

# Harlan Cleveland

*Interviewed by Warren Nishimoto (1996)*

*Narrative edited by Hunter McEwan and Warren Nishimoto*

**Harlan Cleveland**, political scientist, diplomat, public executive, author of dozens of articles and books, and eighth president of the University of Hawai'i, was born in 1918 in New York City. He was the son of Stanley Matthews Cleveland and Marian Phelps Van Buren Cleveland. His father, an Episcopal chaplain, died prematurely in 1926. Nursing his father during a long illness had taken a toll on Cleveland's mother, and the family was recommended to move to a warmer climate. She took Harlan and his siblings to southern Europe where she had spent a part of her childhood—first to the Basse Pyrénées region of France and later to Geneva in Switzerland. Harlan Cleveland's schooling there gave him a strong foundation in French, and he also picked up some Italian and German.

In 1931, the family returned to the United States. Cleveland attended Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. There, he learned to value the connections between the disciplines, laying the grounds for his later abilities as a generalist: "I was always struck with the contrast between a situation in a school or college or university, where all the organization and all the power structure, too, is built on disciplines—and the communities surrounding it, where everything is organized by problems."

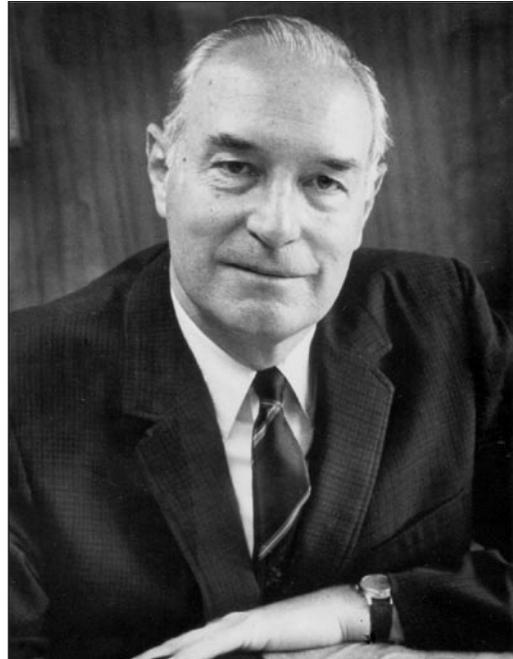
After graduation, Cleveland, at age sixteen, was admitted to Princeton University. He traveled extensively during summer breaks and went to Japan and China in 1937 on a study tour. While in China's Yangtze Valley, he witnessed some of the events leading to World War II, including the Japanese naval bombardment of Shanghai.

After receiving his bachelor's degree in 1938, Cleveland continued his studies at Oxford University as a Rhodes scholar. Oxford provided him with a strong background in Keynesian economics. He was active in the Oxford University Labour Club and helped organize demonstrations opposing Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement with Germany.

His doctoral studies came to an abrupt end with the outbreak of war in Europe, and he returned to Washington to work as an intern with the National Institute for Public Affairs. He was not too concerned that he was unable to complete his doctoral studies as he was not interested at the time in pursuing an academic career: "I thought of myself as a 'reflective practitioner.' That is, a person who would be doing, but thinking harder about it than most of the doers."

As a result of his background as a Rhodes scholar, Cleveland secured a paying job in the information division of the Farm Security Administration, a New Deal program designed to assist poor farmers. However, because the U.S. was in a state of war-readiness, much of his work in the FSA involved the relocation of people displaced by war preparations.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Cleveland was assigned to the "Enemy Branch" of the Board of Economic Warfare. He was put in charge of the Italian Section, working with a small group of exiles, mainly Jewish intellectuals and businessmen



(UH Photo Archives)

who had escaped before the outbreak of hostilities. Their job was to determine how to destroy selective pieces of the Italian economy, in some cases by advising the U.S. Air Force on what they should and should not bomb.

Later, as the Allies gained the upper hand after the invasion of Sicily, Cleveland traveled to Rome to take up a staff position as assistant to General William O'Dwyer, head of the Allied Control Commission (ACC) in Italy. His talents as a generalist and bureaucratic analyst were quickly put to the test in calculating the first balance-of-payments estimate for postwar Italy. Because Cleveland's work was regarded as a remarkable accomplishment by his supervisors in Washington, he was, at age 26, appointed to be executive director of the Economic Section of the ACC.

In the early postwar years, Cleveland transferred to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) to continue the work he had been doing for the ACC in Italy. In 1948, he joined the Economic Cooperation Administration, where he first served as director of the China Aid Program, then developed and managed U.S. aid to East Asia. In 1952, he became the Washington-based supervisor of the Marshall Plan for European recovery.

Cleveland left Washington in early 1953 to become executive editor and later publisher of *The Reporter*.

