

Dr. Daljit Singh:

Well interesting question that I was one of the first international students on the campus. I believe there were no more than five or six international students at that time. We had students... One from Nigeria and a couple of them were from Canada, and one from Japan, and a couple of them from Taiwan. So it was a pretty small group of international students. I may not know all of them because most of the students at that time, were working in the evening and not the daytime student and so these were the students who lived in the dorm on the campus, and I had come to know them well.

Well yes, I wore a turban at the time. I was a student at Cal State Fullerton. As I said, that brings attention to a person. For the first academic year, I lived with a family on Nutwood Boulevard. And after they moved to some other town, then I moved on the campus at [Altress 00:02:04] Hall, which was just finished across from Langsdorf Administration Building. Right. I think now it is a private home [inaudible 00:02:18] [crosstalk 00:02:18] call it, but it was a dorm at that time. And that's where I stayed there during the second year.

So I was at the campus between 1963 to 1965. I came to Cal State Fullerton while at Cal Poly Pomona and Mt. San Antonio College, I spent first two years on those two campuses before coming to Cal State Fullerton. And it was a very interesting environment. We had just one building. Just pretty much as matter of fact, I was the first student. I was one of the first students to be enrolled in Langsdorf Hall. I still remember reading the Orange County newspaper and say that it cost \$9 million to build that. I tell you it's probably several times over the cost of that building, but yes, that was... Before that, of course there were some leftover cabins on the campus, which were built during World War Two.

Well, it's an interesting route. I came to United States in March 1960 and my initial admission was at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. And I went as an architectural engineering student, as an engineering student. So I did go to San Luis Obispo to see the environment. And I was told by several Indian students, there are not many jobs in that town. It was a small town. And for me, it was impossible to go to school without having any job. But they recommended that Cal Poly Pomona would be a better place to go to if you would like to work part-time while you went to college.

At that time, Cal Poly Pomona and Cal Poly San Luis Obispo were the same campus administratively in 1960, and it got divided into two separate campuses under two separate administration later on in the sixties. So I did go to Cal Poly Pomona as a mechanical engineering student there, but they were very happy to have me there then and work part-time to finish the program. But I didn't last very long at Cal Poly Pomona because of not having the right set of skills for an engineering student. So at that time, one of my advisor recommended that since my grades were a lot better in social sciences than in engineering program, that I better go to Mt. SAC, pick up my GPA and look for subject matter which interest me most. And I was very much interested in international studies at that time.

And the campaign of 1960 was going on, John F. Kennedy was running for the president and he had come to Antonio airport and it was a very big thing. So from there, after a year at Cal Poly Pomona, [inaudible 00:06:42] Mt. San Antonio College and finish my lower level general education requirements. And then I asked my advisors, what college would you recommend for me for international studies and political science? And they said, well, we have a new campus in Fullerton and they have just finished their first building. If I would go there. Sure enough, I did go there and met Dean Becker and Dr. [Hank 00:07:24]. He was in political science and Dr. John Brown Mason. And they were most welcoming to me. And that's how I ended up at Cal State Fullerton.

Mr. Love, I forgot his first name, worked in the maintenance department of Fullerton High School. The campus was right at the main road. I think it was Nutwood Boulevard, is the main road

down the street and his house was very close by. So it was walking distance from Cal State Fullerton. I could walk to, and back and forth. And then later on, Mr. Love bought a gas station, Hancock Gas Station in Bishop, California afterwards. So he moved to Bishop and I had to look for another place to stay. So when I went to campus and talked to a couple of faculty members, and they said that we are finishing up Altress Hall in the fall of 1964. And if I would consider moving there and they will give me a part-time job. So I was the first resident advisor at Altress Hall. And doing the evening hours, after school hours, four or five of almost 20 hours a day... 20 hours a week, four hours a day. And then I worked in the library during the day. It was in the basement. The library was in the basement of Langsdorf Hall at that time.

Wonderful. I had the greatest time, actually. They were very welcoming, those students who are from all over the United States. And the way Altress Hall was divided, there were two wings on the left-hand side and two wings on the right-hand side. On the left-hand side of the Altress Hall, all the female students, while on the left-hand side and all the male students on the right-hand side. And then the reception desk was on the first floor at that entrance level at that time. But it was very, very interesting.

We had, as I mentioned before, we had quite a bit of international presence there, students were from all over, including from all over the United States, especially I noticed some of them were sons and daughters of military personnel because their parents were stationed abroad. And their kids were staying in the dorm at that time. So it was a very cosmopolitan and global representation there. Actually, I felt at home, very much welcome. I did not notice any form of discrimination while I was there. And not only the fact that I was resident assistant, resident advisor there, and there were two or three other juniors and seniors were [inaudible 00:11:27]. My supervisor was Mrs. Lund. She was a remarkable lady, had years of experience in other campuses before she came to Cal State Fullerton.

Well, they were very curious, of course. There was not... They pass by when I was not stopped by Fullerton City police. They would not ask me... They would simply ask me where I was going, and where I was from and those kinds of questions. But I guess the word get around pretty fast. And they must tell their colleagues that we have an international student who walks after school quite a bit, and which I used to do that. But there would be some calls. I remember people will turn on their music at that time... I forgot the song that... It was a camel song from the Middle East... A song, and they will turn it on. And then they will Saudi Arabian gesture. They will move their head back and forth and to greet me and so forth. But there were no physical confrontations or anything like that. Mostly verbal gestures.

No, they were not familiar. I don't think anybody was familiar with Sikhism. And like we have turban and like we have beards and so forth. They had the remotest idea about that. When I was at Fullerton, I was invited a couple of places to speak to Orange Coast Community College once. And there's a couple of other places, high schools. I spoke about India at that time... A chairperson of the social science division... I'm trying to remember his name. He had come from Orange Coast Community College to become a chairperson of [inaudible 00:14:35] at what, at that time we had Orange County State College, it was called when I was a student. And soon after that, it changed to Cal State Fullerton.

No, mostly I talked about India. I believe in 1963, when Prime Minister Nehru died and they interviewed me and asked me to speak to people about his life and his works as Prime Minister in India. And I spoke to several classes at Cal State Fullerton, as well as in the community.

Dr. Ariella Horwitz:

Interesting.

Dr. Daljit Singh:

Yes. As a matter of fact, our campus at that time was quite active. I was in the department of political science at that time, and we had wonderful professors who themselves were quite active in local politics. Dr. Julian F.S. Foster, Dr. Foster, who was graduate of Oxford University and earned his PhD at UCLA was very active. Well at that time, Julian Foster and John Brown Mason... Dr. John Brown Mason, he was professor who started the department of political science at Cal State Fullerton. And then Dr. Cook, I forgot her first name. She was quite active. She had come from Claremont with her freshly minted PhD at that time, very active and... There were a number of very good faculty. Absolutely. Yeah. Very impressive. Highly credentials. Well-spoken of.

Julian Foster had started a magazine at that time, a political magazine. "Don't call it reason." It was a phrase he borrowed from a pamphlet, which was started by John Birch Society in Orange County at that time, which was called "don't call it treason." And John Birch Society was very active in Orange County and Fullerton and so Julian Foster would invite us and we would go to bars for a drink and discuss on how we could soften this community, because it was very, very conservative at that time. And we invited a number of politicians on the campus.

There were some actors, they weren't running on the Democratic Party. When invited them. We started a chapter of the Democratic Party with the guidance of Julian Foster. And so it was a very interesting time, the campus... Because University of California, Irvine came later on and then it became another center of academic discussion and activity. But Fullerton was the main campus there. And when I was there, we had only 1400 students. And then the next year it was 1900. And the year when I left, it was about 2,700 students. So it was a small, small campus.

I would say, mainly their parents; the students were very open to well, other cultures and very open... I know the Bible society was quite active. I had known students who would go to the Bible discussion groups in the evening. And I assume they were from so-called religious and conservative families. Otherwise, most... We had a very active international club, which I was part of. And we had a Model United Nations club we were part of, and we used to go to Model United Nations all over the places. When I was there, we went to State of Washington Spokane for representing China at that time. And we had a very active student body in that way.

Yes, actually, we... Fullerton was quite conservative community. We didn't have many black students at that time. I remember there was only one at Altress Hall and they may be two or three non-resident students. They were working in the aerospace industry and they will come in the evening. So I will see them going to classes and coming out of classes, but black student population was not that large at that time. And I am not aware of any incident where there would be any cause for alarm, but it was a pretty open campus at that time.

Civil Rights Movement... We read about it, but there was very little on the campus. Then were no black student associations, there were no cases which would have alarmed anyone. However, there was a large black community outside of Fullerton. People were moving out of Los Angeles and the black population was moving eastward to Pomona. And in that area... And the Hispanic population was moving to El Monte and La Puente area, in that direction. There was a sizable black population in San Bernardino, but in Orange County, I did not notice a very large black community. And I don't remember, I did not have a car at that time. And so I was pretty much limited to the Fullerton environment.

