee for the entire region, which I was principally responsible for. Al and I would go out with Dr. Kobell to recruit physicians for this wonderful work. We would show them how to set up and run these committees. Then we developed these various programs; we developed an education program for doctors, nurses, and social workers in which we could, within 24 hours, put professional information on any problem which they wanted.

Editorial Note: At this point, Mr. Alexander digressed to reminisce about certain Army experiences in community organization and work with other professions, then returned to the UCLA experience that utilized some of the skills acquired earlier.

ALEXANDER: At any rate I went through that basic training and then was out and could not find a job. I was used by the Draft Board to fill quotas and I was drafted seven times. I was trying to find a job in social work. At first I worked for a few weeks at Family Service Agency where I had been doing my fieldwork and then I would be drafted. That was a period of about six months or so in which I was either being drafted or being released from the Army, because every time I went for an examination the Army would turn me down because of my eyes.

Finally, after the Battle of the Bulge, they started taking everybody in. I was taken in and sent to Fort McArthur. The first day I was there, a psychiatrist saw my background in the hospital and put me to work with him. That was Captain Phil Shapiro, who was a marvelous, well-trained psychoanalyst. His wife was also a psychoanalyst; they were from San Francisco. He taught me a tremendous amount during that time. For about a year, our job was to screen people out of the service.

FELDMAN: Before you had been getting them in.

ALEXANDER: Yes. Our job was to screen them out and we had a lot of interesting experiences there. Then we were transferred to set up the first psychiatric rehabilitation service for them. We went to a camp about 60 miles outside of San Diego, we took over an old cavalry camp and set up a complete reconditioning center there. Phil was in charge and I was doing most of the organizing work. We finally wound up with about 15 social workers and a half dozen psychiatrists and several psychologists. That was another exciting experience.

Oh, I forgot another piece. In between trying to find a job and being drafted all of the time, I was asked to take a job with the union because of my past union leadership experience. I was asked to be the international representative for the F.A.E.C.T., the Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists and Technicians. I was given that job and there I was by myself; I was supposed to have southern California organized – it was really something. I had one unit of engineers that was at what is now Rockwell. They had a contract coming up, so I negotiated a contract with the company on behalf of the engineers. That was a three-month immersion in that whole system. They had the War Labor Board; they had all of this technical stuff; and here I was, a little 'know-nothing'. I had practically no knowledge of all of the technical details of union organization, nor of the law; yet here I was facing eight case-hardened personnel specialists; they chewed me to pieces. Every night I would leave for the day and run around contacting other union representatives and ask them how to do this and that as well as read books. I finally got through that thing and learned an awful lot that way.

Prior to that time, I went back to being a machinist for several months. I worked for about three months at a machine shop.

Continuing with UCLA, we had other programs such as professional education. We organized a system, which was run from local hospitals in these nine counties. As a result of the study we determined that there were approximately 30 professional journals that would carry about 80 – 90% of the key information that everybody would need. So we stocked each of the hospitals with those basic journals, we paid for them.

FELDMAN: What kinds of journals were they?

ALEXANDER: They were medical, nursing, and social work journals. This was done so that if local doctors had a question about something, they could call the local hospital which would reproduce the document and send it the following day. Then, if they needed to get more detailed information beyond what was available in these journals, they could come to the UCLA library, which was a national and regional library. We put teletype machines in all of these places so that they could get information in a hurry. If you had some particular diagnostic problem, conceivably you could backtrack all the way to a national library of medicine, and have that material immediately available to you. It was building a system through which . . .

FELDMAN: It was a predecessor to faxing.

ALEXANDER: Exactly. We helped Dr. (inaudible) down at Harbor Hospital set up the first prenatal testing equipment. With him, I designed a program in which we took census districts and located the percentage of blacks in the census districts, where there was the greatest need. Then we developed a program for getting the people from these census districts into Harbor Hospital to be examined by the newest techniques available at that time. They would probe into the abdomen to test the fetus. It was a combination of a sonogram and something else.