In 1956, he was appointed dean of the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. He was also professor of political science at the school.

As dean, he refined his theory that public administration was informed by the social sciences: "We thought of public administration as not just how you do the pick-and-shovel work in a bureaucracy. I thought of it as a horizontal overlay on the social sciences." While at Syracuse he published his first book, *The Overseas Americans* (1960): "It developed some theory about what was the difference in working abroad and there-

fore, what kind of preparation people should have.”

Cleveland was a New York delegate to the 1960 Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles, and from 1961 to 1965 served as Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs in the President John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson administrations.

Appointed U.S. Ambassador to NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965, he continued in that post until the first months of the new Republican administration under President Richard M. Nixon in 1969.

Cleveland stepped into the University of Hawai‘i presidency in the aftermath of a long, bitter dispute between and among the university administration, faculty and students regarding the tenure of Oliver Lee, a UH-Mānoa political science professor whose strong antiwar views led to the denial of his tenure application by the Thomas H. Hamilton administration, a decision supported by the UH Board of Regents. Hamilton’s decision was subsequently appealed on the grounds that it

violated Lee’s right to due process, an appeal supported by the UH-Mānoa Faculty Senate. Hamilton then announced his resignation and formally left office in May of 1968. On April 26, 1969, the regents named Cleveland to be the university’s eighth president.

Cleveland served during one of the most tumultuous eras of the twentieth century. Across the nation, college students demonstrated against the Vietnam War and protested societal injustices such as race and gender discrimination. A unique culture based on activism, rock music, drugs, and social and intellectual awareness developed. During those years, America also endured scandals that led to the resignation of its vice president and president. The nation’s trust in government and its leaders were at a nadir.

Warren Nishimoto conducted eight interviews with Cleveland in 1996 as part of a series of oral histories with former University of Hawai‘i presidents. The following edited narrative begins at approximately the midway point of the interviews, when he assumed the presidency.



President Harlan Cleveland (far right) and Vice President Richard Kosaki (second from right) visit Kapi‘olani Community College, 1969. (UH Photo Archives)

## Coming to the University of Hawai'i.

What was going on through my mind was that a university presidency was the one kind of job that I would really like to tackle because of my professional and academic interest in administration, in how things get done. It seemed to me that being president of a university was the most difficult form of administration. The staff was not really responsible to the so-called boss. A chemistry professor would regard himself as much more responsible to the field of chemistry nationally than he would as part of the university. An urban hospital would be maybe one ratchet more “horizontal,” in that the faculty there, the doctors, are not even on the payroll of the hospital. They are on the payroll of the third-party payers—insurance companies and the like—who pay the tab. So maybe a university wasn't the ultimate case in “horizontal” administration, but it was close enough. And I had already projected in my thinking, then later projected in *The Future Executive*,<sup>1</sup> the notion that most administrative relationships were going to be horizontal in the foreseeable future.

A university presidency would get me into what seemed to be a congenial sort of role where I could use the skills that I had already developed as an administrator and manager; to run things and supervise people. But I could also use my brain to think about the process in which I was engaged and to think about the subject matters I was administering.

So I spread the word among my friends and colleagues [while U.S. Ambassador to NATO] that that's the sort of thing I'd like to do next. If they heard of anything interesting, to let me know. I didn't really have Hawai'i in my sights particularly, although I'd always been interested in Hawai'i. I had stopped there when I was a student on our Orient study tour. I stopped there on my way back and was actually sort of offered a chance to be a young reporter or an intern at *The Honolulu Advertiser*. I met George Chaplin, the editor of the paper, then.

One of my favorite people in the Maxwell [School] faculty and one of our most distinguished professors, had moved to Hawai'i, Stuart Gerry Brown. I got a letter from him in Brussels that winter of the shift-over when it was obvious that I was going to need a new job.<sup>2</sup> He mentioned that they had been fiddling around here for a year and a half trying to find a new president for the University of Hawai'i<sup>3</sup> and “a group of us would like to suggest you. What do you think?” It turned out that he, George Chaplin and Gregg [M.] Sinclair, former [University of Hawai'i] president [1942–55], had gotten their heads together. I didn't really know Sinclair. I knew Chaplin vaguely.

So my guess is, on the basis of Stuart's testimony, they decided I would be right for the job. And they started promoting this idea, apparently, to the [Board of] Regents and I suppose to the governor and others. And so at the end of February or early March [1969], I get a formal invitation to come out.

