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TONI THOMASSON: This is Toni Thomassson. Today is Monday, November 9, 2015. Today I'm interviewing for the first time architect, Evan Taniguchi. This interview will focus on Evan's father, architect Alan Taniguchi. The interview is taking place at the offices of Taniguchi Architects located at 1609 W. 6th Street in Austin, Texas. This interview is being done for the Austin History Center and is one of a series of interviews with and about Austin, Travis County architects.

Hello, Evan.

EVAN TANIGUCHI: Hello, Toni.

THOMASSON: Let's begin by having you tell me your full name and when and where you were born. Then tell me your father's full name and when and where he was born.

TANIGUCHI: My full name is Evan Taniguchi. I was born in Harlingen, Texas in 1952. My father's full name was Alan Yamato Taniguchi. He was born in Brentwood, California in 1922.

THOMASSON: Okay. Tell me about Alan's early years, where he lived growing up, where he went to school.

TANIGUCHI: Well, as you know, he grew up in California. He was born in Brentwood. His father was a farmer, so they grew up on a farm until he was actually eighteen or so before he was shipped off to internment camps because of World War II, and I believe it was 1941 or 1942. But he grew up there on the farm. He kind of worked on the farm. He went to a small elementary school in Brentwood. I think there was about twenty people in his class. When he graduated from high school, he actually enrolled at the University of California at Berkeley. At that time the University of California was the only one, there was no Berkeley, or this and that. So that's kind of his early years. Did you want more detail than that?

THOMASSON: Well, did the war start before he finished college? Or did he go to college after?

TANIGUCHI: He went to college—he was in college when the war broke out, actually, so he came back his freshman year. When they found out they were going to be interned, he came back because they had actually taken my grandfather off to a prison—to jail—and my dad had to come back so he was kind of the man of the family at that time, so he had to help my uncle, his younger brother, and my mother get their stuff together so they could get relocated.

THOMASSON: I see. So when did he finish his college?

TANIGUCHI: Well, he was lucky that during the war when he was interned in Crystal City, Texas, the Quakers in Detroit actually adopted him. They had a program where they could adopt some of the Nisei, the Japanese Americans who were in the camps. So he was able to work in Detroit while he was going to the University of Detroit and he was able to get some of his electives out of the way at that time.

THOMASSON: Wow.

TANIGUCHI: They didn't have an architecture school there, but at least he could take some of the courses that were transferred back to Cal. So he graduated after the war. I think it was 1949 was when he finally graduated after the war was over in '45 to '46. So he went back to school after the war, finished his three years, and I think that was 1949 by the time he did graduate.

THOMASSON: Okay. Do you remember Alan ever saying when it was he knew he wanted to be an architect?

TANIGUCHI: No, he never did really mention that. I know that he started out at Berkeley—he was going to register in engineering because that's what my grandfather wanted him to do. Back in those days, I mean, there weren't a whole lot of Japanese Americans that were going to college, so Grandpa thought that engineering would be, you know, the most—kind of the most rewarding financially as well as however else, because architecture—I don't think our family really knew what architecture was at that time. You know, being on a farm all that time, they didn't have much exposure to buildings and that kind of stuff. So I think that first year that Alan was at Berkeley, I think he met somebody who kind of showed him the ropes about architecture, and I think Alan was a lot more leaning towards the creativity there. I've never heard him talk about art or anything about drawing when he was growing up. I think it was mainly hard work that he did, so I think when he went to college, he finally put two and two together and said, hey, there's another world—a creative world out there. And I think that's kind of what drove him towards architecture over engineering.

THOMASSON: Um hmm. So you don't know who that person was that might've encouraged him, hmm?

TANIGUCHI: No, I don't. But I do know that one of his good friends in college—I know you're going to ask me about professors who might've made a difference—I've never heard any names like that—but one of his classmates was Gyo Obata, which is, you know, HOK, right?

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

TANIGUCHI: So they kind of went to school together, and I think maybe Gyo had more of an artistic background, and when they were friends I think maybe he inspired Alan to go towards architecture.

THOMASSON: Oh, okay. So we talked about where he went to architecture school. You're not aware of any instructors or professors that were—

TANIGUCHI: No. There was so much going on in the family and in World War II at that time in the internment that kind of put a big dent in the whole structure of the family. So he never really talked too much about the college because he talked more about the trials and tribulations of the World War II deal, so.

THOMASSON: Well, tell me about his work history, like, where he went after he graduated.

TANIGUCHI: Well, that's pretty interesting because, actually, I'm working with one of the firms he actually first started with in 1949 I told you he graduated from Cal. Started working at Anshen and Allen in San Francisco, and his first project—well, maybe the only project he worked on there was—he was a draftsperson for the Eichler homes. And the Eichler homes are very famous now. Back then Eichler was one of the first developers of suburban housing. But his houses were very architecturally significant. Now they're like collectors' stuff. You can't even touch them for a million dollars, but people used to call them shoeboxes because they were kind of these glass boxes that had minimal decoration on them.

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

TANIGUCHI: You know, they had cork floors. They had radiant heating in the floors. They were very much ahead of their time, and I think that's where Alan picked up a lot of his ideas was being the draftsperson for these homes because the house he built for us in Harlingen, Texas was just a spit—I mean, a spit image of an Eichler home. So, I know he worked there from 1949 to '51. And 1951 is the year he moved to Texas because my grandparents, his parents, couldn't get the farm started again. You know, they were very successful farmers before the war, but when they came back after five years everything was so much different that they couldn't get restarted. Everything was so much more expensive, so that's when they decided they were going to go to Texas because that was kind of a land of opportunity because things were really starting in the Rio Grande Valley at that time. So Alan and my mother actually moved my grandparents down there thinking that they were going to come back to San Francisco, thinking they were going to come back to work at Anshen and Allen, and they got stuck down there and they never left the Valley until they came to Austin.

THOMASSON: When did they build that house down there?

TANIGUCHI: They built the house in 1952 while I was being born. I was born in '52. The house was finished in '53. But before our house, he built the house for my grandfather, and it's really nice. I mean, it's very kind of California-looking, very modern for being in Texas at that time.

THOMASSON: And are those houses still there?

TANIGUCHI: They're still there. Our house has been remodeled. They put a Dutch roof on it or something like that, where it had a flat roof—you know, it looked like a box. Grandpa's house is still there and still looks really nice. A lot of the houses down there in the Valley that Alan designed—now, they're kind of like Eichler homes. They're very—they're collectors' items, and they're selling, like, for millions of dollars down there. Everybody wants to have a Taniguchi house or a John York house.

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

TANIGUCHI: John York was another famous architect, who moved down to the Valley and started the mid-century modern kind of style. So between those two—their houses, you can't even, you know—well, you have to get in line for them. They're like collectors' cars.

THOMASSON: So when Alan got down there, he just went to work for himself?

TANIGUCHI: (laughs) Yeah, he did.

THOMASSON: He did?

TANIGUCHI: He did.

THOMASSON: That is great!