A lot of what we had to do was go through the political problems in the medical structure in order to get people to be willing to undertake some of these things. Then we also designed information and analysis systems, where we did demographics on all of these nine counties and then made those demographics available to each of the counties, to be used to determine the health problems of the time. It was a super program.

There was a parallel program run by the medical school at USC; Denise Harper ran that program over there. The former dean of the medical school, Roger Egeberg, was the head of that program. He, of course, has been in Washington ever since.

We developed educational programs for pharmacists and social workers as well. We did a number of research programs as well on what it was that would get things across to medical professionals. We had a couple of psychologists on the staff who were good at developing these types of things. Each of these things had a research component, because we had to determine if that particular program made a difference or not. That was pretty much the program. I thought, when Nixon came into office, it would be a perfect program because it was straight free enterprise involved with all of the doctors, communities, and so forth. However, because it had Johnson's name on it, they killed it.

FELDMAN: I would think that in that program are the seeds of what should be done today.

ALEXANDER: Absolutely. It was a natural; we really got the community involved. We got terrific representation; we took everything to these advisory committees and built consensus on essentially changing the medical structure. It was tough because the doctors generally resisted the process. The fact that we had recruited leadership out of the profession itself made all of the difference in the world for these other doctors. It was an exciting program that moved a lot of things at the same time.

We initiated the Martin Luther King Jr. Hospital program, although UCLA took the credit for it. I will tell you a funny story about that too. Dr. Rappoport, was the dean of the medical school, and he was a true 'ivory tower' research person.

FELDMAN: Yes, I remember.

ALEXANDER: Al (Torribio) and I had developed a community committee down in Watts to get this hospital started and get the community to support it and push for it. We also had to push the county at that time and so we needed that community push as well. We took the dean one night down to this community advisory committee and he gave a polite little speech. Then, the committee started with their questions, and they tore him

to ribbons. The dean had never experienced anything like that in his life. He considered them irreverent, because there were some things said that he believed you just do not say to deans. It was really a riot. The next day he called us in his office and said that he had never seen anything like that in his life, he had never experienced any thing like that. He could not understand how these people knew so much about community needs and medicine. It was a revelation to him that to us was really humorous, although it was kind of a dirty trick to play on him. We felt, however, that unless he really understood what was involved in organizing this thing, we would not have the support that we needed. That was pretty much that story.

FELDMAN: How long did that program last; did it continue?

ALEXANDER: I thought at first it was going to die in 1969 when Nixon came in. It lasted for about four years after that, I would say. That is when I left and went to NASW; and Lee came in and took over my job.

FELDMAN: Did Al stay with it?

ALEXANDER: Al stayed with it for about a year and then he went back into mental health. I had recruited him out of the county mental health department.

FELDMAN: Was he still in mental health when he moved to Colorado?

ALEXANDER: He was retired when he moved to Colorado. He had been retired for several years. He had been one of the best organizers in the business; he did a terrific job, which was one of the reasons that I recruited him out of that mental health program. We had Lyons, a black social worker who later came to work for me at NASW, we had (inaudible) earlier. The combination of working with Denise over on the USC side, was a good combination.

FELDMAN: What did you find when you joined NASW as its executive director?

ALEXANDER: You want to know all of that?

FELDMAN: I think it is important for people to understand what was going on in our professional association

ALEXANDER: Well, first there had been a revolt in 1967 at the (NASW) Delegate Assembly. The platform had been taken over by the black students and they would not allow anything to happen until they had certain demands met. When we came back in 1969, things were worse. What happened was that the fact had been exposed that NASW was in severe debt; they had not handled their money properly. Basically, what happened was the big push for social workers to be 'relevant' during that period . . .

FELDMAN: You did put quotation marks around that statement.

ALEXANDER: Yes. What had happened was that some of the leadership in NASW had, in effect, literally taken over the national board on the premise that they had to be relevant to the urban crisis. I had been on the board until 1967 and then subsequent to that time, they took over things. John Turner, who currently is the head of the National Council on Aging, was on the NASW National board, and the whole group who were members of the 'old boys' club. They had declared a crisis in the profession and had stopped all of the existing committees and task forces and so forth. You remember that at that time NASW was divided into divisions. There was a social policy division, a practice division, professional education etc.; they stopped all of those, took the money, and started spending it on meeting this urban crisis. After I got there, I found out what had happened; money had just gone out the door for these various projects.