Now, one thing happened before that. I was in Washington, [D.C.] for a consultation sometime, it must have been in February. And [Herbert M.] “Monte” Richards and Monsignor [Charles A.] Kekumano were—I don't remember whether Bob [Robert L.] Cushing, who was the chairman of the Board [of Regents], was in on that or not—were going to be in Washington for something. I got word that they would like to meet me. I guess we had dinner together. And I liked them both very much, and I liked what they said about the university. Well, they mostly described the sort of shape and size. I hadn't realized that it [the university] was practically the whole of higher education in the state of Hawai'i, give or take a few small denominational colleges. And it wasn't formally a system at that point but it sounded as if it was working up to being a state system. They also described that there had been a lot of ructions there in connection with Vietnam and that there were pending cases. They mentioned the Oliver Lee case, but I didn't really have any idea what it was or how it fitted in. But they weren't selling me the institution; mainly they were trying to find out about me. The next thing I heard was an invitation from the Board of Regents to visit Hawai'i for a week, with Lois, first-class travel, all expenses paid, and so on.

We had arrived at the beginning of the week. I was to lecture at the East-West Center on the Friday of that week. And that was kind of the “cover story,” so that people wouldn't cotton to the fact that I was a candidate for the presidency. And somehow, I think probably because of George Chaplin, they had managed to convince all the media, the television people and the newspapers not to reveal—although most of them knew—why I was in town. Meanwhile, I was doing all sorts of things [that week] that couldn't possibly be kept secret. I was visiting with the governor, I was visiting with the legislative leaders on both sides of the aisle in both houses. I was talking with the regents, obviously. I was having meetings with various groups of faculty and students. And all of them knew why I was visiting with them. So the idea that the reason for my visit could be a secret struck me as increasingly laughable.

It looked like I was going to be offered the job because there didn't seem to be any other candidates around. And more of the conversation was directed at selling me the job than interviewing me for the job, it seemed to me. They, of course, were in the midst of this imbroglio about Oliver Lee, which had blown Hamilton out of the water earlier. So I was given huge sheets of paper to read about the case and what had happened in court, and so on. When I finally got to the meeting with the regents when we were getting serious talking about the job, one of them said, “Well, what do you think we ought to do about this Oliver Lee case? You've read all the background.”

In effect I told the Board of Regents they ought to fish or cut bait. And that was a kind of a risky thing to say because

I didn't know whether I'd be blowing my chances right there by saying that. But I knew enough about politics and administration to have a strong hunch that that was the right thing to say. And they swallowed it.

### The "Prospectus for the Seventies"<sup>4</sup>

It was written during my first year [in office]. I established a committee which Dick [Richard H.] Kosaki chaired, for the university-wide community to essentially think about the strategy for the university during my period. That's what I was thinking about. And they held a number of hearings and developed quite a literature on what was possible. It was in that process that I began to get an inkling, for example, that Mauna Kea was going to play a special role and would be noticed worldwide.

But I took the position very early—and Kosaki was very skillful at making it come out this way—that I wasn't setting up a committee to write the prospectus. I was setting up a committee to help me understand what was going on and what was possible. After all, I was fifty-one, and a published author of already several books, and I was pretty sure that I could write it, if I knew what to say, you know. And Dick managed to work it so that nobody resented the fact that when it was finally written, it wasn't really the committee's document, it was mine. I didn't want them to start nitpicking sentences or concepts. And so I went off over Christmas vacation and—I think that was done at the Sheraton Maui, which was one of our favorite places to disappear to—and wrote, or rewrote, every section of that document. And I worked very hard to get it done by the end of the year.

It was a very valuable exercise. First, it was very valuable to me, because, after all, I'd been working in Europe on security problems. I'd been working for four years on subject matter that had nothing to do with Hawai'i at all, or the Pacific, for that matter. So, it was an excuse to get immersed in the subject matter of the university's purposes.

But, the prospectus was not only good for me, it was good because we were able, through the Kosaki committee, to involve a lot of people on the faculty, and show that I wasn't coming in here with a set agenda that I'd cooked up on the plane coming over. Instead, it really would be built out of ambitions that people there had. And it was, in fact. There were a number of things that went in there that I hadn't realized, I hadn't even imagined before.

It had an enormous impact, both in assuring people who weren't watching very carefully, "Well, the university seems to know where it's going." It created that impression. But it also, for those who were involved—the governor and the legislators and the faculty leaders, student leaders, and parents and supporters around the state—gave them something to sink their teeth into.

My definition of planning was improvisation on a general sense of direction. That [prospectus] was the general

sense of direction, but in this case, I thought that it really needed to be put down on paper and widely circulated.

We got lucky, because again [George] Chaplin was helpful. And he decided, to my surprise, to run the whole thing as a series of articles in *The Honolulu Advertiser* from January 21, 1970, entitled "Prospectus for the Seventies." He preempted the op-ed [opinion and editorial] page for a whole week, and just ran this in big chunks, full text.

