

**Narrator:** William Philip  
**Date:** 12/11/2019  
**Interviewed by:** Justin Wadland  
**Place:** Tacoma, Washington

**Justin Wadland 0:00**

**This is Justin Wadland, and I'm interviewing Bill Philip at his home in Lakewood for the *Founding Stories* oral history project about the founding and development of the University of Washington Tacoma campus. And Mr. Philip, could you please introduce yourself and mention your affiliation with UW Tacoma?**

**Bill Philip 0:21**

I'm Bill Philip and was born here in Tacoma. Lived here all my life. And I worked as a banker and a truck driver. And I really love the city of Tacoma, have for years. That's one of my things I do.

**Justin Wadland 0:46**

**You've already started to do this, but I was wondering if you could tell us a bit about your family background. You've mentioned that you did grow up in Tacoma. How did you go from being a truck driver to becoming a banker?**

**Bill Philip 1:01**

Well, that was easy. One day I was driving a truck down in—I think it was—Chehalis, and there was a 50-foot bridge over the river I had across. There was a State Patrol man behind me, and he stopped me. He said, "What are you gonna do?" I said, "I'm gonna drive across that bridge." He said, "No, you're not." So I had to unload 250 cases of dynamite, case by case, as that was before the liftgates—or whatever they called them—and carry them one by one across the bridge. They each weighed 65 pounds. I had to load them back in the truck and drive to wherever I was gonna unload them and unloaded them. I got home about 11:30 at night. I parked the truck, threw the keys down, and I said, "That's it."

**Justin Wadland 1:53**

**And from there you went ... What was your? How did you go? You said, "That's it," and then you ...**

**Bill Philip 1:56**

Well, my grandfather was an investment banker in San Francisco. And I thought about that, and I said, "You know, I'd like to get into banking." So I applied to Puget Sound Bank, and I was hired as a clerk in the trust department. And in those days, a big old bank vault that I had to open and close. Only they had a 24-hour clock, so every long weekend, I had to go down to the bank two or three times to open and lock the door. And then I gradually just worked my way up from there.

**Justin Wadland 2:20**

**And what is your educational background? Were you also ... because you went from a truck driver to becoming a banker. And was there education associated with that?**

Bill Philip 2:50

Well, when I was in high school, I was—what do you call it?—a four-point student, so I quit studying. When I left my class, I ... there was a window across the hall that had a high shelf. I put my book on the shelf and go, and when I come back, I pick up my book and go to school. And so I took that with me when I went to the University of Washington. That didn't work too well, University of Washington. And it was a bit of a shock to me. My chemistry class had over 360 students in this big auditorium. So I'm saying, "Well, they don't know whether I'm here or not." Oh, they did. So I flunked the course. It was my second year. And so I said, "I'm out of here." So at that point, I left school. And one thing I've been blessed with all my life is a ton of common sense. If you have good common sense, you can get through anything. I've always said that. So that's what helped me survive over the years.

**Justin Wadland 4:00**

**So did you, you ended up going from ... you left UW. And you went into banking.**

Bill Philip 4:07

I went back to work. My dad had a hardware store. I went back to work there for a while, and then went to the bank.

**Justin Wadland 4:16**

**Okay. So I'm going to skip this question because the next one was, "How you ended up in Tacoma?" But maybe you could talk a little bit about how long your family has been in Tacoma.**

Bill Philip 4:27

That part, I don't know. My grandfather, as I said, was an investment banker in San Francisco. And I think there was a depression or something like that, and he went bankrupt. So he left San Francisco and came up here. And why he started a hardware store I'll never know. But he did. And my dad went to work for him, and when he died, and ... that's family background.

**Justin Wadland 5:03**

**What was Tacoma like—downtown in particular—before UW Tacoma was founded and began to have that big impact, especially when the university opened in 1997? And it's in the warehouse district. Like, in the 1980s.**

Bill Philip 5:22

Tacoma. It just suffered. Since I grew up here I can remember. When it's Christmas time, you couldn't walk down Broadway because it was so crowded with people on the street and on the sidewalk in it. And then they opened the mall, retail left Tacoma, and then Tacoma just, like,

then nothing happened with empty storefronts, and of course, that warehouse district, it was empty.

And it bothered me. So I knew George Weyerhaeuser, and he had a real estate company. Division, I should say, called Cornerstone, I think it was. So I got a hold of Jeannie Anderson and Paul. Paul, I can't say his last name, but he ended up being mayor of Seattle [Paul Schell]. And I invited them down and took them up on Market Street and showed them the view. Walked them through town and told them what we needed. And that led to the Sheraton Hotel, which is now Murano Hotel, and the financial center on Broadway. And things began to pick up then. I think that was what started.

