2014-16-05 PT. 2

John Kelly

March 11, 2015

Rasmuson Library at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, Alaska

Karen Brewster, interviewer

Series: University of Alaska 100th Anniversary tapes

John Kelley said at the university in 1972 he was invited by Joe Fletcher to come back and serve as program manager for meteorology and oceanography for polar regions and the Antarctic at the National Science Foundation. He would be on loan for two years. He talked about tenure concerns if he took the position. He thought it would be a good position for him. He took the position and loved it. After two years he was asked to go to Boulder for six months. He was writing a chapter with Fletcher on polar climate. While he was there Max Britton called him and asked him to apply to be director for NARL. Kelley wanted to keep his faculty position, too. He went to Barrow in 1976.

Brewster asked him what OCSEAP stood for. Kelley said the Outer Continental Shelf Environmental Assessment Program. It was the BLM/NOAA OCSEAP. Brewster said you were the science liaison officer for this program. Kelley said for the state of Alaska in the Hammond administration. He sat on the planning committee and did workshops to determine emphasis.

Brewster said when he was director he wasn't teaching. Kelley said no he wasn't, but he was interested in educating science, math and engineering Native students. It was brought back to Fairbanks and he was able to get funding. They had students through ASIS. They gave the students the opportunity to work in a variety of the sciences. Many have gone on for advanced degrees. The program provided funding and training. They had access to the Alpha Helix. He said he is grateful to his faculty for support. He said the program had several names. Now they have ANSEP. Kelley said they weren't associated with ANSEP. They called their program the Orion Program. He said most of their students came in for science training. One of their students is a medical student. The students were at UAF and came from all over Alaska. The program no longer exists. They didn't have the funding to support it. Now the ANSEP program has picked up and is well funded. Brewster asked when they started the program. Kelley said they started in Barrow in the 1980s. The students were doing a television program. They did a program with them on the aurora. They filmed at NARL. One of their graduate students, John Turshak, interested in robotics went to Barrow and taught every class. Kelley said he received an award for his interaction with Native students in science and engineering. Brewster asked how many students went through the Orion Program. Kelley said he didn't know they would have no more than ten students at a time. They started in 1980 and he had money for the program in 1981 from

NSF. It lasted until his retirement. He had funds from the DOE. He retired in 2011. He said it was worth it.

Karen said in 1976 he returned to Barrow to serve as director of NARL. Kelley said yes from 1976 until 1980 he was the director. His job was to transition into closure. At the same time they were looking for a new host. The community itself had different ideas about how the land should be used. Some of the land was good for building houses and roads. There was competition for the land. One of the goals for the scientific community was to preserve old sites where work had been done for so many years. Since 1947 there had been research. Jerry Brown played a part as he was director of the international tundra biome. There was an idea to set the area aside as a bio reserve as far out as the DEW Line – the Barrow Environmental Observe (BEO). The land through the land claims act was transferred. UIC is the owner. They are the village corporation. There were competing interests, management and questions about funding. The Dept. of Wildlife Management operated the animal research facility. Tom Albert was there. He was a visiting scientist who didn't leave.

Brewster asked what it was like being the director. Kelley said it was wonderful. They had a lot of things going on. He was continuing his CO2 studies and trace minerals studies. He talked about the radioactivity study in Antarctica and its end.

Brewster asked him to comment on climate change. Kelley said he understands the worry the general public has about general climate change. He said if you look at the physics and chemistry of gases in the atmosphere such as CO2 and the increases they can show that CO2 in the atmosphere has been increasing since they have been measuring it and estimated to be ever since the industrial revolution. He said the question is - is it the only culprit. Some of the scientific community say we are due for cooling, but that is not what we are seeing. The question is are carbon dioxide and other gases increasing, are they the main or partial culprit. He said when people's livelihoods are at stake it is a big political problem. Brewster said as a scientists does he have a role. Kelley said he is the technical person who gathers the information, but he doesn't see himself as a politician. He said they have given the information at conferences. They all make their contributions through writing. He hasn't proselytized for ceasing some activities. He does think we should be talking about the problem. He believes the committees are necessary and they aren't without criticism. He said even the people at Scripts stay out of the debate. He thinks it is the wise thing to do as technical people.

Brewster asked him about his teaching. Kelley said he got into it right away when he returned. He taught applied oceanography or shipboard techniques. The state gave them ten days of ship time for the class. Then he had to rely on grant money. He said they had to be clever and do things like using smaller boats. He said in retirement he doesn't have to go out looking for money. He said it took a lot of time. Brewster asked what her favorite part of being at the university. Kelley said he enjoyed the research life. He wouldn't want it to be dominant and take over teaching. He said students deserve to get their best. He lets students know when they were slacking off after they paid so much for the class. He said public service is a fraction of what they have. He said it is important to convey information. He said they can't spend all their time on PR. His service included newsletters. He gave lots of public lectures, workshops, field studies, and ran teacher training courses. He talked about the training courses they offered. He

considered it a joyful experience. The teachers were learning how to do things themselves and transfer it to their students. One of his TAs Jennifer Bell told him they would be teaching a course through the College of Rural Development in Nome. He talked about cost cutting equipment they could use. He worked with ATN (statewide system of communications). They helped him set up seminars and courses. He had an acoustics seminar which was another area of his study. The technology got cheaper and became available. It is commonplace now in smart classrooms. He also got into Skype. He said not many people take marine acoustics. He got more students by using Skype. After he retired he was asked to present the acoustic oceanography by Skype. Brewster asked if ATN had a delay. Kelley said yes. It was crude. Brewster said you were using it and saw the benefits. Kelley said he decided in retirement that is what he would do. He didn't think it would be as robust as it is. Right before he retired he presented a class in environmental oceanography. He said a certain amount of mathematics would be beneficial to the students in the program. He introduces mathematics to them in the course. He talked about introduction to oceanography course. With the courses the televised programs worked out well. He said some of his colleagues don't want to do e-learning. The students contact him any hour of the day. Sunday nights can be very busy for him.

Brewster asked how he would assess his time in the university. Kelley said it was exactly what he wanted to do. He said it was serendipity. He said it goes all the way back to his undergraduate training. He talked about the path of his career. He published recently in Nature with colleagues at Script. Brewster said it sounded like being at UAF opened doors of opportunity. Kelley said that is an accurate statement. He wouldn't recommend his way of doing things. He wanted the academic life. He has not tried industry. Brewster said at some point he did get tenure. Kelley said that he wouldn't do tenure the way he did it. Academia is changing. Forty percent of the faculty on this campus are adjunct. Commercial colleges are doing well. He said all these things are the wave of the future.

Brewster asked if there were other things he did at UAF. Kelley said he served on various committees both in his college and at the university level. He was on the strategic planning committee in the 90s. He was involved in accreditation several times. He was given a Usibelli Award. Brewster said she hasn't asked about the NARL years because it was covered in another interview. Kelley said NARL was sort of a separate career. The NSF gave him a taste of management. It was a good opportunity for him. There were two leaders running the same organization. There was a Navy commander at the laboratory and the scientific director. He talked about Max Brewer. Kelley understood what the roles were. He was able to get along with the Navy commander. There were gatherings they had together. They hired a contractor to run the camp. They did bend rules such as T3. It had been abandoned when he took over the lab. They were notified by the university that T3 was moving south. They agreed that they needed to go out to it. While flying over it in a commercial plane he could see T3. When he returned to Barrow he said they needed a plan. He talked about landing on the ice island. They found a tractor on the island. T3 was about 200 miles north of Barrow. A Russian station went by first.