We generally tried to phrase everything we did with the legislature in terms that came out of the prospectus. There was enough philosophy in the prospectus to cover almost anything we'd wanted to do. Nowadays, it would probably be called a strategic plan or mission statement or something, and that kind of thing is done more and more.

And when I was leaving [in 1974], there were several efforts—I think the best one was probably in the [*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*]—to say, "Well, this guy came in with all these ideas. What's happened to them?" And they went through the prospectus, more or less point by point, and concluded that most of them had been done or were underway. And that was because it was in fact a general sense of direction on which I was improvising every day, and as it turned out, a lot of other people were too.

### University programs

Since I'd worked so much in international affairs myself, I thought of the university as an international institution more than a university of the Pacific. For example, there wasn't any Asian language and culture center. There were people who taught Japanese, there were people who taught Chinese, and some of them were in the university; some of them were in the East-West Center. And there were people in sociology and anthropology who had done research in these areas. My problem was to dramatize a concept, and then to attract—usually not very many new faculty into it—pull together the faculty that was there, and find somebody, either internally or externally who could do the coordinating and be the external symbol.

### Marine sciences

That's one thing that I worked quite hard on the first year, because I had been told that the University of Hawai'i, despite its natural advantages in marine sciences, had been passed up in the first allocation of Sea Grant money to the universities from the federal government. That struck me as very strange, and I was kind of curious as to why that was. When I got there, it became very clear that the reason was that the marine sciences were scattered around. There was the Coconut Island marine biology [facility]<sup>5</sup> and there was a strong geophysics element with George Woollard, who was good at landing federal grants. But there wasn't any centerpiece, and nobody available to talk to the federal government people about that whole subject.

John Craven had been one of the candidates, apparently, a year before, for the [UH] presidency. I knew him a little bit. So I arranged an early trip to Washington to get together with him. At that time he was up at MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology], for a one-year appointment—he had just left the [federal] government. He'd been chief scientist of the Polaris program and an expert on small submersible vehicles. He was, interestingly, a combination of ocean engineer and lawyer. And the governor [Governor John A. Burns] liked him. And soon after he came, the governor made him also the state coordinator of marine affairs. So with those two jobs, he was in a very strong position to do what I wanted which was both to pull together the marine sciences inside and to advertise them, sell them, symbolize them, outside, particularly to Washington.

### Mauna Kea

I had not realized that Mauna Kea was potentially the world's best terrestrial site for astronomy. I knew generally that there'd been a history of solar astronomy based more at Haleakala than Mauna Kea. I really got religion about Mauna Kea and pushed very hard for UH to be ambitious. We fortunately had a very good director of the Institute for Astronomy, which had already been set up, named John Jefferies, who had started life as a solar astronomer.

An arrangement had been made, before I got there, for the university to have a ninety-nine-year lease on the whole top of Mauna Kea. But we only had one small telescope there; it belonged to the university. So the runaway take-off for that whole astronomy program happened during my time, although some of the telescopes we negotiated for didn't actually get constructed until after I left. We bid for what was going to be one of the world's great telescopes, what came to be known as the France-Canada-Hawai'i telescope, which was a joint venture between French and Canadian astronomers. They came, I think reluctantly, to Hawai'i to look at the site. They had previously visited all the places in the world where they had any ambitions about astronomy and where French was spoken, and didn't find any of them satisfactory from a scientific point of view. By happenstance, the three people that they mostly dealt with when they got to Hawai'i all spoke French. I had just come from NATO, which is a bilingual community, and I was fluent in French at that time—more so than now, it's rusted over now. John Jefferies had had part of his scientific training at the Sorbonne, in French. And the chief astronomical engineer, Hans Boesgaard was a multilingual Dane who also spoke French. And I always thought later that at least 75 percent of their positive decision was based on the scientific characteristics of Mauna Kea: the black night, the lack of pollution from below, the 9,000-foot inversion of the clouds so that it kept pollution off the top of the mountain. But that maybe 25 percent was just of a cultural feeling

that, "These people must be all right. They speak French," you know (laughs).

### Korean Studies

One of the things that were clear from the beginning was that we could be a center for Korean studies. Korea, because it had historical importance for us, being the venue of one of our great wars, there was a lot of interest. We had a very good professor there, Dae-Sook Suh, who was in fact an expert on North Korea, and actually wrote a book about Kim Il Sung. Suh was one of the first people later on to be allowed to travel in North Korea. So when the question came up, I took the line that the question wasn't whether we ought to have a Center for Korean Studies, but that we were the center for Korean studies in the United States. And then later—I can't remember which years, second or third year—I went on a trip to [South] Korea and negotiated with the minister of education there a deal whereby they would put up half the funds to build that building [i.e., Korean Studies Center], and we would pass the hat in Hawai'i. And interestingly, I thought we'd be depending mostly on the Korean Americans there [in Hawai'i], and maybe some Korean-Americans on the Mainland and so on, but the Japanese and Chinese communities also were very helpful.

