

Barrett Oral History Project
Interview with Joseph Foy
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Notetaker: Matthew Stockmal

LIVINGSTON: Hello, this is Caroline Livingston and Matthew Stockmal interviewing Dr. Joseph Foy on February 27th in his office. This interview is a part of the Barrett Oral History Project. Our goal is to preserve a record of Barrett's history in honor of our 30th anniversary. Thank you so much for taking the time to sit down with us and share your experience.

FOY: You're most welcome.

STOCKMAL: We were just talking before the interview started recording about why you say water like 'wahter'.

FOY: You know Vice Dean Nelson who just retired was so amused by the way I said water and Dean Jacobs, who was a professor at Swarthmore for about 30 years or 23 years I think before he became Dean Apparent, tried to explain to Peggy that I was a Philadelphian by birth. My father was from Philadelphia, called Swarthmore, and I picked up my father's accent although my mother, like my wife, is from Alabama, from Huntsville. My parents met at the Redstone Arsenal in the early 60s during the space race and all of that stuff my mom worked for one of von Braun's six assistants.

LIVINGSTON: Tell me a little bit about your undergraduate experience at the University of Alabama at Huntsville.

FOY: OK. So I arrived there at having attended two other universities. I attended American University in the early 80s. I felt I was going to be a diplomat. I decided not to be and I transferred to the University of Iowa where I did much of my undergraduate work and then I finished up at the University of Alabama in Huntsville because I got an opportunity to do research at the Redstone Arsenal at the space sciences lab and I did research on space physics. So that's kind of what I did there and I helped model- build a model of the Earth's magnetosphere and it was a paper -- I helped work on a paper that made the cover of *The Journal of Geophysical Review Letters*. So that's kind of cool. That was kind of what I did there and finished up my

undergraduate degree and thought I would stay in Huntsville and continue working on gamma ray astronomy and something called the BATSE [*Burst and Transient Source Experiment*] instrument but circumstances eventually brought me out to Arizona. And that's when I decided you know I should finish up and get my PhD. That's kind of what I did there. Anything else want to know about Alabama?

LIVINGSTON: Not right now but how did you decide to go to ASU for your doctorate?

FOY: Well I moved out to Arizona because my parents were here, and my father was an engineer working for Honeywell. We had moved around the country growing up because Dad was an aerospace engineer and after 1980, he became a contract engineer which meant he worked for one or two years and they said to me "Well why don't you come out here? You know the family is moving out here and maybe you can teach or do something." So I talked for a while and I thought well you know I'd like to go back and get my PhD and yes he was here and I took a few physics courses without being an officially accepted student -- you could matriculate and sign up if you had your bachelors. I had my bachelors and I took a course in quantum physics and did well in that I decided to apply, and I got accepted and so 2009 became a grad student at the university.

LIVINGSTON: What did you think of Barrett and Barrett student when you are a graduate student at ASU?

FOY: It's interesting because I would have been totally unaware of Barrett except that my sister - my youngest sister, Rebecca -- was a Barrett student in the 90s. So I knew about Barrett through that. Also, one of my best friends was much younger than I, Peter Dorian, graduated Barrett in 1999. So I knew about the Honors College through them and through their experiences at the Honors College. Peter has since gone on to graduate from Georgetown and he's now president of the Center of European Policy Analysis. He's a big player and he's kind of right of center and anti-Trump Republican who specializes in Putin and Eastern Europe and Russian studies. I actually have a copy of his senior thesis that I helped proofread for him on Solzhenitsyn's defection to the west as part of his senior thesis for Barrett. He translated a telegram that Andropov, who had been the head of the KGB at the time, wrote in the early 70s about what to do with Solzhenitsyn to the effect of "We can't kill him. Why don't we send him to China?" So anyway, so I was familiar with the college that way. And then I got to know Dr. Tom Martin. He and I were teaching assistants in the physics department together and that was right

before Dr. Martin was to go into Barrett and he was telling me you know Barrett's great and I'm like 'Yeah I know of Barrett.' And he said, 'you know they're looking for more scientists who can teach humanities if you're ever interested, Joe you should apply.' And I kept it in mind. So I had a very positive image of Barrett when I was a grad student, but only because I knew my sister has attended Barrett, my friend Peter graduated from Barrett, and of course to Dr. Martin telling me about it.

LIVINGSTON: Did your peers seem to have any idea about Barrett?

FOY: No, that was completely out of that reliably physics and astronomy world. My background was astrophysics so they were worried about NASA and whether they could get a gig. They were all in their 20s, I was in my 40s --I was a student over the traditional age and I knew then that my career wouldn't take a traditional research path tenure track the way wood for peers and other friends of mine were in their 20s just eager to get to the next step with a doctorate and then go do something else go to work for NASA or start a tenure track position.

LIVINGSTON: So you do have a very heavy science background and Barrett tends to focus more on the liberal arts side of education. How does your background impact the way you teach the Human Event?

FOY: That's a great question because as you say much of what especially when I'm teaching in the Human Event- what we're reading would be considered liberal arts works. I think it influences in a couple of ways. In the spring and Honors 272, I do have students read works that I would consider scientific work, so works that I believe are necessary for basic science literacy. So they will include excerpts from Copernicus, as on the revolution where Copernicus proposes the heliocentric hypothesis for the solar system. Galileo including his early experiments in physics his astronomy *The Starry Messenger*. But I also read excerpts from Isaac Newton, but also include things like Galileo's letter to the Grand Duchess Christina where he argues that there's no conflict between his being a scientist and being a religious person -- Christian -- I think is interesting. We see that argument again we have the Templeton Prize and I think we have the Institute for a society- for the school- for the Study of Religion and Conflict right. So many of the arguments that you see in Galileo's letter are with us today. Right. So it does impact how I teach 272 because I think scientific literacy and an understanding of how the rise of science changed our view of our place in the cosmos if you will. It is absolutely important although that doesn't mean that I've made 272 a science-only course I do look at things like Frankenstein,

which I think is the first science fiction. And beyond that, it's interesting because my real struggle is although I studied a lot of liberal arts, a lot of liberal arts courses as an undergraduate I took a graduate course in the French Revolution.