TANIGUCHI: And I'm not sure how he—he never told me how he got his first project, you know, because knowing Alan—he's really quite a guy, and I've always tried to figure out how he got started because, to me, he was always very quiet and not a real businessperson. So it kind of surprises me that he got—he went down there and he opened up his own practice and he became very successful down in the Valley. And I think that's what got him up to Austin, which we'll talk about later because the University of Texas kind of recruited him and that's the reason we moved to Austin from Harlingen, but he had a very successful practice going on down there. I think he won, like, four TSA awards in one year or three in one year. He was really into this—I don't know if you remember—do you remember the concrete buildings that he was doing?

THOMASSON: Yes.

TANIGUCHI: Those parabolic roofs and all that kind of stuff, folded plate roofs. He was really on a roll with that style, and in fact he even studied under Felix Condela. He didn't study with him but he consulted with Felix Condela, and

O'Neil Ford was also doing some of that stuff at the time for TI, so Alan and O'Neil became very good friends at that time because they were kind of both interested in this concrete technology.

THOMASSON: That's cool. So he must've done things other than just residential homes—

TANIGUCHI: Oh yeah. He really got into the more institutional—one of my favorite projects—did you ever see the packing shed that he did?

THOMASSON: Yes.

TANIGUCHI: It's called the House of Morose. It had a roof kind of like this (gestures), really cool and had bright colors, you know, primary colors. It was very industrial-looking at that time, but it's still very popular. A lot of people still remember that building and call me about it. And then the building he did at the King Ranch, it was called the Flato Pavillion, and it looked like a mushroom but it was where they would have their cattle auctions. And that won a couple of awards, but then they ended up tearing it down about twelve years ago, and I wasn't contacted, but, yeah.

THOMASSON: That's too bad.

Well, you mentioned your mom, Leslie. What role did—you know, how important was her role in the firm? And what was her role? As I knew her, she was very involved.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah. Well, (laughs) she was involved. I wasn't sure she—

THOMASSON: Was she always getting involved?

TANIGUCHI: (laughs) —I wasn't sure she was more involved than got in the way, you know, because she'd always just—her and Alan always had this thing. She thought that Alan was the worst businessman in the world and she thought she was going to come to the office and save us, but sometimes she'd come over here and just kind of get in the way. I mean, we were terrible businesspeople back in those days, and you were here a lot of that time, and I'm surprised we even survived. But Leslie (laughs) would be here to make sure Alan wasn't giving all of his time away, right. And you know, she was really involved in politics too, so she would do a lot of her political work here from the office, but her heart was in the right place. I mean, she was really involved and she loved real estate and she bought my house for me. She bought their house. She bought this office. You know, she looked ahead enough to know that these

properties would be great investments, and sure enough, they did turn out to be wonderful.

THOMASSON: Yeah.

TANIGUCHI: And she always picked the right location, and she had a good eye for that. And of course, she was very stylish, and she loved to cook. She loved to have parties.

THOMASSON: She was a good party person.

TANIGUCHI: (Both laugh) She was a good—she was good for Alan.

THOMASSON: Yeah.

TANIGUCHI: They were very different in their ways, but they were both so oppositely different that they kind of helped each other out, I think.

THOMASSON: I saw them as a good match, I thought, from my perspective as an employee.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah. Leslie would get frustrated with Alan a lot. It was, like I said, Alan would do so much—kind of like me—he'd try to do so much for other people, and sometimes he lost sight of the business and the business was kind of secondary. But, you know, back in those days, we had—what—five or six employees. That was probably before you came onboard, but at one time—no, it was after you left, after you left, yeah, when we were doing the embassy building and all that, we had six or seven or eight people here, and, gosh, we wondered how we were going to take care of them all the way Alan was business-wise.

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

Let's see. Did she ever want Alan to design them a house here, or she was—or—they bought it? This was not on our list of questions but I'm curious.

TANIGUCHI: That's okay. No, no. Well, I think she learned from—no, she was never interested in living in an architecturally designed house. She liked the house that she had picked out over in Pemberton, and—because she learned her lesson in the Valley. Of course, Alan brought this California-style to the Valley, but the Valley was about twenty degrees hotter every day than it was—we hardly had air conditioning—we had this really nice house that had glass everywhere, but it would heat up so, my lord, it just killed my mother. She'd say, "Why do we have so many windows?" and why do you this, that, and the other?

So she had enough of living in one of those design houses. There were a lot of arguments about that too.

THOMASSON: And I'm curious, you know, from working with y'all those few years, I remember the houses here that were done with that kind of flooring system.

TANIGUCHI: Two-by-four on edge, the laminated floor systems.

THOMASSON: Yes. When did that come about? Was that something he incorporated once he got here?

TANIGUCHI: You know, that's a good question because he just loved that two-by—that technology.

THOMASSON: I know.

TANIGUCHI: But I know it didn't have to do with Eichler homes because they were all on concrete radiant heated slabs. So it's kind of like—I think it's the Sea Ranch kind of, that technology there. I think the Sea Ranch was built kind of on that post-and-beam look where you could have the laminated floors. But, you know, I really don't know where all that fit in because he did that house here for a Vincent Morianni.

THOMASSON: Right.

TANIGUCHI: And it won a couple of awards too. It was one of the first houses in Westlake. That was back when Westlake was just all cedar trees, but it incorporated that technology, and he used it a couple of other places here in Austin, but I really don't know what that evolved from.

THOMASSON: It seemed very suited to our—

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, it did, but I thought maybe you'd know more about it, but I don't know where he found that idea.

THOMASSON: Okay. So tell me about what year you moved to Austin and about what precipitated that whole transition to move to—

TANIGUCHI: Okay, well, we didn't move here until '63. Alan moved here in 1959, so he commuted between here and Harlingen. He lived in a little garage apartment on Leon behind Blake Alexander. I think Blake owned the garage apartment, so he used to live in the garage apartment. So when we'd come visit Alan, we'd always go up and see Blake and Blake would be playing on his

harpsichord. Blake was one of the first people we knew in Austin. He was a great guy. But Alan was teaching here and he wasn't sure he was going to stay here teaching, so he commuted so we didn't have to just kind of move up here and then maybe move back. But it turned out he liked it so much we came in '63 to join him. In between that time he took a little leave of absence—I don't know if you know this—from the University and he went to Washington, DC to work for Brooks Barr Graeber and White. So Alan was one of the architects on the Labor Building. Brooks Barr Graeber and White were very close to LBJ, so he used to get all those federal jobs, right? So it was kind of lucky that I got to see that. We got to move to Washington, DC for the summer, and I got to go visit the office every day where he was working with the Brooks Barr guys. Kirby Keahey, I think you might know him—

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

TANIGUCHI: —and some of those guys from back then. I think later it became 3DI. But then he came back, and that's when he became a professor. I think he came back from Washington, DC in 1961 or '2, and then that's when he decided he was going to stay since he was a professor he had tenure. So that's when we moved here to be with him. And I think in '68 he became the dean and he was the dean while you were there, so I think he was dean from '68 to '72.

But the thing that I've always wondered—just like I have a lot of questions myself—is that, you know, he had such momentum going as a practicing architect in the Valley when he moved up here in 1959 or '60, like I said, he won all these awards in a row you know —

THOMASSON: Yeah.