### PEACESAT<sup>6</sup>

There was a fellow there named John Bystrom, who was a very well-known person in the field of communications, and he knew quite a lot about the coming technologies of the information age long before most people were turned on by them. I was sort of beginning to get interested in that. Much later, I wrote a book called *The Knowledge Executive*, and have been active in that field ever since.

John Bystrom was one of the people who turned me on to the potential of electronic communication, and particularly satellite communication. He got wind of a NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration] satellite, one of the very early ones. I think it was called ATS-1, Advanced Technology System One, which was up there in the sky, and had been up there for several years. The research and development at NASA and elsewhere had gone past it, but the satellite was still healthy up there. NASA didn't have a job for it anymore, because they were working with more advanced technology, partly for military purposes. And so they issued us all a half-hearted announcement saying, in effect, "Anybody want to use an old satellite? Anyone who wants to use it for some educational or non-profit purpose, we'll make it available for free."

Bystrom caught that ball in mid-air, and [in 1970] conceived the idea that we should develop a Pacific-wide electronic communications system. This is before anybody was really talking about e-mail and so on. And the idea as we developed it was that we would have a communication sys-

tem that would exchange information among all the higher education institutions in the Pacific, including Alaska, Fiji, Tonga, and so on. We had to have a technology that wasn't too expensive for communicating with the satellite—we got the satellite free. And NASA liked this idea very much, because we were going to use something that they had put up and we could show that they were doing something for humanity and so on. And our congressional delegation liked the idea and was very helpful in pushing it. Senator [Daniel K.] Inouye was very helpful, and Senator [Spark M.] Matsunaga, too.

We needed a ground station [to access the ATS-1 satellite]. And there was a very imaginative—some people called him crazy—professor in the [physics department], who was a ham radio enthusiast [Katashi Nose]. And he said, “My goodness. I could put together a ground station out of stuff I could buy off the shelf in a ham radio store.”

I said that the problem with any organization, even if it's expanding, is that what you're already doing fills up the budget. The only way to start anything new is to have some money that doesn't require cutting somebody's budget. So, the thing to do was to make an across-the-board cut ahead of time, so that nobody was feeling the pain. So we had this fund we called the President's Innovation Fund, and I told Bystrom and [Nose], “Here's \$5,000. Why don't you see if you can make it work?” And for an amount that turned out only to be about half the \$5,000, they constructed a ground station on the roof of the engineering building.

And within—I don't know, a year, a year and a half—Bystrom had this thriving business going, where for two or three hours every day, there would be an exchange of views and discussion by what we would now call e-mail. You'd type out a message and it would go out on the system. And altogether, for peanuts as a university investment, it was possible to make a major innovation in satellite communication, because the satellite was free. So that was again partly taking advantage of Hawai'i's location as a Pacific university, but also betting on the imagination and drive of a senior professor [Bystrom].

### The community colleges

I began to worry about, “What about the best and brightest of the students who come through the community colleges? Are they going to get a chance to go on, since it was all one system after all?” I came to regard that as a kind of an entitlement: that if somebody did well enough in community college, they ought to get a chance to get to the Mānoa campus, or later, to the Hilo campus, for a four-year degree or beyond into graduate work.

It was a part of my educational philosophy, but also a political judgment, based on having seen what was happening in other states, where the smaller, more spread-out parts of public higher education were vigorously supported by

the local legislators from those districts. And I came to feel very strongly that we should encourage the maximum flow of people through the community colleges to the Mānoa campus. Our arrangements for admitting students to the Mānoa campus should leave plenty of room for ambitious youngsters from the neighbor islands and from outside of the Honolulu complex itself.

We developed a proposal, which I made to the faculty senate in Mānoa, that we should develop the principle that any student that does satisfactory work and gets sixty credit hours of transferable work should have not just the opportunity, but should have a preferential right to move to the Mānoa campus for the rest of their education. That was very hard for the Mānoa faculty to swallow. First of all, there was an attitude that these are probably inferior students, that they're country folks who really wouldn't understand how to survive on our campus. Then it turned out that they [Mānoa faculty] didn't really know what was going on at the community colleges, and there weren't many friendships of community college faculty with Mānoa faculty. So I used our innovation fund to support a whole series of lunches and dinners. For example, getting the mathematicians on the Mānoa campus together with the people who were teaching mathematics in the community colleges. And some of it was very revealing, because the Mānoa faculty didn't know what was happening in the other parts of the statewide system. In some cases, they were surprised that it was so good; in some cases they were distressed that it was so bad, and began to take responsibility for helping the community college people in their fields to do teaching that would mesh with the teaching on the Mānoa campus when the students came, you see. So, it was not just a question of passing a rule. It was a question of developing a whole new culture.