LIVINGSTON: May I ask why?

FOY: Well first of all I started out as a liberal arts person. I was going to be a diplomat so when I was at American University most of the courses I had to take were either political science, political history courses in English courses. I grew up in a very- I grew up among the book people, as I can put it; if you've ever read or seen the film version of Fahrenheit 451, at the end of that, remember the book people? That memorized all the books? That would have been my parents. So, I grew up in a house of books; my parents -- my father was the first in his family to go to college. He was a first-generation college student, he went on the G.I. Bill. My mother grew up in an educated Southern family and she went to college so they were big on -- although my dad was an engineer -- they were big on literature and the arts and that was just part of my childhood. So first of all, by the time I left high school I probably read more liberal arts stuff than most liberal arts majors nowadays read when they leave college. That's not to boast. That's just the way my world was. So, taking liberal arts courses was as natural as breathing even lives and physics major. I took a graduate course in the French Revolution which was one of my favorite classes and it took a great course in American literature and courses in philosophy. I just felt I needed both; I need to know about physics and I needed to know about philosophy. And I just can't imagine divorcing the two, which I think was great preparation for coming here.

STOCKMAL: Those discussions, mentioning Galileo's readings or Copernicus his readings. How did those discussions flow in comparison with like just a typical reading?

FOY: Great question! There's a danger in the more science-y stuff, like the readings from Isaac Newton or from Galileo or Copernicus that are more science focused is that the temptation is to fall into lecture mode and tell them this is what he means in this book. That's not what we do. Instead we actually discuss it; first of all, I select readings that are accessible to students, that is, that don't have any real science or derivatives and what the students will find is that frequently what Copernicus Galileo and Newton are doing in these texts are changing our conception understanding. So what they're doing is they're challenging what had passed for common sense and saying here's why we shouldn't accept that. And guess what. Just like people in the liberal arts, scientists have to use words, they have to write arguments just like you do, right? So many

of the selections on moves in fact all of the science selections I'm using are basically arguments like this is why we should think differently than we thought before about motion, Galileo's whole thing about how the old ideas that Aristotle and others had about dynamics in motion are wrong. The whole argument is in words. There is a diagram or two to illustrate his point but it's mostly an argument: something like a Human Event paper. So I have the students go through and pick the argument apart and put the terms on the board and if there's confusion they have to figure it out. I'll help a little bit but I won't give them the answer. And you know what. My art majors are often best at these discussions, and my science majors are often surprised that they didn't really understand these issues. They had taken them for granted. They're aceing their calculus physics course right. But they had to stop to think conceptually about what was really going on. So. But it's always discussion based. Even the science stuff and I resist action. Write down a note to myself all the time: don't lecture. The great temptation to stand up and I'll just take over the conversation but I don't.

LIVINGSTON: So why did you teach at Barrett? Do you prefer the more discussion-based style to astronomy- to just teaching like astronomy or physics and not lecture?

FOY: I love to teach physics and astronomy. Love to. I love to hear the sound of my voice. I'm not sure but first of all the job just suits me. A friend of mine, a lady, Wilkinson who is a fellow student when I was in Huntsville and when she and I worked at NASA together she said when I told her about the job and she and her husband were here temporarily working for Intel she said, "Wait there's a job where they pay you to be Joe Foy?!" So, it is I found a job where they pay me to do what I would do anyway which is read a lot of books and sit around and talk about them except I do have to grade papers. So I think it suits me. It suits my interest. I'm certain it is a part of me that loves to teach astronomy in physics, I've done that, you know, I've got the chance to do that. But ultimately, I find this work so satisfying. I teach an upper division course, which is a popular general based course in the history of quantum physics and the philosophy of quantum physics. That too is a seminar style discussion and that's probably my most challenging course because there I have to pick texts carefully that aren't filled with mathematics and I have to pick texts so that students can have a discussion and lead the discussion and so that I'm not lecturing at them, if that makes sense. I don't know the job just fits me the way water fits a fish.

LIVINGSTON: How long have you been here?

FOY: I've been here since the fall of 2008. In my 11th year here at Barrett. I have to say it's the longest job I've ever held and it is the best job I've held. It's just a terrific job. I work with great students; the deans are fantastic. Mark Jacob and I have a connection. He was a professor at Swarthmore. After I came to work here, I found out that he was best friends with someone my parents rented a house from in Swarthmore, the Beemans. Yeah, Todd Beeman is a history professor at UPenn and it turned out my parents rented their old house, Todd Beeman's old house, and it turned out that Todd Beeman studies with Mark. So Mark and I joke about Swarthmore all the time. But it's great! Great bosses; Peggy Nelson was a terrific Dean. Nicola Foote who just hired as the new Associate Dean is also fantastic. So there aren't many chances you get where your bosses are fantastic, your colleagues are great, and then the people you work with, your students, are a pleasure. So that's the other thing I have friends of mine who are research physicists who are in universities back East or over in Berkeley or something and they always have these stories about these terrific fights they're having with their colleagues and door slamming and this sounds like a nightmare.

LIVINGSTON: I heard -- speaking of like small world connections, I actually heard you have some interesting connections to President Crow.

FOY: Yes, actually I do. Indirectly you mean through Leonard, Dr. Maximon? So President Crow's step-father-in-law is that how we put it? and I think that's how we put it. He's the father of President Crowe's wife Sybil, that I remember. But Leonard Maximon is a wonderful man. He's a physicist and mathematician; as you might know, Leonard Maximon got his PhD at Cornell under Hans Bethe, one of the greatest physicists of the 20th century. Dr. Maximon and I just kind of became friends and he started hanging out on my quantum course and we are lunch partners. I actually encouraged him because I've written an undergraduate textbook on electricity magnetism, a physics textbook, and he had been shopping around a monograph, a book, on differential equations for some years. And I simply said, "why don't you find some publishing companies and kind of write a letter" and he said "Well, will you help with the process and I helped to write letter and so forth." And he eventually did and Springer Verlag published his book and he has a nice little acknowledgment of me front. It's lovely and it's a lovely time. Leonard I- Leonard not only has helped me with my quantum class, he would help me with ideas; he'd sit in on the discussions and listen and give me advice. And we would just talk about - it was so, so fantastic but then he is also involved with the Herberger and his students out there and he and I would talk about different ideas and how to teach and stuff like that. So he's just a terrific guy. And it's funny, I didn't realize until we were hanging out for some time that he was

related to Michael Crow because we just talked physics and math and history -- by the way, he worked for the National Bureau of Standards in the 50s, and if you've seen the movie *Hidden Figures* he worked in an office that was across the river. Yeah. And he had his own stories to tell about racial segregation in that time because it was an African-American scientist, a physicist, in his group, and they were they were at could find one damn restaurant that they could go to together as a group and that's the only restaurant that would go to because all the other restaurants at that time were segregated.

STOCKMAL: That conversation you just mentioned about art students and like how to teach ... what how did that conversation go down, and what what did he tell you

FOY: You mean how to teach the quantum class?

STOCKMAL: You mentioned that he hung out with Herberger students.

FOY: Right. So he was teaching and he still does I haven't spoken to him since around Christmas. So I don't know what's going. Leonard but he would teach a science course for very gifted students these Herberger students weren't only arts students there just to these incredibly gifted students so he would frequently have students like this one young woman. She's 13. She wanted to know about black holes and she wanted to know what women physicists and you know. Leonard is like, 'I kinda know.' And we would kind of go through things like what could we tell her about it. How do you explain black holes to very bright 13 year old? Students were smart enough to get some of the concepts but of course as always when you're teaching something like black holes those pretty pictures like the embedding diagrams and all that stuff that we use to kind of explain it in a Neil deGrasse Tyson kind of way can also be misleading and Leonard wants to be quite scrupulous not to give misleading analogies or at least be able to explain all that here's the limit of this analogy? So we would just have conversations about "Well, would this work? Oh would that work?" Leonard would ask me "Well, I'm thinking about teaching it this way." Right. And so we would just talk back and forth. So I didn't have like a prescriptive list like a "Leonard do this, do that that." It would be more of a conversation that we would have back and forth as colleagues and we could same thing with my quantum class when he would come to my class and he would suggest things he even give me a few lovely write-ups of you know "thinking about the Bohr atom, this is how I might explain it." I'm like OK send me this write-up he would do and it was always so fresh and interesting. He's a first-rate teacher, a great guy. So that's kind of my indirect connection. Yeah. Yeah. I would not claim that I'm close

friends or anything like that. But certainly, there is that connection to the president through Dr. Maximon.

LIVINGSTON: In your own experience liberal arts and science have been very much connected but how do you think Barrett as a whole does for providing for students in science majors?

FOY: Good question, because I know that science students people ask -- they never ask me. They just assume that since I'm an astrophysicist that whatever I tell them or whatever I have them will somehow be useful to their careers. I never have an engineering student going. How will this help me take Laplace transforms better. But I think for many of my humanities colleagues or even social science colleagues oftentimes the engineering, physics, biology majors will be more assertive and even aggressive like well why am I reading this, why am I writing argumentative essays. I put the first answer to something I hinted at earlier which is: Copernicus and Newton and Galileo and Einstein -- and I have my students read some Einstein. They're writing arguments. If you read the first couple of paragraphs the Albert Einstein's paper on relativity which is called the move- the "Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies" or the first couple of paragraphs to his famous paper in which he introduces the idea of light particles or photons, they are arguments, there're no equations, they're conceptual and he's making an arguments. He has a thesis, right. It sounds like a standard thesis he would write in a Human Event essay and guess what. If you're a scientist and an engineer and you know what a large part of your life is going to be? Writing arguments. You may not think it's an argument but when you write a paper to your boss or to your group saying this is what we found, this is my research report, it's an argument you've got a thesis like yes we should build this rocket. No we should not build this rocket. Yes we should launch because there's no problem with the O-Ring. No we shouldn't. Because everything is -- and I know this because my father was an aerospace engineer. He also had a background of technical writing so he was a two-fer. So when they would hire my dad and they usually would hire him and pay pretty good coin because they knew not only would they get first rate engineering but he could write the technical reports as well as any of their professional technical writers. And my dad always said it's an argument even if you don't think it's an argument: you've got a thesis you've got evidence, you're convincing someone either to do something or not do something. There is no such thing as a neutral technical report. All reports are basically saying do this. Don't do this. Here's the path. So if you're an engineer or a science student much of your writing is going to be argumentative. You have to think critically, you have to sift the evidence, and you have to persuade a reader right. First of all ,you have to persuade them that it's even worth their time to read what you've written. If you read a scientific paper on

it if you guys are science majors. You want to know how you read a scientific paper? Yes I'm about to tell the E Hollywood true story: How to read a scientific paper. You look at the abstract. Is it good? If it's not good, you don't read it. Like a flowchart. If it's good, what do you do next? You read the conclusion. If those are good, then if it's physics paper or an astronomy paper the next thing I do is I look at all the pretty pictures. Also, the equations so they're pretty equations. OK. Then and only then do I begin to read the body of the paper. Well it's the same thing with the Human Event essay. Have you guys both taken that? So I'll tell you how I grade the Human Event -- this is more E Hollywood true story than you bargained for. I look at that first paragraph with the thesis statement the thesis and the roadmap and I say is this compelling and interesting. Now I do read the student's paper do you know why I read the whole paper no matter how bad the thesis statement.

LIVINGSTON: So people don't hide just filler text?

FOY: Because I get paid to. And that's what I remind my students. The difference between your Human Event instructor and the guy or the gal you're going to work for in an engineering firm is I get paid to read your stuff no matter how poorly written it is no matter how badly argued because that's my job. So you give me a crappy thesis with a terrible road map, I still got to read the whole paper. You know what, your boss doesn't have to do that. If she reads your report and you have a crappy abstract and a crappy conclusion, you know what she does? She files it enters her cylindrical filing cabinet, like that, and then she'd get somebody else to write it. That's why learning to write is fundamental, and learning how to write good scientific writing is the same kind of writing you do that you must first get. Secondly you get the ability to think critically you need that. And I'm telling you these science texts when it comes to the critical stuff it's not too different from reading a text from philosophy or even poetry and beginning to look at it critically. What is the author trying to say? What's going on here? What should I be getting from this? What's the evidence? How do I weigh this? Right. Marx and Smith can't both be right can they? Right. But they're making an argument, right? Each in its own way. How do I weigh that? So there's that. Then lastly, if you're a human being you need calculus and poetry. You need them both. If you don't have them both. It's like- I don't know, like those weightlifters who never work out with their legs, only the upper bodies then they have these two stick legs. Right. You know it'd be like that. So you need it as a human being. To me having grown up with parents who read books or poetry and literature art is a part of my childhood. Part of my life I can't imagine like why you wouldn't be doing this. That's what always appalls me when I see students

with those rent me or those rent books. The sticker on it. It's just like *buy the book*. Go without a Slurpee or whatever it is a venti macchiato for a couple of weeks. So, how's that?

LIVINGSTON: That was good, absolutely.

FOY: Oh, I had another friend who graduated from Barrett, Sarah Bush. Fantastic. She was a Flynn scholar and she graduated in '99 or 2000 and she studied in Harbin, China, and at one time – I'm breaking confidence. She'd been a Senate aide back in the 90s for DeConcini you know those programs, the interim projects. She told me a story about Senator Byrd from West Virginia. Apparently, he had a pitcher of water that was marked Senator Byrd's Water and you were not to touch it or drink from it and it was a clear substance that looked like water. But the rumor was that it wasn't water. [laughter]

LIVINGSTON: So we're going trust that that's just water in that bottle.

FOY: This is just water. I'm not a Senator. I don't have that strong a constitution.

LIVINGSTON: That would make for an interesting interview. Barrett's version *Drunk History*. [laughter]

STOCKMAL: That would be *sick*.

FOY: Sick in a good sense? I have to follow-up on young people's slang. Bad is good. Sick is good.

LIVINGSTON: We have to keep you on your toes. So Human Event is the main class you teach here. Tell me about some of the other classes you've taught and I believe you've done some study abroad classes as well.

FOY: Well, I'll tell you about study abroad first because the most recent trip that I did was with Dr. Don Fette and it was to Germany and Switzerland. It was to commemorate the two hundredth anniversary of Frankenstein. I had the students read Dr. Fette brought his expertise in romantic literature and romanticism. He knows Shelley, Keats, all those guys, and he studied the novel very closely. So he brought his perspective. I with my science background and history of science background to bring my perspective. I've lived with the novel *Frankenstein* since I was 10 when

I first read it. So it's been a lifelong love of mine. Read not only of course had heavy academic work that the students had to do but we the visits were all set by the novel so we hit Ingolstadt for a week. That's where Victor Frankenstein is a student where he's an undergraduate where he brings the creature to life. I always warn my students that the novel *Frankenstein* is an excellent warning against unsupervised research and also against doing research without getting your training. So you must get IRB. Don't do it what Victor did. Ingolstadt is such a fantastic small town. I thought of it but Dr. Fette knew it and we went to Ingolstadt and they were very conscious of the fact that Ingolstadt is the setting for where Victor is a student. They had a great art exhibit with two well-known artists whose names escape me at the moment called *Artificial Intelligence and Artificial Stupidity*. And it was tied into the novel and this whole idea of creating life but also creating intelligence and technology control this sort of thing which took students on a tour there. The State Museum had a whole thing that they were celebrating an anniversary of the novel with some of the themes from the novel and had an original copy. One of the first German translations of the novel there at the museum for students to see. So this was a great trip so we stayed in Ingolstadt, Darmstadt, where they actually have a Castle Frankenstein. We found out the Castle Frankenstein is kind of like 'Washington slept here'. There are bunch of Castle Frankensteins all over that part of Europe it's like Captain Smith. This one probably has the closest claim to being the Castle Frankenstein that may have inspired Mary Shelley to title the novel. It's near the Rhine and it kind of looks like, 'oh yeah maybe that could be it.' We stayed in Geneva. The Victor Frankenstein character is from Geneva and the history of that city finds its way into many of the major themes of the novel. So that's one study abroad that that's the most recent one that I've done and Fette was fantastic. Speaks German and he's a character. And then the other ones you want to hear about the other ones?