There had been a revolt at the 1967 Delegate Assembly, but in 1969 it became almost violent. There were all kinds of caucuses organized and so forth; the Black Caucus came in with a demand that 75% of NASW's resources be used to advance the minorities' cause. Charlie Schottland was the president at the time; he was kind of a victim because he had not paid attention to what was happening. He came in and was

attacked violently during this whole thing. There was an attack on Joe Anderson, who was the executive director. The Western Coalition, which I had originally started six years earlier, was almost taken over by several people who wanted to immediately throw out the existing board. They wanted to throw out Charlie and Joe and the Board, but cooler heads intervened and said you cannot do those kinds of things; there must be a decent process during which these folks are given a chance. What happened at that Assembly is almost impossible to describe: people were shouting at one another, there were near fistfights, etc. Dick Traylor and I sat down and wrote a program for the Association; although it was mostly Dick who wrote the plan. I had originally written a program in 1967, but it had not been adopted then. We came in with this program and sold it to the Western Coalition, and then to the Delegate Assembly. This program consisted of practice advancement, professional education, and community service - which was a different angle on this social policy approach.

Subsequent to that time, the Board of Directors terminated Joe and then they started looking for an executive director. I was approached in the summer, but I was not interested in it, really because I had a great job that I really loved. I went back for an interview and there was a committee of 21 people who were doing the interviews at the Chemical Bank, a big fancy bank in New York. I went in for the interview and they asked a lot of questions for a couple of hours. That was it, and then Whitney, who was heading the committee, called me up to ask me if I would take the job. We talked about it and I became interested in it and finally accepted it. So we made plans to go east and we left on December 1, 1969. I had signed a three-year contract and expected to be back after that, but I stayed 13 years.

What I found was that the organization was about three quarters of a million dollars in debt; it had been going downhill for about five years. Joe Anderson was at the end of his career and he had not paid much attention to anything. I could see that Bert Beck had really been the genius who had developed a lot of things, which had organized NASW: he developed the Academy of Social Workers concept; he had developed things, which had been creative and kept the profession moving. However, when he

left, he was getting discouraged about things and it had gone downhill from then on, that is, for about five years. When I arrived there, the first thing I did was to call a staff meeting of the entire staff.

FELDMAN: Had they ever been convened together before?

ALEXANDER: Never. I went into that staff meeting and said that we were going to try to reorganize NASW, but that there would be no changes for six months. Everybody would be given a chance to do what he or she could to accomplish this big mission. I told them that we would pull together to do this. People were crying and came up to me afterwards with tears in their eyes and said they had never heard anything like this before. It was amazing how the organization had deteriorated during that last period. I do not know if you want hear all of this or not, but those were the kinds of problems that I faced. Nelson Jackson was the Associate Director and he was an old friend of mine; he had made a lot of contributions to the profession when he worked with the Urban League. He had been out in front when they were making the early moves for ethnic minorities. He was riding the gravy train now, he was doing nothing in that job. He had helped to contribute to Joe's demise. He had made himself the international secretary for the IFSW, so that he could take trips, and so forth.

FELDMAN: He sounds like some of the ancient Sikhs that I have been reading about lately.

ALEXANDER: Exactly. I finally fired him, although he was an old friend. It was a hard thing to do, but I had given him six months and I had specific things that needed to be done. He appealed it on the basis of racism and so forth, but I made it stick.

FELDMAN: Whom did he appeal to, the board?

ALEXANDER: He appealed to the board but Whitney supported me on it. It was interesting, Whitney later told me when I asked him why I had been chosen when nobody really knew me on the national scene . . .

FELDMAN: You were a stranger from the West.