TANIGUCHI: —and here he had all this momentum, and for him to switch from that to academia kind of threw me off, and I wasn't exactly sure what motivated him because deep down inside, I think he could've really done something with his practice. I mean, he did okay but there was a big lull in there, ten years that he was at the University of Texas and he was at Rice, so he couldn't spend a lot of his time with his practice at that time, so I just always wondered what would've happened if he had foregone academia.

THOMASSON: Do you think he enjoyed his time at UT and Rice?

TANIGUCHI: Well, I do think he did. I mean, you know, but it just kind of seems odd that somebody that doesn't have an academic background at all kind of jumps into it and all of a sudden gets engulfed in it all and enthralled in it when he had such momentum going as far as a designer.

THOMASSON: Who was it, do you think, at UT that finally convinced him that he needed to come to Austin? Do you remember?

TANIGUCHI: No, I don't. That's a good question too because there was a lot of politics going on in the school of architecture after he got here and they were—I'm sure somebody might hear this and disagree—but Phil Creer, who was the dean at that time, he wasn't liked by the students very much. So as soon as Alan got here—Alan was a very popular teacher even before he became dean. I couldn't even image Alan being a dean of the college, right, when he was in the Valley, but apparently he was very popular as a teacher, so there was a movement to get Alan moved up to the deanship, and there was kind of this political thing going on at the school for the pro-Creer people and pro-Taniguchi people, so actually there was a little bit of a battle going on there. And I can kind of see where—a lot of the guys that were there or a lot of the teachers that were there when you were there were pro-Creer, but then Alan brought in his new bunch of people from Berkeley and from Penn that kind of all the hippie and all the hip generation of teachers and all that, and the students just loved him. You know, all the trees—the deal about the trees. Alan was outspoken about the war. He was more than just a teaching architect. He became kind of a real social activist at that time. So it just went kind of like practicing in Harlingen then coming to Austin and then all this stuff just exploded and he went—I mean, he was all over the place, and his practice kind of suffered a little bit I'd say from that or his potential practice.

THOMASSON: Um hmm. What did he—did he teach design? That would be my guess.

TANIGUCHI:: Yeah, yeah. He taught studios.

THOMASSON: He was always some design studio.

TANIGUCHI: In fact, I'm in touch with some of the people that were in his classes. Some of them worked at TSVM, his firm from 1968 to '73, that was here. I think I've told you it was one of the more—it was the most popular firm. That's where everybody wanted to work when they graduated from UT, Taniguchi Shefelman Vacker and Minter. During that time he actually moved to Houston when you met him, and he still had the TSVM office, I think, at that time.

THOMASSON: Well, he left in '72, a very sad day for us students. (laughs)

TANIGUCHI: Oh, you were still here.

THOMASSON: Yeah.

TANIGUCHI: Well, then when did you go back to Houston then? And y'all got reunited in Houston.

THOMASSON: I went to work for the City of Houston in '75, and I worked about two and a half years and then he called me and so when I went to work for him about '77.

TANIGUCHI: Okay, so the Wiess College was done under the TSVM banner. The Weiss—do you remember that?

THOMASSON: Um um.

TANIGUCHI: Oh, you don't remember the Wiess College at Rice, one of the college houses, the one that had the glass box with kind of a barrel vault and you could see the big trusses running through. It was built between two buildings. It was an infill.

THOMASSON: It sounds familiar but I never worked on it.

TANIGUCHI: Okay. Well, that was while he was still with TSVM, so that was right before I think he separated and became Alan Taniguchi Architects and whatever, so, yeah. So what was the question now? What were we talking about before we got off on a tangent? About—it's all tied together so much, I mean, with the practice and the academia and everything else.

THOMASSON: Yeah.

TANIGUCHI: But I think there's a question in there about what projects—I mean, we hopefully have finished with more of the academic part of his career.
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THOMASSON: Yeah, I think so.

The next question is kind of how you fit in, like when you started helping out and working in the firm.

TANIGUCHI: Well, I started out—I mean, I was born in an architect's office.

THOMASSON: Okay. (laughs)

TANIGUCHI: I was—kind of started in Harlingen and even when we were in grade school, my brother and I would help build models—I think I've told you this—do blue prints. We just kind of grew up in the office because Alan just loved to work so much, him and Leslie would do all-nighters all the time, so we'd end up just sleeping on the couch or on the floor or staying up with them at the office.

So I was very used to that kind of stuff. In fact, I'm surprised I went into architecture (laughs) after knowing how much work it is. (Thomasson laughs) And how much little reward. But I actually kind of started with him more professionally in 1978, I think is when he kind of came back to Austin and opened up his office here, and I think that's when you and I worked together at the Perry Brooks Building.

THOMASSON: Yes.

TANIGUCHI: That's the first practice he had after TSVM and after we moved to Austin from Houston, so you kind of saw how that evolved. I mean, I had just started out doing whatever needed to be done.

THOMASSON: But I thought I remembered working with you in Houston.

TANIGUCHI: Yes, I did—I did come to Houston in the summertime. We were working on that Manila competition.

THOMASSON: Oh, okay.

TANIGUCHI: And that was back in the days of Gary Ashford, which I can hardly remember. Anyway, that's kind of—I came down to help with that competition some, put that together. But I was actually living here, and then when he moved here and then I kind of went to work with him up there at the Perry Brooks with you and I think we were working with the Wooldridge Group and then the Fulmore Group and kind of working with some of the old TSVM partners, Tom Shefelman—

THOMASSON: Jim—

TANIGUCHI: —Jim Nix, Juan Cotera.

THOMASSON: Cliff Koeninger was there.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah. Roger Kolar, was he part of the—

THOMASSON: I think so.

TANIGUCHI: Okay. Roger was at TSVM also, and Girard Kinney was at TSVM, but I don't think he was part of the Wooldridge Group.

THOMASSON: No.

TANIGUCHI: So, and Bob Coffee. You remember Bob Coffee was part of the Wooldridge Group, Coffee and Crier.

THOMASSON: Laura David was there

TANIGUCHI: Uh huh, working for Tom, right? No, she was working for Cotera.

THOMASSON: She worked for Tom, I think.

TANIGUCHI: No, she worked for Cotera, yeah, because I think Raymond (Yin) worked for Juan for a long time too, didn't he? Raymond?

THOMASSON: No, that's just another interview— (laughs)

TANIGUCHI: Okay. (laughs)

THOMASSON: —to untangle all these—

TANIGUCHI: Well, I never knew Laura—you know, I didn't know Laura went to Rice until she moved here and I got to know her pretty well when we were all working together. I don't know if she was there when Alan was there.

THOMASSON: Probably.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, okay. But, yeah, you remember—I mean that was the Wooldridge Group/The Fulmore Group.

THOMASSON: Yes.

TANIGUCHI: Okay. And then that went on until—I guess you left in, what—did you say you left in—

THOMASSON: I left in '80.

TANIGUCHI: 'Eighty. Because I thought you worked in this building.

THOMASSON: I did.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, but we bought this building in '82, so did you come back? We bought this building in 1982 and remodeled it for about a year and a half. So I think you moved in right when—I took a leave of absence from the Perry Brooks Building and I was doing the construction over here. And then we barely had it finished and then you came back over here and we were sitting in the back room, right?