LIVINGSTON: Sure, absolutely. But first how do you think this trip affected the students that went on it?

FOY: Well they seem to have like- well how did it affect them in so many ways Fette and I were talking about that. Actually, we were talking about it while we were on the trip like first all the kids were open to having new experiences and open to learning things. I mean one of the things that we found interesting was that one of the things the students really really found inspiring moving was to be in the UN. You know the UN headquarters especially for refugees and human rights is there in Geneva. So it's kind of the non-political like the political parts in New York where there's the security council and all that but in Geneva it's like the Council on Human Rights the Council on on refugees well we've got this fantastic tour and the history went back to

the Hague and the history of the Red Cross we got to where the Red Cross and this history of Red Cross volunteers then people in the Hague getting letters and forwarding care packages to prisoners of war all across Europe at the height of World War 1. And there's this photograph of these people as many women in starched shirts and very formal attire going through reams of index cards to make sure that letters get to the right prisoner of war and the right camp in Germany and France. And we were just so stunned and gob smacked these men and women who looked like they could kind of not had done this they could have just gone on with their lives chose to volunteer and do all of this. And of course, this happened right at the very moment that here in Arizona the policy of the current administration was hitting where they had that zero-tolerance policy that led to separation of children from their mothers. And we were there that week we were like in Hotel Ibis and there were delegates to the Commission on Refugees. That was a big meeting on the status of refugees that very week and the students were there overhearing conversations from delegates and some of my students even talked to delegates particularly delegates from Africa. It was really. So it was interesting it wasn't directly related to *Frankenstein*. And yet here was this aspect of the trip that the students all commented on. Two of our students are going to do their senior thesis on the U.N. and refugees and this issue which was one of those unexpected things. Of course, there was the *Frankenstein* stuff which was great but that was one of the things that Fetty and I were just so moved by and fascinated to see that our students were open to it.

LIVINGSTON: Absolutely.

STOCKMAL: What was the academic work like on the trip or what did you want the students to take out of it through the coursework as well through the coursework?

FOY: What I wanted to do was to tie the novel to themes and that came from the locations we were at. For example, in Geneva there are plenty of hints in the novel to political themes and to the events of the French Revolution and after the French Revolution and Switzerland's history. The character Alfonse Frankenstein, Victor's father, is a syndic and there's a republic, the Geneva Republic. Where did that come from? John Calvin, and there's this whole history of kind of like the Southern Reformation which was centered in Geneva and Calvin and how that influenced the politics but also how it influenced Rousseau, who's one of the great writers that comes out of Geneva. Geneva has a big place in Rousseau's heart he always says I'm a citizen of Geneva remember Rousseau writes the *Social Contract* and *Emile* and the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*. He's constantly thinking of Geneva when he returns to Geneva having lived in Paris.

They're shocked to find that he's a philosopher of the Enlightenment. So they expect that he'll kind of hang out with the kind of upper crust you know kind of what we would call the liberal New York Yorker reading types. And instead he identifies with the more kind of lower classes and their religious kind of what we might call religious conservatism he says "no, republic needs virtue." He identifies with Calvin in many ways and it's a kind of interesting thing. People are surprised by Rousseau. So we talk about how Rousseau influences the novel and how the politics of Geneva influence Rousseau. And this question of family dynamics and how do you raise a virtuous citizen? Because after all Alphonse Frankenstein is raising his son. This whole line in the novel about how he's having sons for the state for the republic and that's very Rousseau-ian. This idea that you're not just going to be an educated gentleman you have to be good for something you have to be a good citizen and a good member of the public. And so we talk about that we talk about the Southern Reformation with John Calvin. I show them where America comes from we show the Reformation Wall there's John Calvin it looks like something from Maoist Communist statues of Mao or something and there's John Calvin you know 90 feet tall. And then next to him is Roger Williams the guy who wrote the Rhode Island Compact and we talk about that and the influence of these ideas. Shelley sets her novel in Geneva. I don't think it's an accident that she does, and she does in the wake of the French Revolution that looked to Rousseau and in some ways looked to the revolutionaries of Geneva, as kind of heroes as like these are the guys we should model. And of course, the French revolution didn't end so well. I think Shelley kind of puts her finger on the politics like what goes right and what goes wrong with this kind of missionary ideology. And she's thinking about it on a deeper sense not merely the French Revolution. But going back to the Reformation went back to John Calvin. So that's among the things that we talked about we have the printing press and the Reformation. That's the other thing that's the city where you have gone up to St. Pierre's and there's the Museum of the Reformation. And so they get a whole new perspective on the political themes that are touched on in the modern for one thing. Right. We also looked at science museums, right, especially in Darmstadt but also in Geneva. This question of science and how science is applied and what's the role of science and what should be the role of science. Does that help answer your question?

LIVINGSTON: Absolutely. What are some other classes in study abroad you taught?