ALEXANDER: Yes, in a sense I was an upstart from the West. Whitney said that they had interviewed 30 or 40 people and he said that I was the only person who answered every question with a specific answer that addressed the problem posed. That was the basis on which he had supported my bid. He was a marvelous guy. He was perfect to work with; he had no ego problems. I would organize things and put them together for him and he would sit down for a few minutes to look over the project and then he would let me go ahead. I was careful not to do anything unless I had cleared it with him. I spent the first six weeks, night and day, going through the books to see what the problem was, to see what had happened. I had to borrow money from the bank to meet the payroll that first month.

Basically, what had happened was that there was a split right down the middle between the clinical social workers and the 'so-called' social policy people. The first thing I did, too, was to go out to the chapters and listen to what people had to say in the states. It was the same everywhere, split right down the middle. There were very few of them that were organized; most of them were engaged in vicious fighting with one another over who was going to control the direction. Not only that, but there were about 172 units scattered throughout the nation, ranging in size from about 25 to 3,500, all paying different dues rates. They had a basic dues rate for national, but then they could add on additional rates. Many chapters had large bank accounts and lots of activity, while others had no money and no activity. So I established a program concept for unity in the profession. There was no such thing as difference, we were all interested in one thing: social work as a professional methodology – both clinical and policy were absolutely necessary. Then a simple program was established with four or five key programs that were typical for a professional organizations: 1) you had to have practice

advancement through research and knowledge development; 2) you had to have professional standards divided into two parts A) individual standards for practitioners and B) standards for agencies in which we worked; 3) community service, that is we have to utilize the knowledge which we acquired through formal education and so forth which affected the community, and return that in the form of knowledge and practice issues; and 4) was membership services - as a profession we have a collective that could provide special services. So I just started out selling that program. I also needed to deal with the "clinical problem," so I got Paul Kurtzmann to do a study on the clinical practice situation and write an article on what had happened in the profession - the role of the Society for Clinical Social Workers and the role that NASW could play regarding this situation. Basically, what had happened with this response to the urban crisis direction, was that we had abandoned the educational activities that are part of the typical clinical needs. We had to develop some educational activities, so I initiated a chapter educational program. We set aside a small pot of money and made it available for chapters to put on educational programs. I got the chapters into the business of providing professional education, which is what they should have been doing anyway. Some of the chapters were doing a good job, but for most it was a debacle.

FELDMAN: Well, there was no one to provide the leadership to the chapters for doing this type of thing.

ALEXANDER: That is right. Eventually we developed agreements to send key leaders out into the field and we would provide the plan, the mechanism, the materials, and the leadership. All the chapters had to do was to provide the promotion to get people to come to these things. We had important clinical leadership out there. So NASW began to take over the provision of field education from the Society for Clinical Social Workers, which is a whole story in itself too. They were trying to wreck the organization. I had negotiated early on with Aetna Life Insurance, an agreement to accept clinical social workers for payment, and as we initiated it they went to Aetna and sabotaged me, saying that they would sue if Aetna followed through on this agreement with NASW. As a result the Aetna leadership came to me and said, "You guys need to get your act

together; we do not want to be involved in a donnybrook with the Clinical Society. Once you have worked out your differences, then come and see us." I tried to sit down with the leadership from the Clinical Society, but they were all opportunistic. There were a number of young clinicians that wanted to make a name for themselves; they were not really interested in what was best for the profession.

FELDMAN: Well, they do now have their own function.

ALEXANDER: Oh yes, they do now and have all along. I am familiar with them because they had started here in southern California; I helped to put them in business when I ran the Southern California Society for Mental Hygiene. I negotiated the deal for psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers; the Mental Hygiene Society was their referral source on a planned basis.

FELDMAN: Those were very exciting times, to put it mildly. In your role with NASW you innovated some other things too; for example the graduates of undergraduate program came in. Can you say a word about that?

ALEXANDER: For at least seven or eight years there had been a fight in the profession as to whether or not the baccalaureate people should be considered professionals and therefore should be members of NASW. That had originally grown out of the Social Security study completed in 1962 or 1965, in which they recommended that to provide order and training for entry into the Social Security program that there should be baccalaureate programs. That had increasingly developed and had gotten support; a lot of the undergraduate schools had picked this up and some had good programs and some had very bad programs. So it all come to a head about that time. We initiated the development of a standards document "Professional Manpower. " A committee had put this together, chaired by the fellow who was the dean at St. Louis University. He later went on to become the chancellor at Gonzaga.

FELDMAN: Yes, he was one of our graduates.

ALEXANDER: At any rate, after I had gotten into it and studied it, it became an analysis of the professional labor force in the United States. Two things were obvious: 1) the original Master's program were appropriate in their day, but with the expansion of governmental programs and voluntary agencies which provided social welfare services there was a rationalization within the industry. There were different types of jobs and different levels of jobs that could be done with different levels of training. We built that labor force document around that premise and promoted that. Ultimately, we turned that into the basis for licensing. I remember establishing a six-level analysis of the types of labor force, two that were at a paraprofessional level, and four that were at the professional level. We developed a model licensing law in which we promoted the concept of a three-level licensing: 1) the baccalaureate entry license; 2) the basic professional license associated with the Master's degree; and 3) the advanced practice license. That was what we started to promote to develop licensing in this country.

June 23, 1993

ALEXANDER: Let me go back and tell you something that I think was significant. When I came into the executive director position, there were lots of offers for blandishments. For example, I got a call from CSWE to go out to Hawaii for a conference on gerontology; they said I was needed out there. I asked them what it was that they wanted me to do. They replied that it was not much, I would be part of a program and that I would simply have to answer questions. My response was that I did not know much about gerontology. They responded by saying that was ok. Ultimately, I turned down their offer and about another half dozen of those types of things from other organizations.

The National Council on Social Welfare offered the same type of thing. NASW was not specifically tied into them; it had to do with the National Retirement program that you may recall for personnel who worked in health and welfare voluntary agencies. They invited me to the Princeton Club for a fancy dinner with several of their board members; they wanted to recruit me to join their board. I told them that I would have to think it

over and during that time I checked up on them. NASW was the prime membership of this pension program and I found out that there were all kinds of complaints about their program.

I went back to their board and said that I would like to help them out, but first there were some problems which would have to be corrected. I gave them a series of complaints, which we had received at NASW: people were not getting responses to their questions; people had applied for benefits, but were not receiving them; etc. They responded by saying that they would address these issues once specific names were referred to them directly. I had the staff send the names over; meanwhile I kept getting invited to fancy dinners as these complaints continued to come in.

I then hired a top notch CPA to do an investigation for us. I asked him to find out everything that he could about this program and he came back with a report that was devastating. It was the same old thing: the 'old boys' had not improved the operation in 20 years; there were poor and inadequate benefits, etc. I wrote a blistering letter to their Board of Directors about this report and informed them that unless they improved these deficiencies I would pull all of the NASW members out of their program. They fired the fellow who was the stuffed shirt at the head of this thing and started recruiting for another person. They found Bill Quinn, a fellow from Equitable Insurance Company. Bill came over to see me before he was hired and I talked to him about what was needed in the job and so forth. They ultimately hired him and today it is one of the major, national insurance companies; now it is called the Mutual of America. Mutual of America is the one that sponsors the 'Lifetime Achievement Award' in my name.

So that gives you an idea of a lot of the types of things that I had to avoid getting hooked into. I had to keep myself from being co-opted and maintain my independence. This made it very tough, because many of the people who were in the 'old boys' and 'old girls' club, like Catherine Kendall and all of those folks, had a kind of monopoly on the National Conference on Social Welfare; which was going down the tubes too. I had

to keep myself independent of those guys and just represent the interests of our membership.

FELDMAN: The job really requires a lot of political astuteness as well as community organization skills.

ALEXANDER: Constantly. In the first place, it was a thing that we had been complaining about for a long time; the East Coast control and domination of the whole thing. I will tell you one other brief story to illustrate the problems that NASW was having at that time. One of the things that the 'urban crisis taskforce' - which was running the organization in 1969 - had done, was to give gifts of money to a project in Mississippi. Wiley's outfit headed the project. Do you remember the Welfare Mothers?