THOMASSON: Yeah. I was only here a few months, I think.

TANIGUCHI: And then David came and worked here too.

THOMASSON: And I went to Graeber Simmons and Cowan..

TANIGUCHI: But then David came over here, your husband.

THOMASSON: David came—

TANIGUCHI: Your then husband.

THOMASSON: David Rea.

TANIGUCHI: David Rea came here and he worked here for about—what—a year and a half?

THOMASSON: I think so.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah. So that was 1982 when we moved in or we actually bought this place, so we didn't start working here until '83. I'm pretty sure we bought it in '81—and I should've done some more homework. Anyway, it was the '80s, so it was the early '80s.

THOMASSON: Yes.

TANIGUCHI: And then I guess we did the biggest, probably the most prestigious project was the U.S. Embassy, which we got in 1984 or '85. That was during a bad depression, I think. I mean, I think we were wondering what we were going to do to keep our doors open.

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

TANIGUCHI: And all of a sudden the Embassy lands here, and that kept us busy for six years, and that was because O'Neil Ford was on the selection committee along with Cesar Pelli and some other folks and they had chosen Alan of all people. We had, like, a five-person firm and they selected us to do the U.S. Embassy in Georgetown, Guyana. And that was right after Jim Jones had moved his cult down to Guyana and they'd all drunk the Kool-Aid, and those were exciting times. I think that's probably the most prestigious project we've ever worked on, and it's probably the one where I've learned the most. It was interesting because Alan and I worked very closely on that until Alan decided he didn't like to visit Guyana very much because he didn't like the food, he didn't

like—he didn't drink much, (Thomasson laughs). So I would go on the trips. I must've gone to Guyana twelve to fifteen times representing the office—

THOMASSON: Wow!

TANIGUCHI: —and working or supervising a Department of State project. That was the first year that they had the new security guidelines because of the Moscow Embassy. You remember that when they found all the bugs and stuff?

THOMASSON: Sure.

TANIGUCHI: So ours was the first one built under the new guidelines, so they were really strict about it. But I think that's kind of where Alan and I really worked closely together. We had huge deadlines. I think we had hired up to six or eight people at that time to keep up with the project.

THOMASSON: Oh.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah. After that, then I said, "Let's go back to the old days when we had three or four folks."

THOMASSON: So how big was the embassy? Do you remember square footage-wise approximately?

TANIGUCHI: It wasn't that large. It was three stories and had a lot of security. It had an attic that was full of their security equipment. I can't remember how large it was, Toni, but it was probably about, I'd say, eight thousand, nine thousand square feet. Not all that big, but a lot of concrete.

THOMASSON: But complicated.

TANIGUCHI: Very complicated, yeah.

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah.

THOMASSON: So let's talk about some of the Austin architects that Alan worked or partnered with. We've named a few but just for the record, how do you think they met or became partners?

TANIGUCHI: Well, the first one was—well, most of them were through school. Tom Shefelman was probably the first one that he met, and I think along with that was Bob Harris. I think Bob Harris was part of the group at one time, the first firm

Alan had here after he moved from Harlingen. Then he met those guys Walter Vacker and Minter, but like I said, in the meantime, he'd been working for Brooks Barr Graeber and White on the Labor Building. So he actually did work with quite a few—associated with quite a few architects in Austin.

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

TANIGUCHI: Not some of the more longtime guys, like Fehr and Granger. He was good buddies with all those guys, but they never really worked together.

THOMASSON: But not the Pages or the Jessens

TANIGUCHI: No, never—we never worked together with those guys. Yeah. But I think that's when academia kind of took the top role. I think Alan kind of just shifted away from professional practice and concentrated more on that. Especially when he was a dean, he really didn't have time to do anything else. Juan Cotera, I thought we had mentioned earlier. I can't think of anybody else really.

THOMASSON: Okay. Back to the move from Austin down to Houston, we didn't really talk much about what at Rice drew him away from UT Austin. Why did he go down there?

TANIGUCHI: Oh, I don't think he was that attracted to Rice. I think he was just fed up with Austin. You know, he resigned here, and he didn't just give up. He resigned because of his problems with the Board of Regents, and that had been going on for years. I think the school actually suffered from his relationship with Frank Erwin because Erwin was the chairman of the board—

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

TANIGUCHI: —and the board would appropriate the funds to the different colleges, right? So Alan was always left out or he was always on the bottom of the list. But I think at that time I think his students appreciated him because back then, the school wasn't so materially oriented. I think it was more politically and socially motivated, so Alan's stand as supporting the Waller Creek Tree deal, his stand against the war—I think those were kind of appropriate for that time. But they didn't do the school that much good as far as the material—or at least as far as the physical plant goes.

THOMASSON: So what did he do when he went down to Rice? Was he teaching?

TANIGUCHI: He was the director actually, and I think somebody from Florida was the dean. So he was teaching, I guess. I don't really know a lot about what was going on when he was in Houston because I was in school at that time too.

THOMASSON: Um hmm. You were in school here.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah. Because I didn't enroll in the School of Architecture until he left, and that was on purpose.

THOMASSON: Really?

TANIGUCHI: Oh, yeah, yeah.

THOMASSON: That was on purpose?

TANIGUCHI: Well, of course. (Both laugh) I didn't want to get special treatment—or I found out it's not special treatment you get. They have such high expectations of you. That it was even tougher. So maybe it would've been better if I would've taken advantage of him being here to help me.

THOMASSON: You could've gone to another school.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, but this was Austin at that time.

THOMASSON: Yeah.

TANIGUCHI: I was more interested in the Austin life than the school life at that time—as you well know.

THOMASSON: (laughs) Okay. Are there any contractors that you recall that Alan worked closely with or that he enjoyed working with?

TANIGUCHI: Well, we didn't really do that many projects in Austin, now that I think about it.

THOMASSON: Sure.

TANIGUCHI: I mean, we worked on the schools and the courthouse, those contractors he didn't have that much of a relationship. He had a really good relationship with the contractors in the Valley when we had all those concrete jobs. We had, like, three or four jobs going on at once and became good friends with those guys. But back then it was different. You know, the contractor and the architect were—they didn't battle as much. They appreciated each other a little bit more and it wasn't such a business.

THOMASSON: Sure.

TANIGUCHI: It was respect for what you knew and what type of craftsman you were. Back in those days the contractor would actually go out there and do some work, right, instead of just getting on his phone and being a broker. So I think back then it was pretty cool growing up and seeing that relationship, yeah, that followed the old school. Like, everything's changed with the computer now, it's just all business, and it's lawyers and contractors and architects. It's just so much different, but Alan used to enjoy that. They'd go dove hunting and they'd go fishing.

THOMASSON: So he'd be out in the field with the contractor—

TANIGUCHI: Oh, absolutely! Because nobody could figure out how to build these concrete domes or parabolic roofs, so Alan would be out there on the jobsite a lot and he really liked that part of it.

THOMASSON: I got the impression he really liked that.

TANIGUCHI: You know Alan. I mean, we could talk about this part because you've been around him. He liked nothing more than to sit down and work out details, like, a full-size scale or three inches equals a foot. But, man, he was the best detailer in the world. He knew how to make things work, you know.