FOY: Prior to that my experience to study abroad have been going or directing the trip to the United Kingdom and I've gone four times, two of those times I directed. I first went in 2011 and 2012 with Dr. Dianne Feinstein. [laughs] Dianne Feinstein, she's the senator. Dr. Diane Facinelli, and she would emphasize kind of medieval history were women of the romantics and more

importantly like Mallory and kind of that sort of, Sir Gawaine the Green Knight. I would do since on my background in science what I did with the U.K. trip so I would talk about the Scientific Revolution, which, frankly -- the British Isles was the epicenter. That's where Newton and so many of the scientists that kind of Darwin, Faraday you name it. So I would tie science texts to locations but I would also look at the reaction to science and I do the same thing in my 272 course. So William Blake, the great English poet, really has a problem with Newt. He does not like Newton. He does not like Francis Bacon. Sure as hell doesn't like John Locke frankly. He sees these guys I don't know if you've ever read the poem or an excerpt from "Jerusalem" where he compares Bacon and Newton's philosophy to serpents that are going to constrict you. He compares John Locke's philosophy to a loom and talks about the water wheels of Newton that wash Locke's cloth back and then spreads it over the universities of Europe basically turning all your students into widgets. You have the same ideas and says this is terrible right because Blake is the party of poetry. So you see that's kind of romantic reaction against the rise of science. You also see Swift, you guys ever read Gulliver's Travels? The flying island of Laputa is the one where the mathematicians run things and this flying island and they can drop stones down and the mathematicians are terrible rulers. Just absorbed in their calculations and they don't pay attention to their wives or their subjects. And so we look at that. You know, Swift is from the beginning of the Enlightenment. Calling parts of the Enlightenment into question, calling into question this alliance with science and politics and then how many of you guys seen the movie *The Favorite*? You guys should see it, it's about Queen Anne. That was the woman who knighted- She was the queen who knighted Sir Isaac Newton after he had his mental breakdown and became a member of Parliament. He was a Whig. He became the Warden of the Mint. It's kind of like being Secretary of the Treasury, a pretty good position. He lived with his niece in London. And she was a pretty prominent figure and he was pretty well connected to the government. And he's one of Queen Anne's favorites and he was a big fan of the Queen and so Swift and Swift knew all these guys. He knew Haley and Newton he was friends with these guys. And he makes fun of them and he's suspicious. He sees in the rise of science something that's not apolitical but that's something that's a political project. It's as if Plato's ideal of a republic of philosopher kings can be made true but instead of philosophers they'll be natural philosophers, scientists will be king.

LIVINGSTON: And why do you believe this is important for your students to learn?

FOY: Because it's the world they live in. Let me give you an example. The floating island. These guys these rulers who don't know much about the people over whom they rule float around, drop

rocks on them, threaten them right. Can you imagine. I just want you to try a thought experiment a country that did things like I don't know send drone attacks to countries they didn't know much about or bomb places whose language they couldn't speak. [laughter] I mean it sounds crazy. Could you imagine a country which like Laputa has the best telescopes you can imagine, but has the crappiest public schools or even like problems delivering decent water to a place like Flint, Michigan. I mean this can happen. I think it's important for them to know because in many ways they're coming to the Honors College. Most of my students want to become part of the technocratic elite and I don't blame them. This is the way if you want to go to M.I.T. or Harvard as a grad student and let's say you don't have the finances to go to Stanford as an undergrad you come here, you work hard, you do great things and then your application to M.I.T., Harvard, Stanford, even Oxford, which a few my students have gone to, will be taken seriously. And you have a chance, godspeed to you. But while you're on the way, here's some things to think about, and I think Swift critique of the technocratic elite that believes or seems to think that their expertise and technology makes them fit to rule politically is a sobering lesson. Something I say to my students after we have the discussion as an afterthought is remember that the Vietnam War wasn't given to us by Christian conservatives or Trump voters. It was John Kennedy and the best and the brightest, the best and the brightest, the technocratic elite of the early 60s. They felt they were going to solve Vietnam like a math problem. And of course, it didn't work out that way. That's one important lesson of Laputa of Swift satire plus I just think Swift, you should read it. I know I've talked at length. But Matt how you doing? [laughter]

STOCKMAL: I'm chillin'

FOY: Well that's good. If not, I'll just fly around.

LIVINGSTON: Drop some rocks?

FOY: Right. I think that critique. I mean I've always found that sobering. Clearly Swift is critiquing the way the British government is ruling, particularly ruling Ireland. But wow, it can be applicable to today. I think we're currently thinking that Venezuela might need a change of government.

LIVINGSTON: Yeah, they're caught between the elections on that.

FOY: Yeah right, it's kind of like the poster I saw somewhere that said well the regime change didn't work out so well in Iran, Iraq, Honduras, and Chile, and it just goes on. But this time, it's going to work out great. I just think of a flying island of Laputa.

LIVINGSTON: Obviously, this project is celebrating its 30th anniversary, so what new initiatives do you think Barrett should support for the future?

FOY: That's a- that's a big question for a guy who's- my biggest problem is I'm so happy with Barrett. I'll just say keep doing what you're doing.

LIVINGSTON: What are they doing now that you think is really fantastic and that they should put more effort into?