Finally, after, I think, negotiating about it for more than two years, we got the Mānoa faculty senate signed on to the policy. So for the first time it meant open admissions at the University of Hawai'i, after talking about open admissions for years.

### The law school

We were trying to get the law school approved, but in the senate, the senate minority leader, Wadsworth Yee, was very much opposed to it. He took the line that lawyers of his generation often took, which was, “Well, we had to go to the Mainland for law school, but it worked all right in my case. Why don't the kids want to do that?” There tended to be more local politics involved in it, because so many of the legislators, and outside people, were lawyers, and had their own idea of what a law school should be.

I kept arguing that any community that isn't producing some of its own lawyers and some of its own doctors is still a colony, and, “If you guys want to be a colony of California, that's all right, but I don't think we ought to be.” It turned

out to be a pretty powerful argument. Anyway, [Senator] Wadsworth Yee was opposing the law school. But at the same time, he was trying to help his son get into law school on the Mainland. He told people—I don't remember if he told me, or if he told somebody who told me—that he was a good friend of the governor of Colorado, Governor [John A.] Love of Colorado. He would call him up about his son. And the governor, I gather, said something like, “Are you kidding? I can't even get my own son into [a certain] law school.” So, the next day, as a result of that phone conversation—as I understand the story—Yee was standing on the floor of the state senate, saying, “The Mainland schools are discriminating against our kids. We can't have that. We've got to have our own law school.” Just, bang, like that.

We had some consultants come in, including a guy who was dean of the Stanford [University] Law School, who later became president of Indiana University. And they developed a very imaginative kind of a curriculum for a law school, which involved much more clinical work earlier, and didn't start with the usual torts and contracts and so forth in the first year. But the local lawyers, both in the legislature and out, were not about to make our law school a big educational experiment, which they thought might get in the way of being helpful to their kids, you know. And they may have been right about that, actually. Anyway, we did start the law school in a more normal way.

## The medical school

The medical school was much more expensive inherently, and there was also a big argument about whether we ought to have a hospital. The guy who had been heading the two-year program at UH had come up through, I think, UCLA, and to him a medical school was something that had a hospital attached. I started consulting around about medical schools with friends on the Mainland. One of my friends was president of Johns Hopkins [University], and he said, “Whatever you do about a medical school, don't have a [university] hospital. It takes half my time and half my budget.”

So we imported a group of consultants to think about it, and they came up with what I'd hoped they would come up with, which was, “You guys don't need a hospital. You've got some fine hospitals around here. Your problem is to make them part of your program.” And that turned out to be the hard part. Because to make them part of the program meant that you had to get faculty members who could be physicians on their staff, and you had to make sure that those physicians, who were faculty members, were in control of the educational program in the hospital. And I'd been in several negotiations with the Russians and with our allies in Europe, and it struck me that I'd never been in anything so difficult as negotiating with the hospitals in Hawai'i. I thought it would have been the same anywhere. And that's probably why so many university medical programs have their own hospitals.

## The Vietnam War and campus climate

I arrived in September [1969], and in the middle of October, there was sort of a general movement on campuses around the country to declare a special day calling attention to the Vietnam War. It came to be called the October Moratorium.

We consulted with some of the faculty leaders, and some of the regents and so on, and decided it was all right to have a day off [from classes] for talk about that, and that it would be a good thing for every professor to think of a way to make it a day of thinking about the war in Vietnam through the prism of their discipline. And we officially called off classes for an afternoon, a Wednesday I believe it was, so there could be a big meeting on the subject. Student leaders very much wanted a big protest meeting.

They invited me to come to the meeting and speak. I think I surprised them by saying, “Yes, I'll come.”

I hadn't previously said anything publicly about Vietnam. But when I issued a statement that called off classes and made this meeting possible, I said that everybody wants the war over; it's just that there are different ways of wanting it over. But nobody wants this war to continue. Which was more or less true.

And then, when the students running this meeting gave me the floor, I had prepared a very strong and, as I look back on it, eloquent analysis of why we ought to get out of the war. I wasn't able to use the phrase, because Senator George Aiken of Vermont, I guess it was, had already used the phrase, “Let's declare victory and get out.” But that was my theme. It became known with some of my colleagues as the “Vietnam-is-our-Algeria War,” because I had this phrase in there about, “We ought to do what de Gaulle did about Algeria, and just walk away from it.”

I had a line designed as an applause line, and it turned out to be a headline line, to the effect that the reason we're not getting out is because we've got “face” problems involved. I thought this was a way of putting it that would mean something to a largely Oriental-parentage audience: “The face of my nation is not worth the life of my son,” I said. That was emblazoned over the top of the newspaper, the next day. It was by far the lead story, and somewhat transformed my relationship with students in general, and the student leadership in particular.

It also transformed my relationship with Admiral [John S.] McCain, [Jr.], who was the Commander-in-Chief [of the U.S. Pacific Command]. His son [John S. McCain III], now a [U.S.] senator from Arizona, was still a prisoner of war in Hanoi. And so coming out against the war was a stab in the back as far as Admiral McCain was concerned.

Well, it didn't really quiet the indignation about the war, but it took me personally a little bit out of the firing line. And it gave me an opportunity for some educational experiments. People would come in and conduct sit-ins in my office, and

I figured since they were sitting there, they might as well be learning something, so I'd give them things to read and we'd discuss them. I was particularly fond, at that moment, of a piece that I'd just read, that I'd read in French, but that had just come out in English, by Raymond Aron about the events of 1968 which occurred just the year before in France.<sup>7</sup> It is a long and very brilliant essay about the distinction between dissent and disruption. I thought it was a very good opportunity for educating people about the important distinction between dissent and disruption.

### **Decentralizing the University of Hawai'i system**

The goal was to actually try to decentralize the university administration by at least giving the impression that the community colleges were a little better represented. I had to avoid the sense that because of the structure, I was bound to pay most of my attention to the Mānoa campus. Of course, that was what I paid most attention to always, because it was the biggest part of the university in terms of number of students, in terms of dollars, in terms of investment, and in terms of outside renown.

For me personally, the UH presidency became a marginally less attractive job after we set it up as a state "system," because I wasn't seeing quite as much of the best people on the Mānoa campus. They had to go to the chancellor for their problems. And it was harder to initiate things. For example, PEACESAT was initiated right out of my office, with a quite direct relationship with the professor who was masterminding it. But with a more decentralized administration, all those dynamics would be between the Mānoa chancellor and him, except it might not happen because I had the flexibility to move resources around from my level, more effectively than a campus chancellor would have.

### **The board of regents**

I remember a meeting of the board of regents in which we were trying to recruit somebody in a sub-field of biology. And it was the kind of sub-field where there were probably only half a dozen, or a dozen at most, first-rate people in the whole country. One of the regents was critical of the fact that the chairman of that department was off gallivanting around the country on our budget, trying to recruit somebody for this slot. And he asked the question, you know, "Can't we find somebody like that around here?" Well, in the context, for that particular slot, that was a ridiculously ignorant question. But you couldn't say to a regent, "That's ridiculously ignorant," you know. So we just had to explain how difficult it was, and how few people there were, and so on. And how if you didn't go after them, other people would get them because there were a lot of good universities with good biology departments.

So, you've got that kind of regent trouble. But by far, the most serious issues with the board as a whole, or at least

with the majority of board [members], came over athletics. And that may be typical elsewhere, too.

### **Collective bargaining**

I always thought that it was a bad idea for faculty members to form a union. I thought it would be better for them to have a strong professional association and work things out that way. Unionization would have a levelling effect. If you were an associate professor, you would tend to get paid [a certain amount] whether you were topflight or just average in whatever the field was. It didn't seem to me to serve either the university's purpose or the individual's purpose, for the best people in a particular category to be kind of held to an average salary. For [certain] fields, it would be harder to get the best people unless we paid top price. It would be harder under collective bargaining, I thought, to make those distinctions, either between excellence and average, and between, say, physics and English. Because for a very good price for an English teacher, you couldn't get a first-rate physicist in the marketplace. And we needed to be able to make those distinctions.

But the politics of our situation was fundamentally different. In the first place, unions were politically popular. Some of them—Harry Bridges and the longshoremen and so on—had played a big part in the history of the West Coast and of Hawai'i.<sup>8</sup> So it was hard to make the kind of points that I'm making now without being seen to be anti-labor, you know. But by the same token, the labor mystique in Hawai'i was very hard to apply to this kind of intellectual activity.

So I had talks with Werner Levi and other faculty leaders. I advised them against going for a union. But some of the best of the faculty leaders thought that it would be both good for them, but also, that it was inevitable in Hawai'i that it would happen, and they'd better try to keep control of it themselves.

So then the Hawai'i Labor Relations Board held a hearing about whether this kind of union collective bargaining could be applied to the university. And also—very important—where you would draw the line between "labor" and "management" in a university. I was clearly management. And a professor with no administrative duties was clearly a peon in the traditional hierarchy of labor relations. But what about a department chair? The department chair is partly representing the faculty in their disciplines, but at the same time, the chair has responsibilities to the administration to stay within budget and stuff like that.