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

TANIGUCHI: He was the first person that told me the story about never use brick if it doesn't come down to the ground. He couldn't stand, like, something that was—the brick started out on the second story.

THOMASSON: Oh.

TANIGUCHI: Man, every time he saw that, he'd bring it up, and I was kind of shocked that he was just so kind of critical in that sense.

THOMASSON: Just wasn't natural.

TANIGUCHI: No, but he knew his materials really well, and he didn't like brick very much for that reason, I think. But when he got into the concrete thing, gosh, he just went overboard. I mean, he loved the idea of using the less reinforcing and getting the most strength out of concrete that you can. And he liked the looks of it back then. He was one of the first people I know that told me about board-

formed concrete, and we did use that on the Clarksville Clinic, which still has that and which still looks nice if they hadn't painted it the colors that they did.

THOMASSON: It does.

TANIGUCHI: By the way, did you know that's still the most energy efficient building—city building in Austin?

THOMASSON: No.

TANIGUCHI: Well, half of it's—well, three-quarters of it's underground.

THOMASSON: That's true.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, so it stays pretty cool. But, yeah, that was Alan. He was a huge detailer. He loved construction, so that's kind of what threw me when all of a sudden he decided he was going to go to the university every today and sit in his office and talk to students. (laughs)

THOMASSON: —that office. Yeah. I wonder where he got that love of detailing. Maybe it was that first job that he was a draftsperson.

TANIGUCHI: Uh huh. Well, it was building—yeah, that and then it was coming to the Valley like a year and a half after that and actually designing the house and building it himself. He built those for my grandfather and our house, he actually helped build the houses himself.

THOMASSON: Okay.

TANIGUCHI: And he hired some of the workers down there. That's when he got to be good friends with a lot of the contractors. And the ones that he liked, he would hire and they became good friends because they appreciated each other. Hands-on kind of a thing. Right?

THOMASSON: Right.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, he was a very hands-on type person.

THOMASSON: Okay.

So maybe we'll go to this question about projects that he did here in Austin, Travis County. We talked about the clinic, the Clarksville Clinic.

TANIGUCHI: Um hmm, and did we do another city project at that time? I think you were involved in most of the ones that we did with him except for the embassy. We did the Fulmore—

THOMASSON: The addition to the Fulmore.

TANIGUCHI: The addition to the Fulmore. We did all that work at the Travis County Courthouse. I think that was after you—that was when David was here. I was kind of in charge of all those with Cliff. Cliff was here at that time too. Lots of remodeling on the old courthouse and then we did the new annex. Remember the one that's behind there?

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

TANIGUCHI: And then we did the little fountain that's kind of in the middle. He did a project with Donna Carter, and I can't remember who else the other firm was here. Willie Kocurek Elementary. Did you work on that one?

THOMASSON: Um um.

TANIGUCHI: Ruth Parsall. I think it was Ruth Parsall, Donna and Alan. And, oh, but some of the TSVM stuff probably sticks out the best. The Manchaca Library.

THOMASSON: Oh, yes.

TANIGUCHI: The branch library, I think that's one of the nicest—I think that's still one of the nicest buildings in Austin.

THOMASSON: I've heard some people in the library department say that's their favorite.

TANIGUCHI: Oh, I know John Gillum is.

THOMASSON: (laughs) Um hmm. That's his favorite.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, John Gillum has really been great. He's tried to preserve it as much as he can. I know that they added something on to the front entry, but he always liked that as a piece of architecture. So he's been probably the biggest proponent of trying to keep it intact. But there were a lot of things we did—TSVM did. We had a contract with Highland Lakes Estates. Do you remember seeing some of those? The Pedernales Country Club that Willie Nelson has now. We did some work at Point Venture, Chaparral, and we did a lot of those kind of country club kind of stuff and resorts kind of on Highland Lakes. That probably is what kept TSVM in business. They also did some speculative duplexes mainly under

the wind of Walter Vacker. Walker Vacker was a really good designer too. He might've studied under Gropius or something, but he was into the white modern look, and a lot of the stuff at TSVM.

THOMASSON: Um hm.

TANIGUCHI: Kind of like that library was kind of his kind of a—

THOMASSON: His signature.

TANIGUCHI: Yes, kind of, yeah, so he kind of brought that style into the office. I think Alan helped a lot with some of the detailing because Alan was the concrete expert, so that building was all concrete and it's all tilt-up.

THOMASSON: Right.

TANIGUCHI: —and that's kind of what Alan really enjoyed doing was working out those technologies—

THOMASSON: So which came first, the Clarksville Clinic or the library?

TANIGUCHI: The library. The library was, like, '73, and the Clarksville Clinic was more, like, '83.

THOMASSON: Okay.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah. I thought we did another project when we were doing the Clarksville Clinic. I can't remember. There weren't all that many though in Austin. And then he did a couple in Houston with you, you know, the parks—two parks and then he did that project at Rice at Wiess College.

THOMASSON: There were a few residences around Austin, right?

TANIGUCHI: Uh huh, a few, but nothing like down in the Valley. That's why I said, you know, most of his notable work to me was down in the Valley and back in the '50s—the late '50s.

THOMASSON: Okay.

Well, we've talked about Alan was really active politically. I'm curious, did he serve on any boards, commissions?

TANIGUCHI: Um hmm. Yeah, he was on one of—the planning commission for, I think, two terms. Charlie Betts—remember that? Charlie kind of served with him

one time. Charlie was in his twenties and Alan was probably in the forties or fifties. Yeah. And then Alan was—you were around at that time—he was on the Save the Capitol Views Corridor here.

THOMASSON: Oh, okay.

TANIGUCHI: He was in charge of that with Robert Barnstone, I believe. And I can't remember. He was on the board of Huston Tillotson College. I took over when he passed away in '98. He was on the board for two terms, and let's see. I know he did some more stuff, but I can't remember. Do you remember?

THOMASSON: What about Town Lake?

TANIGUCHI: Well, you know, that was actually a commission job. We forgot to mention that. That's not a building project.

THOMASSON: Yeah.

TANIGUCHI: But, yeah, that's probably his biggest claim to fame in Austin. Nineteen sixty or '61, he was commissioned—his firm was commissioned to do the hike and bike, the first Town Lake Master Plan.

THOMASSON: So it was actually a project.

TANIGUCHI: Oh, yeah. And the hike and bike trail is actually—the way it was on his master plan is the way it is now.

THOMASSON: Oh.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah. Didn't I ever tell you the stories about we used to go fishing down where that new Austin High is? Before any of these roads were in it, this street wasn't even paved. So you'd have to park someplace over here by El Arroyo and you'd have to walk down through all this brush to go fishing. There was a fishing hole down there. Well, he used to love fishing. And we'd walk down there. Bubba and Alan and I would walk down there, and he'd point out to us, he'd say, "Look. You see all this land over here." He said, "It's going to be a hike and bike trail," and we went, "Sure." (laughs) You couldn't even see through all the brush and stuff, (Thomasson laughs) but he'd visualized all that. And his original plan is how the hike and bike trail developed. He was a great friend of—what was her name at that time? It was later Crenshaw.