FOY: I really like the Global Citizen Initiative that Marc Jacobs and Peggy Nelson came up with and that Dean Foote is totally committed to, and she has such great experience with her background in the Americas because -- I mean it becomes a cliché, like 'citizen of the world' sometimes has this flaky connotation like I'm a citizen of the world, but you don't know anything about your backyard. But I think that's not what the deans are thinking in terms of thinking you need to know your backyard and be aware of the rest of the world and be connected. Back to this flying island. These guys know calculus and they know Laplace transforms and whatever they know right but they don't know foreign languages the distance. The only thing the flood of Lilliputian rulers, if you remember from the episode, they esteem is mathematics and really abstract music and they think that's all you need to know. What we were asking earlier about our engineering students, no knock on our engine and some of my best friends are engineers, but do you ever have you ever been around somebody who thinks the fact that they know how to program- and I won't say for Pascal, I don't know whatever it is means- that they should rule the world because I've been around those people. Or physics majors who think because they're in physics, they really are smarter than everyone else in the room and people listen to them. Have you ever run into those people? Yes, of course you have. I think part of Swift's message was, you know what? When it comes to political ruling, when it comes to some of the challenges we face, we need to know it's great to know those things. No question. But you also might need to know some languages, you might need to know some culture, you might need to know a bunch of other things. The character in the flying island of Laputa episode there's this great lord that all the other rulers disdain because he's terrible at math and it's not very good at music. But what is he good at? He's good at languages. He's good at conversation. Remember the Laputan rules are so

bad at conversation you have to have servants with a pole and bags of beans and they have to be hit on the ear to remember to listen and then hit on the mouth to remember to speak. That bad at conversation, so self-absorbed and wrapped up in their own thoughts and here this great lord they disdain is perfect at conversation, does all these things. We too have to be good at conversation, and that means we do have to understand the rest of the world, and the deans are committed to that. I've led these studies abroad programs. I would say easily half my students have never been abroad. I've had students who've never been outside of Arizona. The first time they're outside of Arizona, they're in London or they're in Geneva, Switzerland, and they're getting this other, new perspective that they wouldn't get any other way. That's priceless. That is priceless. Keep doing that Global Initiative. It's really paying off. That's something. There's so much going on- just thinking of, shoot, what's his last name. Oh say Alex... downtown professor...

LIVINGSTON: Oh, Young! I had him as my human event professor and I loved him.

FOY: So like Alex Young, I mean Sandoval's cool, but I'm just thinking of Alex. He's taking students to Morocco and Alex Young is one of these guys who just does. Yeah. Sandoval, of course, you know, works with the black theater troupe. He works with oh Hamilton, he got students in to see Hamilton. Yeah, I mean, but I think that I just thought about Alex Young because of the stuff he's doing and all the guys... downtown campus is a great campus. A lot of fantastic energy. I taught there one semester. I just had a great time with it.

LIVINGSTON: I went there last year.

FOY: Yeah. I mean just the image is great but you know like Alex Young is one of these guys who really gets this global initiative and understands that hey, you know, Morocco's another place too because students get London, they go to Paris, there is a kind of dreary familiarity with like "Oh yeah, I'm going to Western Europe," while the world's a lot larger than Western Europe. So expanding on that, I keep a map on the wall which my wife got me from IKEA. So students come in, and I say Greece is over there, right. So reading the Iliad or something. Troy is somewhere over there. So that's something I can think of. What other what other initiatives do you guys think? I mean you guys, young people are more aware and more hip. What are the things that they're doing? While I'm grading essays. There's so many because I know there are so many things, there's the community dialogues, of course, that people have done. I think that's part of this idea of being aware. Bringing new voices and then things. So what do you guys

think? Now I want to add- I want to turn the interview. What do you think Barrett should do more of? In terms of initiatives.

LIVINGSTON: Uhhh... Connections between the different university Barrett campuses. Each one individually does a very good job but sometimes there isn't that connection between the campuses just because of the distance between them.

FOY: You know, it's really challenging with connectivity, I was associate chair for Laura Popova, and she was the chair, and she's awesome. She's a wonderful form of teaching the Human Event that I learned from watching her like "Oh yeah. That's how I should be doing it." I mean she's also a great faculty chair and we struggled with this. And it's easier to bridge that gap between the Downtown and Tempe campus. Not that we always do it. It's more, the proximity is closer. So when I taught downtown, I could hop on the light rail or I could get on the shuttle, the shuttle only takes half an hour, although I love the light rail, even though it takes longer.

STOCKMAL: The shuttle is amazing.

FOY: The shuttle is amazing but you get on the light rail and you feel like you're in a real city on the subway. And, how shall I put it delicately, on the subway, on the light rail, you meet an interesting cross-section.

STOCKMAL: Every day on the light rail, it's an experience.

FOY: I mean you know I lived in Philadelphia ,New York, as you know it's like being on the subway and meeting an interesting cross-section. So it's a little fun, but I think it was easier, but I think the real challenge here is- what we should do a better job of even though we're better connected with the downtown campus with Dr. Flaherty, Dr. Sandoval, Dr. Young, Dr. Feddock. And those guys are able to make it for faculty meetings, and when I was Flynn advisor for three years, which was one of the great highlights of my time in the past two years, when it came time to pick a new one. Catherine O'Flaherty was the obvious choice. And Dr. Flaherty was downtown and people were worried, well, how can students meet with Dr. Flaherty? But as I pointed out Dr. Flaherty is closer to the Flynn main office being on the Downtown campus than I was at the Tempe campus. So I think that's been easier. I think more challenging is Poly right? East which given the West and we call it the Wild West and I love Dr. Ramsey and Dr. Gruber, but it's almost like it's its own thing over there, and I think particularly for students on the West

campus there's that feeling of isolation that they're not quite a part of the family. You say it, but then they'd like the distant relatives. We don't know, and I would like to see more connection or closer sense of *esprit de corps*. I've directed a few theses where I've gone out to the West campus and helped or directed a student from the West campus, but I will say it's a challenge because that shuttle and I love the shuttle. But the shuttle takes you half an hour to get to Downtown campus, but it's almost like an hour, like 45 minutes to an hour, to get to West. And it's challenging when you're coming from Tempe campus of course to go from Poly to us. I know how that works and the shuttle is great. I mean that helps. But what are some of the things that we can do not merely to bring faculty together, but current students together? So are there things, like I think of the events, Dr. Sandoval holds these really cool cultural events and makes these connections. Are these the sorts of things- something that gets the students together, where the students are kind of getting together for events in the West and the Downtown campus. Matthew, what do you think? You've got that look on your face like you're thinking.

