

AIP Interview Invitation and correspondence

Initial Invitation

David Zierler <dzierler@aip.org>

Sat 4/3/2021 5:38 AM

- Cottrell, Les

Dear Dr. Cottrell,

I direct the Oral History program at the American Institute of Physics, and I am working with communications officers and archivists at SLAC to develop a project that celebrates physics heritage at the Laboratory.

The starting point of the project will be to conduct oral histories of eminent physicists associated with SLAC. In discussions with Angela Anderson, Melinda Lee, Dorothy Leung, and Jean Deken, everyone agreed that an interview with you would be a terrific addition to the project.

Since we have all moved to a remote work platform, I have been conducting interviews via videoconference, and I have been pleasantly surprised to learn that this medium works basically as well as in-person interviews.

To give you a sense of the scope of questions and online presentation of the finalized interview, here is a link to my talk with Persis Drell, the most recent we've published from this collaboration:

<https://www.aip.org/history-programs/niels-bohr-library/oral-histories/45286>

Interviews generally last about two-three hours, and my goal is to engage in an enjoyable conversation that contextualizes the interviewee's career and research achievements within a broader life history narrative.

Following our interview, we will transcribe the audio file, and you would have full control to review and edit the transcript before granting us authority to publish it. Our interviews are posted online and held in the archives of the Niels Bohr Library, and parallel copies would be published by the SLAC archives. Your interview would be a tremendous resource for researchers and historians.

I hope you are interested in this, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

David Zierler

David Zierler, Ph.D.

Oral Historian

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Response

Cottrell, Les

Sat 4/3/2021 1:03 PM

To:

- David Zierler <dzierler@aip.org>

Thanks for the invitation, I would be happy to participate. I read the interview with Persis, it was not only very interesting from a historical point of view, bringing back many memories, but also gave me a better idea of what kinds of things you are looking for. As you are probably aware, I only pursued physics as the main goal until 1980 when I spent a year at the IBM research Lab in the UK. On returning to SLAC I left the Group A HEP physics team and took over leadership of SLAC's computer networking which though rapidly evolving in its own advanced technology and research (eg supporting the evolution of the Web by supporting/encouraging the first web site in the US), was more of a support role for the physics and was closely engaged with the physics program. For example, witness the first Internet link between SLAC and the IHEP Lab (with its electron-positron storage ring) in Beijing which led to China's joining the Internet in 1994.

I am wondering how I should prepare, whether you need anything in advance et

Follow up

David Zierler <dzierler@aip.org> Sat 4/3/2021 2:51 PM

To:

- Cottrell, Les

Dear Les,

It's great to hear back, and I am glad you enjoyed the interview with Persis. And I think in light of Persis's career trajectory, my "opening" in these interviews is that all people I talk to, began their professional careers in physics and many of whom branched off into other disciplines and interests. Your own path would certainly be a case in point.

As for preparation, that's really more for me than you. Armed with a CV and any literature or links you would like to share, I can formulate topics and questions that are sufficiently broad based for you to have answers at your fingertips. You might benefit from your own read through of a publication list but anything more certainly would not be necessary.

Next item would be to get this on the calendar. Would Wednesday, April 21 at 11 am PDT/2 pm EDT work?

Best,

David

Date of interview

David Zierler <dzierler@aip.org>

Tue 4/6/2021 11:29 AM

To:

- Cottrell, Les

Dear Les,

Following up to get our talk scheduled. The time I originally proposed on April 21 is no longer available; would 11 am PDT on April 28 work?

Best,

David