THOMASSON: Roberta.

TANIGUCHI: Roberta, yeah, but before she got married to the Crenshaws, she was really involved in the trail with Lady Bird under a different name. But they became really good friends, and of course, Lady Bird knew my grandfather and wanted Alan to help do the trail thing too, so he was really involved in that. That was in the '60s, and then he had two planners from San Antonio who were O'Neil Ford's best friends, Sam Zisun and Stewart King. They were the planners back in those days for this project.

THOMASSON: Oh, Okay.

TANIGUCHI: And then he later worked on the—well, we won an award for the original Waller Creek plan, which he did with Myrick Dahlberg out of Dallas.

TANIGUCHI: Myrick Newman Dahlberg?

TANIGUCHI: Um hmm, who is now I think an offshoot of—one of the guys here is an offshoot of them. RBI. Bob Richardson used to be with them. They won an award with them. I think Sinclair might've been on that team. Tom Shefelman did some beautiful sketches of the original Waller Creek plan. And then I think Alan worked with Sinclair on the Creeks plan, something about the Austin creeks.

THOMASSON: That little publication?

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, yeah, yes. So, yeah, I didn't bring—I wasn't thinking about planning projects. But, yeah.

THOMASSON: He did a lot in planning.

TANIGUCHI: Oh, yeah, yeah, he did. Yeah, I forgot all about that.

THOMASSON: Okay.

Can you summarize what you think were the highlights of Alan's career from his perspective maybe? Looking back, what would he have—if he were sitting here, what would he say?

TANIGUCHI: If he were sitting here, he'd probably—well, you know, he was such a humble guy—

THOMASSON: I know.

TANIGUCHI: —and so quiet. (Both laugh)

THOMASSON: It would be hard to drag it out of him.

TANIGUCHI: (laughs) Yeah, it's easier to try to get it out of me, but, you know, I think he probably had most of his notoriety was as the dean of his academic days. If there's a legacy there, that's probably it really at the University of Texas. I don't think Rice kind of enters into that picture, but also his early years I think his 1950s, you know, his work in the Valley. I think people always remember that. I mean, that's getting to be—that's history now. I mean, really history, that's over fifty years ago. His days here in Austin as an architect—I think in Austin he probably is known more for his planning projects because as I see it, I don't think we have that many projects that we built here. So I would say that most people—but most people don't even realize that he was the planner for the hike and bike trail.

THOMASSON: No, I think they associate it with Lady Bird.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, but—

THOMASSON: And that's kind of it.

TANIGUCHI: Uh huh—but they did have to have a—

THOMASSON: Design. (laughs)

TANIGUCHI: —they had to have a, yeah, a consultant. And it was him, and it's funny. There's a—I'll have to send it to you. It was published in the *Texas Architect Magazine* back then, a beautiful map that Alan Holt had sent me—and I'm trying to get another copy of that.

THOMASSON: Oh, wow.

TANIGUCHI: Several people and Sinclair—when people kind of argue about Alan being the original designer of that, Sinclair always says he knows for sure, because he's had lots of discussions with Alan and Sinclair will confirm that, yes, Alan was the designer of the hike and bike trail.

THOMASSON: Good. Good for Sinclair.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah. Oh, Sinclair and Alan were really close. I mean, that's another name we didn't bring up at UT. You know, Alan—Sinclair, he'd said Alan was his mentor.

THOMASSON: Sinclair was younger by a lot.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah.

THOMASSON: Was he in school when Alan went there?

TANIGUCHI: Oh, yeah. Yeah, uh huh, he was in school there. Most of the time, he was at Berkeley though. See, Sinclair went to—that's kind of funny that Sinclair was getting his master's at Berkeley when Alan was here, and Alan had been there and Sinclair had been here.

THOMASSON: So they had that bond.

TANIGUCHI: And that's where Alan actually hired Richard Dodge from Berkeley, and I think Gerlinda (Leiding)—if I'm not mistaken.

THOMASSON: Oh, yeah, they were young when they came here. (laughs)

TANIGUCHI: Oh, they were young, yeah. You saw that picture I sent you.

THOMASSON: I did. (laughs)

TANIGUCHI: That should go in the archives somewhere, not just for the architects but because a lot of people had that—you know, that picture I showed you—sent you of the faculty.

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

TANIGUCHI: That's pretty cool because you see a lot of people that were there, Richard Swallow, Carl Berkowitz.

THOMASSON: Send us a copy and we'll put it in there.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah.

THOMASSON: Okay.

The next question is about how Alan approached design, whether or not he had a process, so when he got a new project, what was the first thing he thought about? Was he a sketcher? Did he go right to those details?

TANIGUCHI: Um hmm. Yeah. (Thomasson laughs) Yeah, you know, I mean, I think he went to the—oh, and we did the two houses here too that won him some—those are probably what he might be most known for in Austin are the Carroll house and the Van Earp house.

THOMASSON: Okay.

TANIGUCHI: Did we do those while you were here? You know, one of them's on the lake and it looks down and it's got sort of—

THOMASSON: I think they were in the beginning stages.

TANIGUCHI: Gary Ashford worked on those. That's one, yeah.

So anyway, Alan wasn't much of a sketcher. He was more—he worked more in detail. I think when—he knew materials and how things went together really well, so he wasn't like a Frank Gehry kind of a person who just saw a mass, you know.

THOMASSON: He didn't crumple a piece of paper and throw it on the table? (laughs)

TANIGUCHI: No, he didn't do that, but I don't think he really looked at the—he did not see the building as a built object. I think he started kind of from the inside and worked out in what evolved.

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

TANIGUCHI: He still appreciated this inside-outside relationship a lot.

THOMASSON: Yes.

TANIGUCHI: And a lot of people have commented on that, and I think that's what kind of started was where it was situated on the site. I think he was way ahead of his time as far as sustainability goes.

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

TANIGUCHI: He'd always think about the shadows and about the shading and about the mechanicals of that kind of stuff. And I think the building—his buildings were more kind of like a machine, more of a kind of industrial approach.

THOMASSON: Very simple is what I recall.

TANIGUCHI: Oh, very simple, yeah. Yeah.

THOMASSON: As simple as it could be.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, yeah, whatever it took. I mean, he'd add, he'd add the roofs, shed roofs and all this, but yeah, you're right, very simple. Except for the embassy, which had to look—it had to fit into the historical neighborhood.

THOMASSON: Yeah.

TANIGUCHI: So he had to make it look like a British colonial building.

THOMASSON: Tell me about a typical day for Alan coming to the office here.