**Justin Wadland 6:45**

**Where was Puget Sound Bank located during this time?**

Bill Philip 6:50  
Eleventh and Pacific.

**Justin Wadland 6:57**

**And that's where you would work most of the time? Is that kind of where your office would be? So you would be really like—**

Bill Philip 7:05  
Yes, I started out in the basement.

**Justin Wadland 7:06**

**Started out in the basement and worked your way up.**

Bill Philip 7:10  
Yeah, I was there. I think it was formed in 1894 or something like that. The same time as the city or statehood.

**Justin Wadland 7:18**

**So you really, I mean, were just front-row seat to this history of Tacoma, of the decline of downtown and then, the interest in reinvesting in downtown and the reemergence with education.**

Bill Philip 7:36  
Yes. And then the Russell company located here. And they were other employers of well-educated people, and they made good salaries. So they've definitely had an impact on downtown Tacoma.

**Justin Wadland 8:02**

**And that leads into the next question about your role in the business community, leading up to the establishment of UW Tacoma. I've read some accounts or heard, kind of, the major economic players in Tacoma at that time were you, George Russell, and George Weyerhaeuser. And that if, for things to be happening, it was kind of this team that would really have a big influence on that. And so what was your relationship like with George Weyerhaeuser and George Russell? And was it more as a friendship or were there more formal sort of overlapping interests?**

Bill Philip 8:40

Well, it's interesting, because we all grew up in Tacoma, and that makes a big difference. You know, one of the problems today is so many senior people come from out of town. They don't have that same feeling about Tacoma. But they call us the BGs. "We ought to go see the BGs." So we all felt pretty strongly about Tacoma. That made it a lot easier, too.

**Justin Wadland 9:05**

**Did you know them growing up?**

Bill Philip 9:06

I went to grade school, Lowell School, with George Weyerhaeuser. And George Russell grew up out here, I think, in Lakewood. So I didn't have that much contact with him.

**Justin Wadland 9:26**

**And then, I've been reading Rod Hagenbuch's memoir, that recounts his involvement in UW Tacoma, and in that, he talks about his being appointed as the I believe the CEO of the Economic Development Board. Were you involved in that recruitment? And could you tell us about that?**

Bill Philip 9:52

No. I started the Economic Development Board years and years ago, and something new to the city, if you can believe it. And I had representatives from the Port of Tacoma, the County, and Tacoma. And I got them all together one day, and they looked around the room. "Bill, this is the first time we've all met." Can you imagine that? Here they are, the people that run the City, the Port, and the County. And they've never met.

**Justin Wadland 10:19**

**What year was that?**

Bill Philip 10:21

Boy, I don't remember. But then I left the EDB. And I was not involved when Hagenbuch was CEO.

**Justin Wadland 10:39**

**So you've been a strong advocate for UW Tacoma. What would you say has been your vision of UW Tacoma? What did you hope it would do—sort of, when you were, sort of, in those early days, when the conversations were emerging about bringing a university to Tacoma?**

Bill Philip 10:58

Barbara knows this very well. I always tell her, it was a small school, had excellent professors and small classes, so they could become the Stanford of the Pacific Northwest. And kids would come down from— Kids. Students would come down from Seattle to go to UW Tacoma. I'm still working on this.

**Justin Wadland 11:24**

**And when did you, do you recall when you first really, either you had the idea or when the idea emerged of bringing a university, sort of, what the origins of that was?**

Bill Philip 11:40

Well, by that time I had formed Columbia Bank. And a friend of mine called me one day and said, "You see that helicopter flying around downtown Tacoma?" I said, "No, but I can hear it." He said, "That's Sam Smith, the president of Washington State looking for a location for a branch of Washington State. I said, "Over my dead body," and hung up. I picked up the phone and called Bill Gerberding.

And prior to this, business leaders from Seattle and Tacoma all got together to form some kind of a group that would look at all the things going on, and the requests for money, and so forth. And about 15 or 20 of us in a hotel room. And they turned around and said, "You're gonna run." I said, "Okay. I'll run it better on my way. Period. I don't need any influence from you people. If you don't like it, I'll quit. And Gerberding was in that, was in the original Economic Development, I mean, the committee. And Bill Gerberding, Gary Reed, and Frank Shrontz, who was then the chairman of Boeing. So I knew those people pretty well. That's how I got to know Bill Gerberding.

And so I called him and said, "What's this? I hear about the state is going to pass a law that the university can have branches." I said, "I had not heard anything about that." He said, "Yeah, that's true." I said, "Well, UW Tacoma should apply for a br—" UW Tacoma. That's my age showing. "UW Seattle should file for a branch in Tacoma." And he said, "Okay." He talked to the Board of Regents. Well, the Board of Regents were against it. Originally, I was really mad. "What the heck is the matter with these guys?" And then I realized that they were concerned about the state taking funding from Seattle campus to give Tacoma. So that was legitimate. You know, they've been looking for money ever since they opened. And so then I understood it. So that's how I picked up the phone, called Gerberding, and said, "Well as the Board of Regents if they want to a branch of Washington State in Tacoma. That might have changed the view.

**Justin Wadland 14:41**

**So before the helicopter flying overhead, had, I mean, were you participating in or aware of the conversations—**

Bill Philip 14:50

No. I had not heard a word about it, about the authority to ... actually the law had not passed yet. Authorities to open branches in other locations. That's all news to me.

**Justin Wadland 15:12**

**So once this started, could you tell us about some of the key events in your memory that led to the establishment of UW Tacoma? Of course, we have this helicopter and the call. And what other, if you think about this as kind of a timeline of this early period, what are the major marks in your mind about?**

Bill Philip 15:32

Well through the Executive Council, we got pretty close with the main campus real estate department, trying to determine where they're going to locate the branch. And they said it's going to be in Fife or the Tacoma Community College campus, the property, of course, they already owned. And you know, there wasn't much we could do to change their mind. But I'd always envisioned it being down in that warehouse area. In my vision, of course, they'd tore all those warehouses down and build a brand new campus. And, so then, I started to think, "What can I do?" So one night I was sitting here—not here, at my house—thinking. I remembered that Pierce County, to attract Fort Lewis at the time, offered to give them the property. And I thought, you know, that might work. So that's when I came up with the idea of offering Gerberding a million dollars to do what ... I said, "You can go on a vacation. I don't care. Use it whatever you want, wherever you want, if you locate it in downtown Tacoma." As Gerberding responds, when I talk about this to the CEOs, I said that was when a million dollars was a lot of money. And so I called the members of the Executive Council together. And, you know, Erivan Haub was on at that time, the multibillionaire. And Weyerhaeuser, of course, and Russell, and Shrontz and Reed. Reed's family owned Simpson Lumber. And I don't know, I think three of us put in 350,000 dollars each to form the million. And Barbara says I had to lock the door to keep them in there, but that's not true. They're all very excited. That was the easiest million dollar I ever raised. So then, that certainly turned the corner for the location.

**Justin Wadland 18:05**

**So the location—that's definitely a really important piece of the history, and I'm wondering about what your motivation was during this for establishing the campus. What were you hoping to get out of it?**

Bill Philip 18:22

I told you early on over in the room. That was such a blight on Tacoma. And everything had to grow that way because you go north and you run into Stadium Way and the hills and everything. Everything had to grow that way. So I thought if we could clean that up, we would have a better chance of having the city grow with new buildings and businesses.

**Justin Wadland 18:49**

**Would you say that that motivation was shared by the other people who made those large donations at that time?**

Bill Philip 19:00

You know, I don't know. I never asked. I assume they wanted UW in Tacoma. Where? I don't know a thing. Maybe they thought that far.

**Justin Wadland 19:20**

**Are there other pieces of that timeline that you would want to pull out? Or maybe move on to some other topics?**

Bill Philip 19:28

Well, I got to, well, you know people. I got to worrying that people would find out about where the UW was going and start buying the property and raise the price, cost UW more. So I called the guy that ran the Executive Council for me, and I said, "Get a hold of Bill Riley and find out exactly where they're going to locate the campus, and then go buy, have him go buy as many options on the property as you can."

And he said, looked at me and said, "Where are we going to get the money?" I said, "Well, we'll have the Executive Council borrow the money from the bank." They headed out the door and came back in. He said, "Bill, you know, they haven't passed the legislation. What if they don't pass the legislation? What are we gonna do?" And he really stumped me there. So I looked at him. I said, "Well, we'll cross that bridge when we come to it." So he went out and bought as many options as he could. Hopefully that saved the school some money.

**Justin Wadland 20:46**

**That leads right into one of the next questions that I wanted to ask about is the relationship you may or may not have had with the larger legislative efforts to pass this through. There was the the group sort of colloquially known as the Pierce County mafia in the legislature, with Brian Ebersole as Speaker of the House and Dan Grimm, Chair of the Ways and Means Committee. And then, of course, the governor was from Tacoma as well.**

Bill Philip 21:22

Booth Gardner. He was on my board of directors.

**Justin Wadland 21:24**

**So, things were lined up pretty well for Tacoma in this. So I'm just curious what kind of contacts you had and to what extent there were kind of conversations going back and forth.**

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Bill Philip 21:38

Well, I had conversations with Brian and Mark because they're both, I knew them both. I know Grimm, too. Wasn't he involved with the UW in some way? I don't know. Early on? I don't know. Anyway, I knew Grimm, too. And when they were going to put in the vote, I went down and paced the House floor with Brian. The Senate, Marc Gaspard had already passed it. So it was up to the House. He said, "Bill, calm down. It's gonna pass." And obviously it did, so they bailed me out of all my problems.

**Justin Wadland 22:18**

**So you were there on the day that it ... Can you share what it was like when ... ?**

Bill Philip 22:26

Well, right. I can hear the discussion. I don't remember it now. And I think, for the most part, the legislators, they were never even against it. So it passed.

**Justin Wadland 22:31**

**And you were relieved.**

Bill Philip 22:43

Yeah.

**Justin Wadland 22:46**

**So then, the other piece of this. So you had, we've been talking about this executive group, and then the university—or I guess the state—had the Higher Education Coordinating Board, which was overseeing these efforts of establishing the branch campuses. And during this time, there was a study that was set up and led by Donna Kerr, who would become the first administrator for the two campuses established. Were you involved in that in any way, or did you have any conversations with those folks?**

Bill Philip 23:27

I knew them all. I like to say, they were at the 30,000 foot level, and I was on the ground. And I had one discussion with them. And ... I have to be nice, but I never run into them. So I don't know what they did. You don't have to put that in. Until I heard that they were going to ask the state to provide University of Washington Tacoma diplomas. And I went [unintelligible]. So I called a meeting and met with them. I said, "How would you like to be a student from Tacoma, Washington, going to New York, and you have a chance to get a good job, and they say, 'Where'd you go to school?' 'I have a diploma from University of Washington Tacoma.'?" All my life I've traveled—in my working life, I travel to New York and Chicago and whatever big city it was, and whoever I traveled with, business people, somebody would ask where we were from, they all said Seattle, and I said Tacoma. So as always, nobody in New York knew Tacoma existed. And, to me, that was important that they get that recognition that Tacoma was part of Seattle, because, as you know, Seattle is a great school.



**Justin Wadland 24:45**

**So that's where it goes back to that original vision you had, that was where, one of these instances, where you felt like there was a potential to have it go in a different direction than you were hoping.**

Bill Philip 25:01

I think it gives Tacoma more credibility. I don't know how you guys feel.

**Justin Wadland 25:10**

**Well, we're asking you, so I don't want to give you my view. Maybe after we're done with the interview, I can talk a little bit about that. I don't want to take up more time than I need to. So the idea of a branch campus met with some resistance, and we've talked a little bit about that—the UW, UW Faculty Senate. Also, it seems that some of the local universities, University of Puget Sound—**

Bill Philip 25:45

They felt threatened. Local universities felt threatened.

**Justin Wadland 25:49**

**—and community colleges as well. It kind of, like, everybody's kind of, like, "Okay, we're gonna ..." Is this kind of gonna draw students and money away from—**

Bill Philip 25:57

From their schools. And I think the UW Tacoma people calmed that down because, as you know, when we started, we were only a two-year school. So the students had to go to school for two years someplace. And most of our students came from community colleges, obviously, and PLU and UPS. So then they didn't feel as threatened because they at least get a shot at the students.

But you might say UW Tacoma is a little cheaper than PLU and UPS.

**Justin Wadland 26:38**

**And were you involved in any of the efforts to do outreach to these groups or was that—**

Bill Philip 26:44

I met with ... I didn't meet with UPS. I met with the gentleman running PLU, and I cannot remember his name. But I remember meeting with him.

**Barbara Bartolatz 26:57**

**Was it [Loren] Anderson?**

Bill Philip 26:58

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Yeah, I think it was. I met with him and talked to him and tried to calm him down. For some reason I think I might have gotten Jane Russell involved too because she was well known there and respected.

**Justin Wadland 27:19**

**And another person that you might have interfaced with in advocating for this is Kelso Gillenwater, editor of the News Tribune. Could you tell us a little bit about him and maybe—?**

Bill Philip 27:33

Kelso was larger than life. And very outgoing and happy. He and I got along great. We had a great relationship. And you know what? Between the two of us, we could promote anything. We felt good. Nothing personal, but we felt it was good for the city of Tacoma or the school or whatever.

**Justin Wadland 28:06**

**And bringing it to the University of Washington Tacoma and establishing, were there particular things where you worked together in that regard?**

Bill Philip 28:14

None that I could recall, but I'm sure there were.

**Justin Wadland 28:21**

**How are you doing? Do you need a break at all?**

Bill Philip 28:23

No, I'm fine.

**Justin Wadland 28:24**

**Okay, I just want to make sure that I—**

Bill Philip 28:25

I'm a retiree. I have nothing to do.

**Justin Wadland 28:34**

**I just know that it could become tiring to just remember even, you know, it's just, it takes effort to bring up those memories. So were you involved in any way with the South Sound Higher Education Council?**

Bill Philip 28:51

No, just that one. That one.

**Justin Wadland 28:54**

**The Executive?**

Bill Philip 28:57

I didn't really know what they did. I never really looked into it. Do you know what their responsibility was? What did they contribute?

**Justin Wadland 29:10**

**So this is the South Puget Sound Higher Education Council.**

Bill Philip 29:14

Fred Haley and—

**Justin Wadland 29:15**

**Yeah. Fred Healy and—**

Bill Philip 29:17

—Dawn Lucien and Barbara Bingham. I knew all three of them.

**Justin Wadland 29:20**

**Yeah. And so, my understanding of this was that it seemed like there was a lot of work happening at the Economic Development Board for making the case around UW Tacoma. And then there was another group that emerged. And when I talked to Brian Ebersole, he described this group as being political, sort of, continue to have the conversation and apply pressure actually outside of Tacoma. That was his way of framing it. The Hagenbuch memoir, as far as I can tell, he was a little confused about what its purpose was. And it just seemed to be kind of happening at the same time as the Economic Development Board group. And so—**

Bill Philip 30:09

That's how I said. I don't know what they did.

**Justin Wadland 30:16**

**I'm just reading through ... We've already kind of touched on some of these questions.**

**Joan Hua 30:32**

**But you said you knew all three of them. You knew Dawn Lucien, Barbara Bingham?**

Bill Philip 30:38

And Fred Haley. Fred Haley was the co-owner of Brown & Haley, the Alma Roca candy company. And the Brown of Brown & Haley was also on the board of directors of Puget Sound, so I knew him pretty well. So I got to know Fred.

**Justin Wadland 30:58**

**You knew them but weren't quite sure what they were up to.**

Bill Philip 31:01

No. I should have probably looked at the purpose when the government appointed them, but I didn't.

**Justin Wadland 31:12**

**So even after UW Tacoma was established, it experienced some uncertainties: there were low enrollments. Like right at the beginning, some enrollment targets were not quite what they expected. And so we've been talking a lot about what has led up to the establishment of the campus in 1990. And it opens in the Perkins Building downtown.**

Bill Philip 31:44

One of my employees was one of the first graduates.

**Justin Wadland 31:46**

**Oh, who was that?**

Bill Philip 31:48

Julie Healy. [phonetic]

**Justin Wadland 31:49**

**Okay. And did you go to that graduation?**

Bill Philip 31:52

I think there were three—total of three students I think. Was it there more?

**Justin Wadland 32:01**

**Four or five. Yeah, there's a picture of them. It's a very small—**

Bill Philip 32:05

Yeah, yeah. So yeah.

**Justin Wadland 32:09**

**So it's in this very early days where, you know, for graduates from the university, and there are some questions about its future. How involved were you in the university in those days?**

Bill Philip 32:24

Once I helped get it started, I kind of backed away, feeling that the people in Seattle knew how to run a university. I didn't know anything about it. And so I just didn't pay any attention to it. And it probably got off to a slow start because of the location, one thing—it's an old office building.

And I don't know how aggressive the first chancellor was. And I don't know what subjects they thought at all.

**Justin Wadland 32:57**

**It was a liberal studies program with 13 faculty that were hired.**

Bill Philip 33:03

Thirteen?

**Justin Wadland 33:04**

**Yeah, there were, so—**

Bill Philip 33:06

Must be a state operation.

**Justin Wadland 33:10**

**For UW Bothell and UW Tacoma at the same time, they hired 13 faculty for both campuses, and they both were established and created at this same time. It was a liberal ... they essentially created the curriculum from the beginning.**

Bill Philip 33:31

Well, to me, part of the slow start could be the students you focused on. You know, they had to start at a different school; they're expensive, and there's no way they get to go right to University of Washington Tacoma. And I don't know, again, what subject they wanted or what subjects they offered. But I don't think early on it was very attractive to students. If they really wanted an education, what does it offer me? They should let me set the program: engineering, technology.

**Justin Wadland 34:20**

**So it sounds like you took a step back. I guess, while we're still sort of on the subject of the early days of it, it seems there was ... you've been involved in a number of the fundraising efforts around the university. And the first one was this million dollars to place the university in downtown Tacoma. The other is the Founders Endowment. That's a separate effort. And could you talk a little bit about that piece?**

Bill Philip 34:56

Well you're testing my memory now.

**Justin Wadland 34:59**

**I have, actually, if you want to read the news article, I have a couple here.**

Bill Philip 35:04

What was the purpose? That's awful to say, isn't it? [unintelligible] David Allen knows my ... the guy that ran the Executive Council for me. It was a good idea, wasn't it?

"It's the largest donation to either the university," oh, that must mean Bothell. Now you've jogged my memory. We thought it would help get the school started. And that was the charmer.

**Justin Wadland 36:02**

**And you've been involved in others ... Have you been involved in other efforts like that over the years, or, sort of, like as we—?**

Bill Philip 36:11

Nothing getting something started that I can think of. Probably the Glass Museum, I mean, but ... the Technology Institute. That got me in trouble with your former president McCormick. Gary Locke, who was then governor, and I was chairman of the Advisory Board, came to the board and said, "I want to," you probably read about this in the paper. He wanted us to establish a technology school in Tacoma. So he said, "I will get the state, we'll give you six million dollars if you can raise four." I said it's a piece of cake. And about a month later, he came back. He said, "We're going to reverse this. You raise six, and I'll raise four." I said, "Okay." So, we raised the money, but then we had to go down to Olympia—Herb Simon and I—to talk the legislators into providing the money to establish the school. And, you know, I'm a very conservative person. And Herb is a very liberal person. And I spent all my time calling on Herb's senators and representatives because there weren't very many Republican. And I remember sitting in Helen Sommers, I think—wasn't she the head of the education committee or something? Anyway. The employees were standing outside, screaming, yelling for a raise, and we were trying to get six million dollars from these people. And we spent, I think, the whole day down there. And I can remember at the end of the day, going to Gary Locke, and I looked at him. I said, "You know, Governor, I'm tired of carrying your baggage. It's time for you to go out there and start raising money. We're going home." And I guess he must have done something. I'm not a big Democrat so I can say those things.

**Justin Wadland 38:19**

**So it sounds like you continued to have a key role in—**

Bill Philip 38:22

We wanted to establish that technology school.

**Justin Wadland 38:26**

**And this was because you were serving as the chairman of the Advisory Board. And what years were you serving in that role?**

Bill Philip 38:37

Vicky Carwein asked me when she first came. When was that? You don't know. You can look up to see when Vicky Carwein started.

**Justin Wadland 38:48**

**She was the chancellor when I started in 2003. So it would have been in the probably late 90s then [1995]?**

Bill Philip 38:56

She wanted me to go on the board, the Advisory Board. And I said, "Okay, but you gotta let me pick the board." Because I don't think there are any business people at that time on the board. I guess in my .. you don't want to print this, but I'd probably say do-gooders. And I said, "As long as I can pick the board." And so I picked Jane Russell and people like that, which would, I thought, give the Advisory Board more credibility, when you have those big names on it.

**Justin Wadland 39:43**

**And you said when you were in that role ... I'm kind of looking at some of these questions, but I'm sort of trying to make some of these a little more specific. You said that you ran into some challenges with the president of UW while working to establish this Institute of Technology.**

Bill Philip 40:03

Richardson [Richard McCormick]. He really got upset. He invited Herb and I to Seattle to meet with him when we were through. And he just read the ... and whoever the ... no, Richardson? [McCormick] What am I trying to say? Anyway. They just read us the riot act, just tore us down like a bunch of kids. And I'm thinking to myself, "My God." He said, "We set the agenda for legislation. You don't." And he went on and on. That's silly.

**Justin Wadland 40:41**

**This was because you were going directly to the legislature to ...**

Bill Philip 40:45

We had already raised money. It's finished. It was done. But you know, it was the governor's idea. It's not ours. What am I supposed to do? Go to the University of Washington Seattle and say, "Can we do this?" Anyway, I really got upset with the guy, kind of charged him off. But then he sent down the head of the number school or whatever they call it? Who is a very well known, respected professor in Seattle. He wanted to meet with me. So I met with him at UW. And he read me the riot act. He said, "You're a cowboy. You're not supposed to go down there. We set the agenda." Just ripping me up and down. I just looked at him and got up and left.

**Justin Wadland 41:31**

**And then there is an Institute of Technology at UW Tacoma. So—**

Bill Philip 41:36

That was the governor's idea. That was a good idea.

**Barbara Bartolatz 41:43**

**Was it while you were on the Advisory Board?**

Bill Philip 41:45

I was chairman. When Locke came.

**Barbara Bartolatz 41:50**

**But, no, was it at the same time that you started the conversations with the Milgard family?**

Bill Philip 41:57

That was the business school. When did we start that?

**Barbara Bartolatz 42:06**

**Twenty-five years ago.**

Bill Philip 42:07

So it was one of the first schools?

Okay, so Milgard. We helped put the Gary and ... Jim had mentioned business years ago, the Milgards. So we went to see, Herb and I went to see Jim to see if he would give us 15 million dollars to get the school started. At the same time, the big shots from the business school in Seattle were going to Jim and Gary. They were asking for 50 million dollars to get something for their business school. And I said, "Well, Jim, that's a pretty easy equation." He looked at me and said, "Bill, we're not giving any money to Seattle. Don't worry." And Herb and I, I don't think you better print this, but Herb and I walked out the door and looked at each other, and we said, "We should have asked for 20, because it was so easy." I don't know. You better not say that.

**Justin Wadland 43:11**

**So then it sounds like you were really involved in setting up not just the Institute of Technology but the Milgard School of Business. And then, Barbara, are there others that just, from your—?**

**Barbara Bartolatz 43:31**

**Those are the two big initiatives. And then you continue to be involved. You are currently our honorary chair for a fundraising campaign. You're still doing work with the Milgard family behind the scenes.**

Bill Philip 43:45

You mentioned Kelso Gillenwater. Kelso and I had lunch with the family that owns Seattle Times—can't say their name. And he was the editor of the Seattle Times. We had lunch in the Tacoma Club. And Kelso introduced me and said, "Bill's raised more money in Pierce County than the Internal Revenue Service."

**Justin Wadland 44:16**



**So, one thing I'd like to just talk a little bit more. You've kind of touched on this in a number of examples, is this relationship between University Washington Tacoma and UW Seattle. You've talked about the importance of the UW on the degree. And yet there also are these tensions between the locally based campus, fundraising around it, setting up programs, and the administrative structure of UW Seattle, and the expectations around that. Are there other aspects that you might want to highlight around that that we haven't discussed?**

Bill Philip 45:03

No, I ... probably relates to Richardson more than anything else. But I can see from their standpoint, again, where's Tacoma? That they're concerned that we would drain funds from Seattle. And I think that was the primary motivating factor from their standpoint because I don't think they would have anything against higher education. So that didn't make any sense.

**Justin Wadland 45:46**

**Who do you think has benefited the most in Tacoma from UW Tacoma being here?**

Bill Philip 45:53

Oh, well, first the students. I sat through a graduation a couple years ago. And just looking at those students, none of them could afford to go to Seattle. Just looking them. None of them. Of course that was in the liberal arts part of the ceremony, not the ... And they didn't have transportation. They didn't have money. They didn't have anything. So those young kids got an education that I thought was important to them.

**Justin Wadland 46:30**

**And have you had much interaction with UW Tacoma students beyond the graduation?**

Bill Philip 46:36

No.

**Justin Wadland 46:38**

**And as a, I mean, somebody who's connected to the business community and in banking, I mean, have you seen UW Tacoma graduates staying in Tacoma and really contributing to the economic vitality beyond just the presence of the university?**

Bill Philip 46:58

I've heard that they have, and I have one experience with—I'm on Janine Terrano's board of directors, and she's hired kids from from the tech school, and she said they're really good. Well educated, you know. Well educated.

**Justin Wadland 47:16**

**Others who you think have benefited from UW Tacoma?**

Bill Philip 47:19

Well, I think the business community itself has, being able to hire these educated kids just to promote their ... work in their business. Obviously it has to help.

**Justin Wadland 47:34**

**And do you still come to campus and walk through that?**

Bill Philip 47:38

No. I'm 93, and I don't enjoy driving on the freeway anymore because there are so many idiots out there. And so I just have not gone down there very much. Last time I was there was probably for Divya [McMillin]—her, what do you call it? Her symposium that she has. And my birthday party.

**Justin Wadland 48:13**

**How do you perceive the evolution of the campus over time? Has the campus stayed true to what you hope it will become?**

Bill Philip 48:20

Yes, and hope is a good word because, again, I wasn't a big fan of the original plan to hire this displaced person, people, or whatever they are. I've always envisioned that as a four-year school, and when they decided to do that, that's when it really became into fruition for me, because it then was filling the role I thought I should fill. And with of course the tech school, the business school, and now you have engineering, and I don't know what. So it's a true, to me, now, it's a true higher education campus, which Tacoma needs.

**Justin Wadland 49:10**

**And speaking of the transition into four-year, you know, that happened in 2005. And was that something that you were involved in any way? Or was that something that you just more observed?**

Bill Philip 49:25

The school was ... I was not involved. I'll put it that way.

**Justin Wadland 49:34**

**And what do you see as the future direction of campus as you kind of think about the trajectory going into the future?**

Bill Philip 49:42

I've already argued with Barbara about this. They're going to run out of property. Really. The school's going to grow. The area is going to grow. And they have property that the City of Tacoma sold for a hotel. I always envisioned ... would be for the school to expand. And I know they can go up the hill.