FELDMAN: Oh, yes.

ALEXANDER: I do not know whether you remember or not, but we started that program. The local chapter gave Johnnie May Tilden \$4,000.

FELDMAN: I worked with her because I was chairing the County's Commission on Families and Children, set up in accordance with the 1962 Amendments to the Social Security Act. She was a member of that commission, and a welfare recipient.

ALEXANDER: Our chapter gave Johnnie May Tilden and the Welfare Mothers \$4,000 to get started. They eventually became a national organization. That was kind of a favorable spot for me, because I at least had some connection there. Shortly after I came into the job, they were knocking on our doorstep for money; but we did not have a dime. We already had to borrow money from the bank and we did not have money for anything else. So I sat down and said to Wiley, "We have to have a meeting with you guys and let's get things straight here." So we had a meeting with Wiley and his board of directors, which was composed mostly of black welfare mothers and two or three others, including Tim Samson. Do you remember Tim Samson?

FELDMAN: Oh yes, indeed.

ALEXANDER: Tim was one of Wiley's lieutenants. There also was a young guy in there, who was also a lieutenant. Jim Evans, who later came to work for me at NASW was one too. So they came in yelling and screaming about the fact that they were owed a lot of money. The money was for a program called the 'Mississippi Project.' What they did was to send students to the area down there and try to organize people; it was part of that movement. The NASW headquarters had apparently promised – in their usual fashion – they had been this way or that way; in effect, they had promised them about \$200,000 to \$300,000 towards this project. NASW had already given them some money; but in the last year during which the organization had kept going downhill, although they did not have money available, they had kept promising that they would give them money. NASW never said "no" to them; instead they pledged that as soon as they had more money, they would give it to them.

I had a meeting with this group and I told Wiley quite frankly, that NASW did not have any money and that their project was not going to be receiving any money. I also told them that I did not think that was where the members' money ought to be spent anyway. I concluded with the statement: that I was sorry and that we wanted to cooperate with them to help them in any way that we could. I offered that if they needed to organize in key areas, we could try to get the chapters to help, but we could not give them any money to support them.

Well, the talk blew up; a couple of the young guys and a couple of the women started cussing me up and down. Particularly, there was this young fellow, a nice guy, but he was trying to show off. He was blustering me, so I turned right around and blustered him – I knew more swear words than he did. So I shocked him and stopped him. Some of the women, who were more sensible, said, "Your people are always being bad to us." I said that I would make them a promise; that is, if they had any of our members who treated them badly, that is, badmouthing them or not doing what they were supposed to do, they could come directly to me and I would see to it that the problem would get

corrected. That kind of stopped them at that point. I then turned to Wiley and reiterated that NASW would cooperate, but would not be financially supportive. We did not have the money and even if NASW had it, I did not think it was the right way to spend the membership's money. After that meeting, our relationship with Wiley straightened out a little bit. He was just glad to have somebody who was honest with them.

FELDMAN: He knew where you stood.

ALEXANDER: Exactly. Before, NASW had always been frightened and afraid of them, so they would make half promises and so forth. So that was another of the trials and tribulations of starting.

FELDMAN: How long did you stay with NASW?

ALEXANDER: Thirteen years. During that time we initiated a whole series of programs; as a matter of fact, I have a short write-up of what I did. I will send it to you.

FELDMAN: I think it would be very good to add it to the Archives.

ALEXANDER: I just sat down and wrote about some of the experiences to try and keep track of all that was going on.

FELDMAN: However, you have such a good memory. I heard names today that I have not heard for years.

ALEXANDER: I was thinking as I came up here; do you remember Colleen Lipscomb?

FELDMAN: Oh yes, indeed.

ALEXANDER: Colleen was the one who hired me at the Veterans Service Center. I later took her position at the Southern California Mental Hygiene Society.

FELDMAN: What other materials do you have that might be added to our record of your achievements? You have already given me a curriculum vita for our files.

ALEXANDER: I have about four boxes of plaques that you can have.