TANIGUCHI: Well, you were here, so, yeah, this is a typical day for Alan. Of course, before I tell you, he'd come in about ten o'clock or nine o'clock, and the first thing he does is smoke a cigarette back on the back porch, smoke a cigarette and then kind of get a couple cups of coffee, and he'd go to the bathroom. (Thomasson laughs) You know, every day about eleven o'clock or eleven thirty, about when lunch—

THOMASSON: When everyone's leaving for lunch. (laughs)

TANIGUCHI: —then he'd start getting energized, but then he'd want to go to lunch too, or he'd bring his lunch here. So he ate his lunch, and all this was—so he got nothing done in the morning. And then he'd bring his dog with him too, so you know, get the dog situated. But then, he was always here until ten o'clock at night. (Both laugh) I'd say, "Hey, why don't you just get started a little earlier and then you can leave, like, at six?" And he said, "Well, I don't want to go home and see Mom." (Both laugh) Oh, boy! Yeah, they were completely opposite, but, no, yeah, that's kind of Alan. I mean, while you were here it was kind of like that. Later on he really did lose interest in architecture for some reason, or he lost interest in the practice, and I think after that embassy building, I think that wore him out. After that I was kind of in charge of everything, so I could say I probably took over the office in, like, '92 or '93, and then he passed away in '98 and then I had to take it over, right?

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

TANIGUCHI: But after that, you know, I understood that he wasn't all that interested in business.

THOMASSON: Wow!

TANIGUCHI: He spent more of his time on the planning commission. It was, like, after the embassy, then we started—I started looking for other kind of work because he wasn't going to go out and look for anything. You know, we really didn't start doing the UT projects until after he passed away. We were actually

working on that parking garage with David Rea in ’98 when he—when Alan passed away we were just finishing up the working documents, so he didn’t even get to see that one through, but that was the first UT project we ever had.

THOMASSON: So from ’92 to when he passed away, he would come to the office every day I take it.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah.

THOMASSON: And you could consult with him.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, or fight with him or, yeah, or, yeah. Mainly he came here so he could bring Tofu with him, the dog. Remember we had two dogs, right?

THOMASSON: I remember the dog.

TANIGUCHI: Chico was the Chihuahua they had—

THOMASSON: I remember Chico.

TANIGUCHI: —that he just loved. And he’d bring him to work every day, and then my mother would bring Chico or he would. Then we had a dog name Tofu. She’d come every day.

THOMASSON: Tofu was bigger?

TANIGUCHI: A little bit bigger but white, yeah, not all that much bigger. But, oh, Cliff fell in love with Chico.

THOMASSON: I remember.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah. So that was (laughs) the reason he’d come to work was to bring the dogs.

THOMASSON: (laughs) And get out of the house.

TANIGUCHI: I do think he lost interest for some reason after about ’92 or ’93. Yeah. And then the other reason he’d come to the office was because Leslie wouldn’t let him smoke at home. So he could come over here and smoke on the back deck.

THOMASSON: I see.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, some of the more important things in life. (laughs)

THOMASSON: Yes. Well, let's see. How old was he when he passed away?

TANIGUCHI: Oh, '22 to '98.

THOMASSON: That's seventy-six.

TANIGUCHI: Seventy-six. You know, Leslie didn't even reach seventy.

THOMASSON: Oh, I didn't realize that.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah. She kept saying she didn't want to live past seventy. I think she died, like, two months before she became seventy. I think.

THOMASSON: And she passed away in California, right?

TANIGUCHI: In San Francisco. Yeah. July 5 we were watching the fireworks over the Golden Gate Bridge from her hospital room right before she passed away.

THOMASSON: Oh. So y'all were out there with her.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, we were out there. She'd had a massive stroke, and she just never pulled out of her coma but we were there.

THOMASSON: Oh, okay. She was visiting her sister, wasn't she?

TANIGUCHI: Um hmm, which she did every year in the summer. Leslie couldn't stand the Texas heat, especially as she got older.

THOMASSON: Let's see. Do you know when he—there may not be any—but do you know of any projects that just didn't come to fruition that Alan would've loved to have gotten or worked on—or he worked on it and then it didn't ever happen?

TANIGUCHI: Yeah. Well, one especially, and I'm not sure if you were here, but that one—we did that—we did that house for the owner of the Continuum Corporation. It was a white, a boxy white house, and then they had bought some land over on Bull Creek Road, kind of where that little swimming hole is.

THOMASSON: Right.

TANIGUCHI: Off of 2222, really nice property, and we were commissioned to do the design on that. Were you here then when we did those two buildings that were kind of opposed like this? (gestures)

THOMASSON: No. Um um.

TANIGUCHI: Very nice, and Gary was still here at that time, and it was so very—really like—they were like machines in a sense, very sustainable. Remember Gary was into all the—solar collectors and all of that. He was in all of that stuff at that time.

THOMASSON: That's right.

TANIGUCHI: So this was going to be a showcase for that kind of stuff and Alan and him and I worked really closely. It was actually a really nice design. It was turned down because of some of the neighborhoods that lived up above on Cat Mountain.

THOMASSON: Looking down on the solar—

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, looking down on it. (laughs)

THOMASSON: Which sounds ridiculous now.

TANIGUCHI: But, yeah, but that was back then. That was probably 1982 or '83, '84. That's one of the projects that we really wished would've happened because that would've moved us forward because we weren't really doing much, you know, just doing schools and kind of remodeling. We didn't really have any new construction to show off.

THOMASSON: That was too bad.

TANIGUCHI: That was probably the one that hurt the most.

THOMASSON: Um hmm. Did it get redesigned by someone else?

TANIGUCHI: No. It is still not—nothing's been done on that property.

THOMASSON: Oh. Interesting. Okay.

Completely outside of architecture, was there anything that Alan was fascinated by? Do you think fishing?

TANIGUCHI: Well, he liked to go fishing. He liked fishing, but you know, Alan was—he was quiet and I think he probably knew—I don't think he had any real friends outside of the profession.

THOMASSON: He was pretty single-minded.

TANIGUCHI: He was very single-minded. He liked to go home, and he liked to putter around the house. He was a DYI guy, right, at that time.

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

TANIGUCHI: And he loved to kind of, like, remodel the inside of our house on Wooldridge. He liked to cook and grill outside, but I can't—you know, even growing up, he wasn't interested in the sports and stuff. My mother was the one that kind of took care of Bubba and I because Alan at that time when we really were at that age when we were playing sports and all, he was the dean—he was traveling all over the place as the dean. So, yeah, I can't remember anything really. Can you?

THOMASSON: No, not really. I remember his cooking.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, he liked to cook.

THOMASSON: I remember going to his house and him serving me my first experience with dandelion greens. (laughs)

TANIGUCHI: Oh, really? Okay, yeah, I remember dandelion greens, but you know, if it wasn't for Leslie, then he probably would've—yeah, Leslie threw the parties and made Alan work and cook, right? Or Alan wouldn't have gone out of his way to throw a party ever. He just wasn't a party person.

THOMASSON: Did they ever go to Japan?

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, they did. They went with—I'm not sure if you were here—with Frank Cooksey when Frank was the mayor, and they were part of the delegation for the light rail train. They were going to Japan to look at the rail systems there because the city was proposing one between here and San Antonio. So Alan got to travel in that delegation. And then Alan went with Grandpa once but without my mother, and my mother would go with her sister but without Alan.

THOMASSON: Okay.

TAIGUCHI: Yeah, they usually went by themselves or with somebody else when they went, but they did go together that one time.

THOMASSON: How did they meet? At school?