So they had me come and testify about where you would draw the line. I read up on some labor history, and prepared quite a substantial brief on the subject, which was, I think, quite baffling to them because their experience hadn't prepared them for my argument, which was that a department chair is both "management" and also part of the "labor" group. Most department chairs teach and do research. So I

thought that if collective bargaining [were to take place], there ought to be some way of adding a third party of people who were not entirely labor and not entirely management, but who had certain responsibilities of their own and ought to be heard in the dialogue.

I made it too complicated an issue for them. The result was that they went ahead and simplified it anyway: they threw the department chair into the [bargaining] unit. I told them if the department chair were thrown into the unit, it would require the appointment of a whole collection of assistant deans to do some of the things that the department chair was supposed to do for the administration. And that would inflate the administrative costs of the university, and be generally unpopular with people who thought that there oughtn't to be so many administrators anyway. That was a sort of curve ball from the point of view of the labor relations panel, because I was speaking to their prejudices—that there were already too many administrators.

Anyway, all my efforts along that line were not very successful. And it came out in favor of collective bargaining. The vote was more split on the Mānoa campus. As I remember, it was a slight majority against collective bargaining on the Mānoa campus, but that was swamped in the bigger numbers of the university faculty as a whole.<sup>9</sup>

## Resignation

When I was negotiating the question of being president with the Board of Regents in the spring of 1969, I was asked in one of the meetings whether I would sign on for five full years. They wanted me to stay for five, but they weren't willing to change the constitution, which states that the executive officer serves at the pleasure of the Board of Regents.

That would have required an explicit contract on their part to change that deal. So I didn't have any term of office. But as I came up to the fourth and fifth year, I had a feeling that it would require kind of a new decision on my part, almost as if it had been a five-year term. I had to think about that. I also had the impression that the people most interested in the subject, the regents and other political folks in the legislature and the governor's staff, and so on, were sort of regarding it as a five-year term, too, and thinking that maybe they had a decision to make as to whether I should stay.

Because of what I thought was a sort of depressing effect of unionization on the potentials that I had been pushing for at the university, and because the regents were showing more and more signs of "local-itis"—it seemed clear to me that Hawai'i as a community was going to insist pretty soon on there being a locally-born president of the university, I decided that I didn't really want to stay around to go through that argument and fight about it.

I started thinking that I would rather decide when to leave, rather than get into a situation where I'd be more and more being pushed out by what was, I think, clearly a dete-

riorating [relationship with the] Board of Regents. They were all appointed by the governor. I think one very important factor was that the governor [John A. Burns] was sick,<sup>10</sup> and that was slowing him down, making him less willing to take advice from everybody the way he used to. And that he was putting on the board people that he felt he had some political obligation to, to advance or to give some plum to. And being on the Board of Regents was regarded as quite a plum.

[Following his resignation from the university in 1974, Harlan Cleveland developed and directed an international program at the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies. In 1979 he was the Distinguished Visiting Tom Slick Professor of World Peace at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin.

During the 1980s Cleveland served as the founding dean of the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, a graduate school, research institute, and one of the nation's early centers for leadership education. He retired in 1988 as professor emeritus at the University of Minnesota.

Cleveland authored articles and books on executive leadership and world affairs. He was a fellow of the World Academy of Arts and Science and in 1991 became its president, a position he held at the time of the interviews, which were conducted in Pāhala, Hawai'i and Minneapolis, Minnesota.

He and his wife Lois raised three children.]

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Harlan Cleveland, *The Future Executive: A Guide for Tomorrow's Managers*, 1972.

<sup>2</sup> A lifelong Democrat, Cleveland knew his days as U.S. Ambassador to NATO under the Nixon administration were numbered.

<sup>3</sup> After Thomas H. Hamilton's resignation in 1968, the university was headed for a year by Acting President Richard Takasaki.

<sup>4</sup> Cleveland's "Prospectus for the Seventies," was written to be a "general sense of direction" for the university. According to Cleveland, it was not meant as a "personal initiative," nor a "consensus of the university community." See Center for Oral History, *Presidents of the University of Hawai'i: Harlan Cleveland* (Honolulu: Center for Oral History, 1998). A1-A28.

<sup>5</sup> Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology

<sup>6</sup> Pan-Pacific Education and Communication Experiments by Satellite.

<sup>7</sup> Aron, Raymond. (1969). *The Elusive Revolution: Anatomy of a Student Revolt*. trans. Gordon Clough. New York: Praeger.

<sup>8</sup> The International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union [ILWU] has had a long history in longshoring, sugar, pineapple, and other fields, affecting several thousands of Hawai'i laborers.

<sup>9</sup> The University of Hawai'i Professional Assembly (UHPA) has been the exclusive bargaining agent for all faculty members of the University of Hawai'i system since November 1, 1974.

<sup>10</sup> John A. Burns, who served as Hawai'i's governor from 1962 to 1974, left office on December 2, 1974. He died on April 5, 1975.