STOCKMAL: Oh, I don't know what I was thinking about... what's the next question I would like to ask.

FOY: Oh, okay sure ask me.

STOCKMAL: Which was instead of looking to the future how have you seen Barrett change over the time you've been here?

FOY: First of all, the obvious one is size. When I came here it was 13... 16 at most. So it was much smaller, it was easily half the size. And the first year I was here we were still over Irish, the last year we were Irish Hall

STOCKMAL: So you're a vintage professor? [laughter]

FOY: Yeah, I'm old school. And I actually had Dr. McManus' old office and my wife got me a 1940 Sam Spade kind of telephone. Sort of looked like I was, you know, Humphrey Bogart or something. And I'd talk about environmentally incorrect. I could adjust the thermostat in my office to whatever temperature, I can make it blasting like a cold freezer in the middle of the summer. I mean, I could be ultimately, totally irresponsible. And then the second year that I was in Barrett was the first year we were over here in the new buildings. So there's the change in that. I think we just get meta for a moment. We could talk about the change in the composition of the

number of faculty. I think when I arrived at Barrett we were still in the phase of trying to gain recognition for what we were doing. We were still in the phase like convincing the Provost office and our President Crow was on board. I mean we kind of were his baby. He hired Marc Jacobs with the idea of "Maverick, make this honors college the Harvard of the Southwest." And so we clearly, we had the wind at the backs in terms of Crow believed in us, and we had to come through, and we had to convince other people, not so much him, but other people on campus, other professors, other units that we were serious, and also convince other universities elsewhere that we were the real thing. We were kind of halfway through that. I think the difference between when I arrived and we were still in that phase reaching out and trying to impress others on the campus of ASU also other universities, Princeton, Stanford, that we were willing to be taken seriously. We were there. I mean we are taken seriously. That's not the question now. Now that we have reached that what do we need to do. What do we not have to do to maintain that. That makes sense right. You've gotten this reputation it's well deserved forget the Frank Bruni column. Those were the gold standard. I've never heard Marc Jacobs mention that less than three times in any given talk, but since we we arrived then the question is how do we maintain? The other thing is the size of the faculty and the composition of faculty. I would say when I arrived it was smaller. We had great colleagues. Dr. Popova came out of the University of Chicago, which was just freaking awesome. And I really thought it was the perfect place for me. Over time we've grown. We've heard a lot more people. I chaired- in 2014 I was the chair of the faculty search that hired four permanent new faculty including a Dr. Soares, Dr. Voorhees, Dr. Stoff, and Dr. Niebuhr and then we hired four one year staff because we were short. People suddenly had to fill a gap. The following year we hired almost a dozen. So suddenly we were hiring a lot people, we've tapered back down. We've more than doubled in size of faculty. And that's because our incoming classes, our number of students have grown. So when they originally built this building not all of the offices and Sage South were filled. And we kept clicking. "Oh it'll be years before we have to worry about that." Well now you know, this office that I'm in, this used to be Cynthia Pitino office, and advising spilled over into North Hall. If we have more people, we got to figure out where we put them. And, of course, even more students. Part of it was because President Crow said look he had a goal of 10 percent. He wanted 10 percent of the incoming freshmen to be Barrett. That's kind of that's my goal. And if you guys have ever seen Dr. Strangelove. Watch it sometimes. There's a there's a character that reminds you of President Cros. But anyways he was kind of like we're going to have this mandate. Well, we in the faculty were kind of upset to hear this because we felt like our Human Event classes have to be about 20. We can't have it much more than 20 or 21. Frankly, I feel it's a little much. I'd really rather have it at like 16. That would be ideal. So we didn't know what that meant. Right. And what President Crow was

thinking. So Marc Jacobs and Peggy Nelson went to the president and said look if you want this expansion in terms of the number of students who are coming to Barrett, and you want to maintain the quality it is we're going to need more professors and they kind of figured they were kind of calling- I think it's Marc Jacobs may disagree with his characterization- but my understanding was they kind of thought of it as calling President Carter's bluff. Like, look, do you understand what's involved here? And Crow without batting an eyelash said that we can do that. Here are the resources, here's the money, people, let's get it done. We've been really fortunate. I got to tell you I have been stunned, blown away by the people we've hired, especially the newest people. We just heard some amazing faculty. I'm a mentor for Dr. Taylor Hines, Dr. Dagmar Engan, Dr. Katie Boyce-Jacino. These are just terrific people and finally with Taylor and Katie I have people I can tell science, math, and physics jokes because of their background. But when I look at them on the personnel committee when I look at- I hope I'm not giving away state secrets. But this is a good thing. I'm looking at the stuff they're doing. I'm just blown away. I'm just like wow they're doing this innovative stuff. It keeps me on my game. I think I better not sit on my laurels because these are folks who are younger and bringing in new ideas and new energy or doing really interesting things in the classroom. So that's kind of my take on the biggest changes.

LIVINGSTON: Thank you very much. I think that's a good place to wrap it up-

FOY: Because it's five o'clock. [laughs]

LIVINGSTON: Thanks so much for your participation if you have anything to share later you can reach out to Vice Dean Foote, but thank you again.

FOY: Thank you guys for coming by. It's been enjoyable, wait till I tell my wife.