**Justin Wadland 50:10**

**So that, so that's the question is property and expansion. You see it as something that is gonna—**

Bill Philip 50:18

The school will grow. Education, thank goodness, higher education is becoming more important to kids than ever. And so it will grow. You know, half the state can't get into the University of Washington. So it's a godsend for them.

**Justin Wadland 50:43**

**I have gone through most of the questions. Is there anything else that you want to ... any sort of last words before we wrap up the interview? And Joan, was there anything else that you felt we should touch on?**

Bill Philip 50:56

Well, I have one more thing to say. It's not part of the history, but I really, I've talked to Barbara about this. I really want to compliment the professors and the people run the school because I think they're doing a great job. I think it's a great little school. Not quite Stanford yet, but I think it's a good school. My granddaughter wants to go to Stanford. It's too liberal for me. But she's, if there's a 4.0 student, she is a 4.5. And she's a 6- or 7-handicap golfer. So she could probably get some kind of grant.

**Justin Wadland 51:42**

**Yeah, well, she's applying to schools right now?**

Bill Philip 51:48

She's a senior, so when do you apply? Next spring, don't you?

**Justin Wadland 51:52**

**I think she'd be doing it right now. Yeah.**

Bill Philip 51:57

She keeps saying, "I'm gonna apply to UW, grandpa!"

But my other granddaughter is there. She is in the Foster School of Business. And she's really, you know, she's a three-and-a-half at best, but she is like her grandfather. She has a ton of common sense. And so she's doing very well in the school and is all excited about it. To get into the school, you have to write some thesis about yourself. And I don't know how long the Foster School of Business has been open, but the thing she wrote about herself, they said it's the best one they ever read. So that's how she got into the school. Because they had a minimum of 3.75, but she was 3.5.

Katie went to you UW Tacoma for liberal arts and knew more than any of the professors, knows more than her grandfather, and so I don't think she got much out of it. Really! She couldn't get a job so I got her a job at the bank. She's very bright though.

**Justin Wadland 53:12**

**So, your granddaughter is a graduate of UW Tacoma and is working at the bank. So you do in fact have somebody in the family who was a graduate, but from the IAS, School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences, it sounds like.**

Bill Philip 53:28

I do. Yeah.

**Justin Wadland 53:29**

**Which is what the Liberal Studies became as like a bachelor's.**

Bill Philip 53:33

I always thought kids who do go to school—kids, here we go, everybody's a kid to me—I was always pretty basic. When you go to school, you shouldn't go to liberal arts. You should go to engineering school—some school, tech school or business school. I don't care what. Something that will give you an education that will help you get a job. And I was on the board of trustees of [University of] Puget Sound when they decided they were going to do away with their business school, and I got up at the meeting and said, "I'm out of here. That's a terrible mistake you're making." I'm still friendly with, what's his name? Phil Phibbs. Yeah. We're still good friends. But, you know, I thought it was a mistake, so.

**Justin Wadland 54:31**

**So you don't see a place for the liberal education?**

Bill Philip 54:35

No, I don't. That's me. I'm conservative.

**Justin Wadland 54:37**

**No. I'm just trying to get an understanding of where you're coming from.**

Bill Philip 54:40

Well, I guess you can get any job with liberal education, but I always thought you needed an education of a particular field to get a good job, to have a chance. You see how conservative I am.

**Barbara Bartolatz 54:56**

**And yet you hired Melanie.**

Bill Philip 54:59

Who, Melanie? I hired Melanie [Dressel]. I'm big on women. Hired Melanie to run, take my place at Columbia Bank, and I used to be chairman of the MultiCare Hospital. And I placed the guy that was running it with Diane Cecchetti, who was a nurse. And she's the best hospital administrator they ever had. I think women are good at certain things. At least I felt that way.

**Justin Wadland 55:33**

**Well, why don't we end the interview there?**

Bill Philip 55:35

Okay.

**Barbara Bartolatz 55:37**

**Are there people that you think we should talk to?**

Bill Philip 55:42

Well, you showed me a list, I think. I think you hit most of them that are still available and were here then.

**Barbara Bartolatz 55:54**

**So there wasn't anybody that we're missing?**

Bill Philip 55:54

No. A lot of ... you can probably guess, I'm kind of a loner. So I didn't run into any of those people when I was working on it. I guess I just went and did my thing. Not saying they didn't do things, but anyway.

**Justin Wadland 56:19**

**Well, thank you very much for talking with us.**

Bill Philip 56:21

I enjoyed it. You're supposed to write a book though.