So the Watts Riots were... People were quite concerned, but they felt that they were limited to Los Angeles and it would not penetrate into the Orange County area. Orange County was pretty much isolated, self-contained county. Towns, such as Long Beach, Newport Beach, and others were very much non-black towns. So I don't remember any incident where I say that Orange County had experienced overflow from Los Angeles. No, that was not the case.

The incident, which I do remember at that time... I used to read Orange County newspaper, I forgot the name of it, during John F. Kennedy's death, when he was shot, we went on the campus. Other than campus... People were not that much saddened of that, but on campus, we noticed the faculty and students at that time, they were very much here affected by that case. I was in English class with Dr. Joan Greenwood, who has passed away several years back. And she had come from Stanford, a wonderful, wonderful professor and we remember spending some time in the class and discussing passing away of John F. Kennedy when he was shot.

Yes, that would... Because he was a Catholic and he was a Democrat.

Dr. Ariella Horwitz:

Right, right. Even though I did not grow up Catholic, I forget that would have been a big deal in Orange County because they would have been Protestant evangelical.

Dr. Daljit Singh:

That's right. He was the first Catholic president. I noticed... I was living with the Love family at that time. And they did not exhibit any outwardly sadness.

Well, yes, they did. As a matter of fact, I did come to the first elephant race. Although I was not student at Cal State Fullerton, I was student at Mt. SAC then. And the newspapers, the Los Angeles Times and Pomona newspapers... They had big articles about the incoming elephant. So friend of mine, Raj Kapoor, he was a student at Cal Poly Pomona. And he said, well, hop in the car and let's go watch the elephant racing. So we... Two of us, Raj and I, went there to watch the first elephant races. And that was the most memorable one. The second and the third, well was not that much larger. The first one was very large gathering, almost 10,000 people were at the first elephant races.

And I remember very vividly when one of the elephants got loose while running. [Crosstalk 00:27:54] I was a little disappointed. I thought it would be... Elephant races like horse races, where they will go... No, they had one at a time between two points. And the field was very dusty, I remember. It was extremely dusty, dusty field. But we stayed away from it. It was right across... The Langsdorf Hall was under construction at that time, it was not finished because it was finished in the summer of 1963. And the 1962 races were a year ago. So it was behind that hall. That's where it was held.

Dr. Ariella Horwitz:

So where the quad... Kind of where you start entering into the quad now, like by University Hall?

Dr. Daljit Singh:

I would say yes, it's between... It's the baseball field and the quad. That's where... And it was, they had just plowed the field. I thought there was orange orchards there, but it was cornfields at that time, which they have plowed the corn field to make it.

Yeah, actually that was Dean Becker has selected one of the students to become a mahout, the fellow who rides on in the elephant. And then there was a young lady later. She was in our dorm. I forgot her name. She was on the smaller elephant at that time. And the reason was... Dean Becker at that time, I believe he was in the Navy. And he had gone in several places, including India at that time, that he was familiar with the tones and with the elephant... It was his idea of having an elephant race. And that's how he was able to mobilize the student government to host that.

That was very popular... As I said, in 1962, I was not student on the campus, but that news was on the radio all the time for several days before the race, no matter what channel you turn on the car

radio, the news were Cal State Fullerton when the news was on. And as a matter of fact, that visit to the campus in 1962 became more favorable for me to go to the campus. Not only it was a new campus, but also the people I met at that race, I thought this was really a nice place. I was admitted to enter the Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. And they even have offered me some scholarship, but it was a private college and lot more expensive to go to than Cal State Fullerton. And that's how I came to the campus.

Dr. Ariella Horwitz:

Well, and it probably would have been a lot less diverse than even Orange County.

Dr. Daljit Singh:

Yes. That would be the case there. But I had part-time jobs in the city of industry with Mattel toy company. I would work during the summer. And so I thought that this will give me some income while I go to college, but I was able to hold a job on the campus to put myself through college.

Yes, I do. I was on the alumni board for four years at the university. Yeah. My term ran off maybe three or four years ago. So I enjoyed going to my board meetings a couple of times a year. Yes.

It was my favorite campus. I've been to many other schools, as I mentioned, coming to Cal Poly Pomona. And then to Mt. SAC, and from Fullerton, I went to Claremont, where I finished my graduate degrees at Claremont and then I taught everywhere in the United States for 44 years. And I felt Cal State Fullerton... I mean the most favorite campus of all time. I say it's a cultivation process. That's where I assimilated in American society.