FELDMAN: Was the presentation that was made in Washington recently - did they record that?

ALEXANDER: Yes.

FELDMAN: Is it possible for us to get a copy of that also?

ALEXANDER: Yes, I think so.

FELDMAN: I think it would be a great addition.

ALEXANDER: I think we can get that.

FELDMAN: That would be good. I told Ruth (Britton, Librarian) that I would ask you so that we can display them during receptions. That would be fine.

ALEXANDER: Sure.

FELDMAN: Now you are teaching at Long Beach State.

ALEXANDER: Right, I teach management and social policy.

FELDMAN: Are you there full-time or half time?

ALEXANDER: I teach half time. I deal with this health care coalition in Orange County, that I have organized. We have a big 65-member coalition of the same old type; everyone from the Junior league to the Asian organizations.

FELDMAN: Do you have some printed material on that?

ALEXANDER: Yes.

FELDMAN: Could you send that along, too?

ALEXANDER: Sure, as a matter of fact, I have the original report that we did in 1967 that we used to sensitize the Orange County community. We also have a follow-up report on some of the things that we have accomplished as a body.

I was able to get some money from foundations so that we could hire staff because I was doing staff work in addition to chairing the coalition for about four or five years – it was more than I could handle. I was able to get three foundations to give money and we now have two staff people running the operation. It has been run under the auspices of the United Way, but soon we are going to apply for a 501©3, (not-for-profit) as an independent coalition.

FELDMAN: Last summer I think it was, I had a request from Corrine Wolfe's group to do some biographies for the 'Pioneers of NASW' program. They wanted additional nominations and I sent your name in. Did you ever hear anything from them?

ALEXANDER: No, but I talk to Corrine a lot, and submitted some names to her for that 'Pioneers' program.

FELDMAN: I had a telephone conversation this morning with Rhoda Sarnat who has just come back from Washington. The Sarnats are giving NASW a grant for interpretation of social work. She went through the Pioneer Room and called me this

morning to tell me that she had found Al (Feldman) and me there, and various other people. I asked her if she saw you there as well, but she did not remember. So, I thought that I ought to ask you.

ALEXANDER: I do not know. Each time I have been to the office, I have forgotten to look.

FELDMAN: I have not been there, but I will check with Corrine. I will be in Albuquerque next month. I will see her in Santa Fe and ask her then.

ALEXANDER: I have done some writing on her biography. Somebody from the university system, was very interested. I read her biography and then responded to it or something. They asked me about some of the people that she had worked with. It was very interesting. I think I have a copy of her biography at home.

FELDMAN: I would like to see that.

ALEXANDER: I think I have told you this before, that we started this process at NASW to have five or six biographies or maybe more, oral biographies of the NASW leadership professionally done, including Arlien Johnson's.

FELDMAN: I know that, we have a copy of that here.

ALEXANDER: We got some money for that, but unfortunately the board of directors turned down the continuance of that project. I thought that was an absolute necessity.

FELDMAN: That is too bad because there is so much to learn from them.

ALEXANDER: These people are dying off all around us, too.

FELDMAN: That is one reason why we are so eager to work on this project. Let me just close this interview and give thanks to you. I will expect to get these other materials.

ALEXANDER INT

Please center heading: Chauncey Alexander
Interviewed by Frances Lomas Feldman
On 11/15/91 in ~~the~~ School of Social Work office
And
On 6/23/93 in Arlien Johnson Social Work Library

NOVEMBER 15, 1991

FELDMAN; There has been a delay since our first interview (^{4/27/90} ~~date?~~) due to your illness and surgery. (Then continue as shown.....)

p. 7, insert: Alliance (of America, a client-union group) ✓

p. 9, insert marginal heading:
JUNE 24, 1993

p. 9, insert parentheses (see interview of ^{4/27/90} ~~date?~~)

p. 11, insert:

Editorial note: At this point, Mr. Alexander digressed to reminisce about certain Army experiences in community organization and work with other professions, then returned to the UCLA experience that utilized some of the skills acquired earlier.

*insert date on p. 1
as shown end,
also, on p. 9*