TANIGUCHI: You know, they really don't talk—yeah, at school. Leslie actually was enrolled at Berkeley. Of course, Leslie was so much different. She came from a merchant family. Her parents went to college and they were musicians and they owned a very successful gift store in Japantown in San Francisco right when the war broke out too, whereas Alan's parents never went to the city hardly, right? They were always on the farm and even in Japan they grew up in an agricultural area. They didn't go to college, and so they were completely different. So it's always surprised me how they met. I can't even imagine what the event was but they did meet at Cal somehow, and that's about all I know.

THOMASSON: So Leslie's parents were born in Japan also or they were born—

TANIGUCHI: Uh huh, they were born in Japan, yeah. Just to say something, just to put perspective into it, they were Catholics, so they were from Japan but they were more—you know, they were Catholics. That says something. They were more like capitalists too, whereas my Taniguchi family is more from the dirt, from the earth, right?

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

TANIGUCHI: They're strict Buddhists and all this, so it was quite a mixture.

THOMASSON: It was a mixture.

Well, Alan encouraged and influenced many architectural students and young architects in his lifetime. Are there any of them that you would like to name or mention or talk about?

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, there's one that I would like to mention, and that's Fred Clark, who is now a principal of Pelli Clark Pelli, and Fred was actually a junior here I think in 1965 or '6. He was a junior here while Alan was the dean. Maybe it was '68 and Pelli had come down for one of the juries—they called them juries back then—what do we call them now? Anyway, he came down here for a design jury, and he saw Fred's stuff and immediately Cesar Pelli was overwhelmed and he went up to Alan and said, "This guy's really talented. What if I hire him and take him out of school?" And Alan said, "Well, you know, you need to talk to Fred first." So Pelli hired him right there on the spot, I believe, and took him out of school for three years.

THOMASSON: Wow!

TANIGUCHI: Fred came back and finished his degree, and then—look where he is now.

THOMASSON: Yeah.

TANIGUCHI: I mean, he's a principal in one of the most famous firms in the country, and actually Fred in appreciation started a scholarship for Alan and for Carl Berkowitz, they were his two favorites. Fred and I stay in touch because I'm on the dean's advisory council and he is also, so when he's here in town, he stops by for meetings. But, yeah, that's the one that I heard most of. Alan really liked a lot of the other—he kind of liked the quieter people, you know.

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

TANIGUCHI: I mean, even like Del Wieding, you remember Dell?

THOMASSON: Yes.

TANIGUCHI: Alan felt so bad—I'm not sure he felt bad for Del, but he hired him for a long time even against my better judgment. I'd say, "Come on, Alan. Let's get real," and he just wanted to help Del out because Alan was more of that type of person. He liked the underdog. He liked to help anybody who was kind of—

THOMASSON: Struggling.

TANIGUCHI: —struggling, right. Yeah, like, getting a puppy dog off the street or something, but Del was one of the things I could never figure it out. But, of course, Del loved Alan to death too. But he was his dean. I think y'all went to school at the same time.

THOMASSON: Del and I are still friends, yeah.

TANIGUCHI: Is he still around?

THOMASSON: I think so.

TANIGUCHI: Oh, okay.

THOMASSON: I think that's the same Del.

TANIGUCHI: Okay.

THOMASSON: He's a sketcher.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, yeah. Everything's been over.

THOMASSON: Um hmm.

TANIGUCHI: Okay, well, I need to get his contact. But anyway, Alan didn't speak too much about anybody else, but that Fred Clark story is one that I—

THOMASSON: The person in my class that I remember him helping was Everett Fly.

TANIGUCHI: Oh, oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Well, Everett, yeah, he spoke very highly of Everett.

THOMASSON: I think he really helped Everett get into landscape school—

TANIGUCHI: Oh, yeah, but not only helped him but he really liked Everett.

THOMASSON: Yeah.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, Everett was very much like Alan in a sense, kind of quiet, kind of very humble.

THOMASSON: Yes. Right.

TANIGUCHI: And I think I just got—did you hear that Everett just won the National Humanities Award or something?

THOMASSON: Yes.

TANIGUCHI: Huh?

THOMASSON: Yes.

TANIGUCHI: And he got this award from Obama.

THOMASSON: I know. I was so proud of him.

TANIGUCHI: I left him a voice message, but he didn't call me back, but, yeah. I said Alan would be really proud of this.

THOMASSON: I'm going to get his number from you so I can congratulate him. I didn't know how to get in touch with him.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, I have his phone number.

THOMASSON: Okay.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah, and Everett actually had a room in the back over here for a while.

THOMASSON: I remember that.

TANIGUCHI: For Lebarbra and Everett, and I think that Alan let them have that room. Let him use it for nothing just to get him started, but that was a tremendous story, you know. His mom was a maid, right, in Alamo Heights, and Everett was a great football player in high school, and Alan even called Darrell (Royal) up to say, “Hey, can you give this guy an opportunity to try out, you know? He needs a scholarship.”

THOMASSON: But he didn’t play—Everett didn’t play football that I knew.

TANIGUCHI: No, not at UT, no, no. I think he kind of—I think Alan found him a scholarship, but he was going to try to get him a football scholarship if that was the only thing left. (Both laugh)

THOMASSON: Everett wasn’t that big. (laughs) He was fast though.

TANIGUCHI: No, but he was really good in high school.

THOMASSON: Yeah.

TANIGUCHI: He was one of the top athletes—backs in San Antonio. Yeah, I’m glad you brought that up because, yeah, Everett was one of Alan’s favorites, for sure, definitely.

THOMASSON: What do you think was Alan’s favorite building anywhere in the world? And then, did he have a favorite in Austin, not necessarily his but it could be.

TANGUICHI: Well, back then when there was nothing in Austin that was—anything was still—he didn’t really have favorites, but he did have his favorite architect was Frank Lloyd Wright—

THOMASSON: Okay.

TANIGUCHI: —because Alan had actually tried to go to Taliesin West. He had enrolled there and something had happened. He was—you know, it was right in the times after the war when everything—you know, he just couldn’t make any decisions, but he was going to enroll there because he’d always been in awe of Frank Lloyd Wright.

But the building he might've liked—you know, I think he really liked a lot of Mies van der Rohe's buildings because they were kind of like great technical—they looked like machines in a sense, a very well detailed, very simple, kind of like what we just talked about. But he wasn't into gaudy stuff, I mean, not Gaudi, (Thomasson laughs) but he hated post-modernism. I think that's what kind of set—he was a good friend of Charles Moore's, but he liked Charles Moore back in the Sea Ranch days, not so much the post-modern stuff.

THOMASSON: The newer. Interesting.

TANIGUCHI: Yeah.

THOMASSON: Well, that's my last question. Is there anything we didn't talk about that you would like to add at this point?

TANIGUCHI: Nothing I can remember. I mean, it kind of all just goes around and around, but I don't think there's anything else I can think of right now. I'm kind of—after an hour, I'm kind of drained.

THOMASSON: Okay. Well, we'll call it the end.

TANIGUCHI: I was just going to say it's fun though talking about a little bit more than architecture because life is more than just architecture and projects you work on.

THOMASSON: Sure.

TANIGUCHI: So I think in that respect it was very nice.

THOMASSON: Well, thank you.

TANIGUCHI: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW