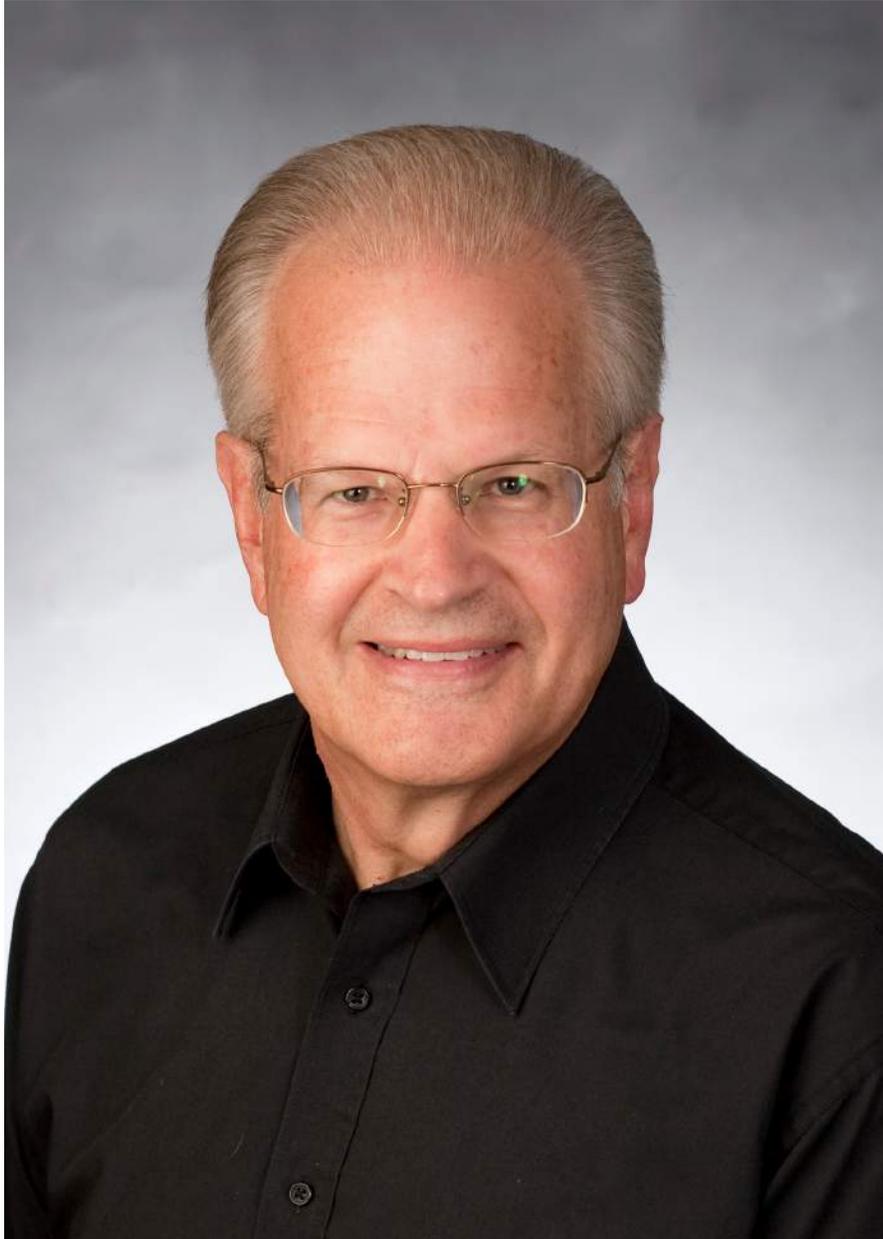


An Interview with James D'Arc



Brigham Young University

Curator, Harold B. Lee Library

Arts and Communications Archive, BYU's Motion Picture Archive, Film Music Archive

Founding of the First BYU Film Studio

I can't tell you a whole lot about it, because I don't have a whole lot of records that pertain to it, and this was a long time ago. I do know that after some struggle, we got funding from whatever the student organization was—I don't think it was BYUSA back then, but it was from the student funds in those days. And I do recall meeting in the Nelke Experimental Theatre because I remember the tremendous challenges of setting the two 16mm projectors on that tremendously steep rake in there, and that the attendance was very, very good.

One of the great perks of doing that was that films in those days, 16mm films we rented, would usually come a week before the event. So Robert Derek and I would enjoy watching these films a number of times before they were actually screened at the event. Somebody listening or watching this interview who is not acquainted with that era might say, "Why would you spend so much time doing that?" For one simple reason. That was the only way you could see it. There were no other formats other than 16mm that you could see these films. Sometimes it would be months or years before you could see these films on television. So you were like an individual in front of a banquet table with enough forks to dig in, and your job was to stuff as much of that down as you could during that time.

One of the great experiences of being someone really interested in film during the 1970s and 80s was cable television. When cable television arrived in the Provo area, we would go to the library and we would scan the television schedules of the stations that were pulled in. One of them, I believe it was KUTV from Sacramento/Stockton, they had the best listings of classic films and contemporary films because they were un-edited. And you would plan your week accordingly.

I think the serious discussion of film came some time after. What the BYU Film Society offered people was another venue of entertainment. In the 1970s and early 80s, most students still didn't have automobiles at school. They were prisoners of campus. A lot of them were in campus housing, so it was an easy walk to the Harris Fine Arts Center in order to see something. I think the entertainment value was the first order of business. There were, as I recall, no film notes, which other film societies in other locales at other universities had, and they were way ahead of where we were. So I think as people got to network, and get to know one another, classes began and talk of a more serious nature of film was generated from that, but I really can't speak to the history of how soon or when that aspect developed.

Special Collections

I was hired on here in 1975 in what was known as the Archives and Manuscripts Division. I needed a 20-hour-a-week job and they were offering employment—and frankly, I wasn't sure what an "archives and manuscripts" did. So this was in the fall of 1975. I was married, trying to raise a family, and other things were tangential to that. Well, once I hired on here as a student processor, as they called it—you would be handed a manuscript collection, and you would arrange and describe it and create a finding aid so that scholars could find it and use it.

The head of the department at that time had only been here a couple of years to establish an archive unit at BYU. His name was Dennis Rowley. Well, he hired me, and he said, "This is what we do; we arrange and describe manuscript collections that we get. What are you interested in?" And I said, "Well I'm interested in film, but I suspect you don't have anything like that." "Well, we just got a collection in," he said, that I went after, "of actor Dean Jagger." I said, "Well, that's interesting." I had been involved with Dean Jagger because he played the title role in the movie *Brigham Young*. And I went to his house and interviewed him in 1972, and yeah, that would really interest me. That would be a great way to learn how to do this. I was interested because of my previously mentioned interest in the movie *Brigham Young* and the cultural role and significance— Well, he did [eventually join the LDS church], and in the process of my interviews with him, he began asking me about the LDS mission, from which I had just returned. I learned that his wife was a less-active, maybe even a lapsed member of the church. He became very interested in what my experience was and what I had done on my mission. We just got to talking more and more about the church, and less and less about the movie *Brigham Young*. Maybe his tactic was that he could tell that he was getting senile, and I was doing most of the talking during the interviews, not him, because he couldn't remember a lot from that time period.

I had also written Vincent Price during this time. It might be easily said that I was obsessed with this film and everything that surrounded it. I had asked Vincent Price for an interview, so that he could talk about his role as Joseph Smith and whatever coaching he might have had from technical advisors; well, he could never see me, but he did write me a two-page handwritten letter, which was wonderful. So that spurred me on to see Dean Jagger. He was available—he wasn't acting much any more—he had a beautiful home that he was, I found out, renting in Santa Monica on Adelaide Street, which was close to the ocean. He really befriended me. He took me to Hamburger Hamlet for lunch. He loved to talk. One of his favorite books, he said, was Truman Madsen's *Eternal Man*. I can remember that wonderful Midwestern twang he had in his voice, and by that time it was accentuated, and he would say, "This is truth, this is beauty. Eternal man. I love this. Philosophy—I love philosophy." I had to hand it to Dean Jagger, at that point in his life being concerned about ideas, even though I couldn't get much out of him on *Brigham Young*. I kind of let that go. We were just good friends. That resulted in, later on, when I was hired on at BYU, bringing him to BYU under the auspices of the film department to have a Dean Jagger film festival. It was very, very nice.

Well, the evolution of my becoming an archival curator began when I started coming here in 1975. As a history major, and also as a film fan, once I got into the world of archives, my reaction was, "Where has this been all my life? This is exciting." Original materials: not only to sit here and go through it and formulate finding aids, but archivists also get to go out and get these things. They find out where they are, and then they use the tools of persuasion, passion, and enthusiasm to convince those who have them to place them here. So this world was unfolding from December of 1975 into early 1976, and rightly or wrongly, wisely or unwisely, I'm a very passionate person and I'm going to go after what I like.

So, I got to be very good friends with Dennis Rowley, the head of this department. And very bold-faced and innocent, I asked him, "What can we do to get me into this? This is what I'd like to do." While I was on my mission I was the secretary to the president and I did various clerical things there. I noticed that the department secretary was leaving to go with her husband to graduate school, so I hatched a plot with Mr. Rowley. I said, "Look, I can type, I can do all these things, I can file; that's what archivists do anyway; I'm going to apply for that full-time position." I was an undergraduate at the time. Well, I got the job, and while I was departmental secretary, he would train me to be an archival curator. Even that time that I was formerly a secretary, I would go on these acquisition trips with Mr. Rowley, one of which was to see the daughter of Cecil B. DeMille, Cecilia DeMille Harper, and also to visit Howard Hawks. So both he and I would keep up the correspondence with the DeMille family and with Howard Hawks. Finally in June, I think it was 1976, I was hired on permanently as the full-time departmental secretary. I didn't become, at least in name, a curator of the Arts and Communications archives—that's the name we decided on—until June of 1979, but between June of 1976 and '79, I was doing curatorial things anyway.

I likened it to the story of Steven Spielberg getting started in the mailroom at Universal. This was my equivalent to the mailroom, sitting at a table and organizing collections. So the visit to Hawks and to the DeMille family went on in 1976 and into 1977, when we actually acquired the collections. We just got a big 17-foot Ryder rental truck, and drove down there. Now, at the same time, I was also doing film reviews and news stories for *The Daily Universe*, the campus newspaper. We took along with us a man by the name of Nelson Wadsworth who was in the Communications Department and over, in a supervisory context, *The Daily Universe*, so it was like a stacked deck: we had all the people. He was working in special collections as our photo archivist. So, we had all the media tied up. Wadsworth took pictures of our acquiring and loading the DeMille collection and the Howard Hawks collection, so we had it documented. I wrote stories for *The Daily Universe* on acquiring both of those, which helped from a public relations standpoint, both through the university and off-campus, in acquiring those collections because we had an ace photographer to document all of that. So, we acquired the collection and we also manipulated the press and public relations aspect of all of that and we were on a run then.

The image of DeMille as well as the image of Howard Hawks was very potent to ride on as we began this part of special collections. The Cecil B. DeMille papers were all in the house and the basement of the legendary house that Cecil B. DeMille bought in 1918 from Charles Chaplain in the Los Vidos area. So when I went in to box up everything, I went into the beautiful study that hadn't changed since 1918.

Stained glass windows, beautiful polished wood on the vaulted ceilings and on the walls, a classic library in DeMille's office where, even though DeMille had been dead since 1959, his longtime secretary Florence Coal changed the daily calendar and put a fresh carnation in the bud vase. *Shades of Sunset Boulevard*, here. It was wonderful. I was there two weeks every day in the house loading all this material out of the basement, out of bedrooms. So I got to see the entire house, and at least from a decorative standpoint, DeMille was much more subtle and mainstream in home décor than he was in his motion pictures that were lionized for extravagance. For being credited as the one who popularized the opulent American bathroom, his were plain and nondescript. He knew what he was doing.

Cecil B. DeMille was a man of taste, was a man of cultured refinement, and was also a great businessman even though he couldn't run his own studio, and that only lasted a few years. A businessman, in the sense that he was like a cultural physician who had his fingers on the pulse of his audience, knew exactly what they wanted and knew exactly how to serve it up. But in its own way—critics would cringe at the term I'm going to use—in his own way with finesse and taste in his films, because he was criticized by most critics for being exaggerating and outlandish in what he did. No! DeMille had taste. And an area where most people remember him now, as a maker of religious films, he was not a cynic. He was a believer.

Cecil B. DeMille, I think, successfully bridged the 19th and the 20th centuries. He was clearly a 19th century man in terms of taste and proclivities, who brought many of those values into the 20th century and was a modernist in the 1920s, in the subjects he chose, but very much a traditionalist in the arc that those stories took. He was just what the motion picture industry needed to become prominent and flourish.

Film Class and Degrees

I remember how happy I was when in—I believe it was 1973—1972 or 1973—to hear that the film department was offering—the theatre department, as it was so named—was offering a class in film. And it was Dr. Charles M. Metten who offered it, and I think it was under the rubric of a film appreciation class. I remember we met in the Harris Fine Arts Center and for a while, I remember some classes were held in the Harold B. Lee Library. There were probably 15 or 20 students who attended and Dr. Metten's approach was very artistic. It wasn't English Department-generated, which was the source for many academic classes in film across the country, and I think it was born of his interest as an actor in motion pictures, and he came from the film appreciation side. "What do you think of this film? What artistic merit does this film have?" It was consistent with what was going on at the time when film was kind of the mistress of Theatre departments, English departments, very rarely from History departments.

So he taught it in a very personal style, and if I'm not mistaken, Arthur Knight's film, *The Liveliest Art*, was perhaps one, if not the only, of our tests. It was very impressionistic. We would get assignments to write papers, I still have the papers, and we could choose our topic and discourse on it. I enjoyed it a lot, not perhaps because it was the best-taught class, but because at least it was a class. It was a place where we could meet as students and faculty and talk about film, write about film, and not have to hide it under the mattress, like this isn't something you should be doing. It was legitimizing the study of film. And then, as I believe, Dr. Metten got involved in the film society when Garrick and I sort of receded, because we had our undergraduate experiences—I mean, we were trying to get through school.

My advanced degrees and the place where I chose to do it were a result of employment and circumstance. The circumstance meaning I was a young father with four very young children born very close together and I had a job that I didn't want to leave. So in my mind, I wanted the advanced degrees because I also wanted to teach and I also wanted to participate on graduate committees, masters committees, doctoral committees, and you need the degrees to do it. But again, by circumstance and employment, I had to do it here. The University of Utah wasn't really an option for me because I wanted to stay close to home and be able to flourish in my employment.

So the film department here at BYU, under the leadership of Dr. Harold Oaks, was, I must say, very, very accommodating in working with me to structure a graduate degree, after I had gotten my bachelor's, to be a combined master's and PhD program in film history. They helped me to design a program, which was a function of things that I had already published, as well as two projects that would result in my

dissertation. I did two studies: one on the writing of Cecil B. DeMille's autobiography—did he really do it? If not, who did it, and what level of participation did he have? The other one was on a, for want of another word, cultural study on the making and the impact of Darryl Zanuck's *Brigham Young*, the 1940 20th Century Fox Film. That was the dissertation, those two projects that would be thoroughly researched, that would be acceptable to be published by juried journals. So I got a degree in 1986.

Development of the BYU Motion Picture Archives Film Series

The phrase “a kid in a candy store” has been my experience, because all of the things that I was interested in as a youngster and as a teenager, and most of them could be folded into my professional activity in what is now the L. Tom Perry Special Collections. Motion pictures and culture, motion pictures and history, and then starting a film series of our own in what is now called the BYU Motion Picture Archive Film series, which was begun in the year 2000. So, yes, I was delighted to see that a lot of these things could be used in this way from early childhood interests and turned into a profession, a vocation.

The classics like *Singing in the Rain*, which now is a common benchmark film, were not seen that often. Musicals were frequent, the MGM musicals, because Robert Garrick liked those, and he was the principal instigator of the BYU film society. I enjoyed bringing films such as *The Best Years of Our Lives*, the classic universal horror films (for the stylish cinematography and the mythology of the monster), the Astaire Rogers musicals, and I particularly enjoyed exposing them to films such as Bela Lugosi's *Devil Bat* (done for PRC after Lugosi's star status had quickly faded during the 1930s, and he was doing just about anything he could). They were lots of fun, but they were also an example of where Hollywood was going. It wasn't all MGM. It wasn't all the gloss of Paramount and 20th Century Fox. There was a classification of theatres and a classification of audience that would see these 69-minute “quickies” done on bare-bones budget and directed by directors who would then go on to TV. Why? Because they had to be just as cheap and just as quickly done for television. Monogram, PRC, Tiffany, Chesterfield, Enterprise, and a host of other studios were the perfect training ground for the television generation.

In its early years, it was a harkening back to the classic era of motion picture making. BYU was considered a refuge in the academic world from some of the more radical or left-leaning institutions of leading academic institutions. And I think with Latter-day Saints correctly perceiving themselves as being under siege because of a number of doctrinal and policy stances that they had taken, which were causing Latter-day Saints to have the microscope or the magnifying glass placed on them, BYU was a refuge. So there was a self-censorship about the kinds of films that would fit the role of a refuge. Classic films fit that definition very, very easily. Gene Kelly, Fred Astaire, and Ginger Rogers worked well and they were enjoyed during those times. The niceties of the academic distinctions of the study of film had not yet arrived.

Archivist Mandate

I'll turn the “benefits arising from archival research” into an organic term: Blooming. When one invests the kind of time that's necessary in a box full of papers and then watches a film, you are planting seeds that you then harvest afterwards. And blooming is the only way I can refer as a metaphor for what happens to me. More and more flowers, the blooms get bigger and bigger, the more experience you have, the more you ponder, probe, and think about. And for me, that's the greatness of the archival experience over say, internet research, because these documents are fixed and static; they are the way they were created when they were created, and you get that entire sensory, physical, emotional experience when you go through a collection and see a film.

Archival research is tremendously pan-historic and pan-chronological, almost in the way that it goes forward and it goes backward in an infinite way. It does turn one's heart more so, in a very heartfelt way, to these past masters like DeMille, Coster, and Howard Hawks, in that you give place to who they were, what they did, and why they did what they did. And it increases the curiosity, it increases the attention. It's not just an assignment that you have to do and then you get on to the next one; there are some very potent seeds that are planted, that bloom, that mature and fertilize later one.

One of them is the allocation of time in this day and age in the 21st century. Students, and I dare say a lot of faculty, don't give the time that's necessary to research that they deem to be important, because when one does, one gets into these marginal territories of "What did they really do?" There's surface opinion of how DeMille is regarded, but if I spend enough time with him and with these documents and with the world that he inhabited, you're going to find treasures that no one else has found, that no one else has considered. Now, as an archivist, what that means to me is, I want to find someone who has a similar regard for that, so that a book can be written. So I've taken responsibility as an archival curator to bird dog those people who can come and do that. That was Mark Vos, whom I attracted here to come and bury himself in the Marion C. Cooper collection that produced in 2005 his marvelous biography of Marion C. Cooper called *Living Dangerously*. It happened a few years ago when I identified an author who I had great respect for, a biographer, Scott Eyman, and persuaded him that it would be a good thing to rediscover DeMille in this way and produce the benchmark biography of DeMille, which was published in 2010 by Simon and Schuster, called *The Empire of Dreams*.

I have interpreted the archivist mandate as being archivist as facilitator, and in my language, it's archivist as activist. These aren't dead, inert materials; the archivist is part of the bridge to see that they are used as an investment into the culture they come from, and find those who are willing to re-interpret this material in a way that makes these subjects au courant.

Importance of an Audience

One of the great joys of being in film studies is not being in a room by yourself, the fabled ivory tower, looking at films and then writing about them. The great thing that I found about film is sharing them with others and seeing what their reactions are. I grew up in an era where film series, film festivals on campuses were the great underground activity. Much more so at other places—University of Michigan, NYU, UCLA, USC—than here in Provo, Utah. So as we began acquiring more and more collections, here in special collections, we were amassing 16mm prints from producer/collector Marion C. Cooper's collection, some from DeMille, and then a real trove of 16mm prints from Jimmy Stewart and from Lorraine Day. Well, these were in the basement of the Harold B. Lee Library. We really had no place to show them, so when plans were laid for the addition to the Harold B. Lee Library in which we are now sitting, the underground portion that now houses special collections, a thought came to mind when I saw on the plans that there was a teleconferencing room, an auditorium, and wondered, that's going to seat 210 people? It has rate seats, hmm. Video projection...how much would it be to build a projection booth and to specify the size of the screen so that we could show the films that we have been collecting all these years? Jimmy Stewart's print of *It's a Wonderful Life*, his di-transfer Technicolor print of *Rear Window*, so many others. Lorraine Day's print of *Locket* with Cary Grant.

So I got together with the powers that be in the library to see if that could come to pass, and fortunately it could. So I got specifications for a cinemascope Panavision-type screen and specifications for a booth. After we moved into this facility as a department in the fall of 1999, we started right off in January of 2000 with the BYU Motion Picture Archives Film Series, and the first film we showed was James Stewart's *Broken Arrow*, 1950. We probably had 35 in the audience, but they loved it, and we were off and running. I wanted to model the series after the—I'm trying to remember now, it could have been NYU's film series where they had notes that were written that were distributed at each screening. One thing I wanted to add was about a 15-minute verbal introduction with things to look for, in contrast to the notes that were more formal. They gave a sort of history of the making of this film, complete with all the technical credits, with as complete a list of cast as I could muster, and that would fit on an 8 1/2 by 14" page. That gradually grew into the format of this film series and continues to this day.

We began by showing one a month during the September through mid-April season, and then a few years ago I increased it to two films a month. For a while we showed films during the summer, but the response wasn't that great versus the cost at the outlay. So we run from September through Memorial Day, and we regularly fill up. About five to six years ago, maybe longer, we were given status in the Honors program as part of the Great Works program there, and it's been quite successful. As an outreach not only to faculty and students but to the community. Occasionally I'll ask, what is the furthest that one

has come to this? And we had one person raise his hand and say, “We drove down from Evanston, Wyoming to see Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy,” because it was very difficult—still is—to see Laurel and Hardy films in the way they should be seen, on the big screen and with an audience.

What I began to appreciate, as this series went on, was the entirely new dynamic that certain films took on when watched with an audience. In a darkened room with an audience, as opposed to watching it with a few other people in a classroom, the films that I thought were very dull and unresponsive, or that elicited little response from a viewer, took on a whole new sense of pacing and timing and emotional engagement when done in front of an audience. It’s something that I should have realized years before—the “duh” moment—slapping the palm of your hand into your forehead—this is how these films were made. When they were previewed, they were previewed with an audience. Directors and production personnel would be down there, not watching the movie; they were watching and listening to the audience, making notes for edits, for trims. Well, I discovered that truism in this way. So my passion for showing these films increased over the years, so that people could have the experience of seeing these films the way they were meant to be seen: with an audience. So what kind of films am I talking about that garnered a whole new life that I had responded to differently before we saw them with an audience? Most of Cecil B. DeMille’s films. Which I thought on an individual basis were slovenly paced and rather boring, very archaic. But when they were seen with our audiences over the past fourteen years, they took on a whole new life.

There is a response from the audience which is palpable and alarmingly contemporary in enthusiasm to a film that is older than most of the people who are seeing it. The other one that really surprised me, that I had been a critic of seeing it individually years before, was Henry Coster’s *The Robe*, which I thought was very sanctimonious seeing it as an individual, and very, very slow. I resisted seeing it through the years. But inasmuch as one of the collections was the Henry Coster collection, I thought, well it’s obligatory to show *The Robe*. Alright, we’ll do it. It was magical when we showed it, and we have shown it three times since, and the estimation is in my mind, for a Christ film, that it’s one of the best. Why? Because you see very little of Him, but you see His reflection in how other people talk about their encounter and their experience with Christ. So I turned from being a cynic of that film to being an admirer of it in many ways each time I see it with an audience, because of the alchemy, the chemistry between the images on that screen and the people who are watching it.

The motion picture industry was created for the masses by the masses. Some Marxist critics will counter by saying, “No, the American film experience was done by an oligarchy of people who had their own view of what they wanted America to be and foisted it on the American public. And worse than that, in the early years, they created an economic cartel, which pretended to control this product and foist their view of America and mankind upon the culture.” Well, that argument is good as far as it goes, but they neglect the masses who really helped determine what it is that ends up on that screen. There are a lot of filmmakers who didn’t make it past five years. Why? Because they didn’t make films that people would go to see again and again and again, when this was an era of motion pictures, like what television became later on: the mass art, the mass medium. It was audiences that moderated some of the excesses of the filmmakers that didn’t make it, but more importantly, the ones who did. No filmmaker from DeMille to Raul Walch to Orson Wells would deny that it has to be popular with audiences or they’re out of business. They have to cater in some way, shape or form to what that audience will see.

That’s why we were talking about Westerns earlier. You get a very different biography of Jesse James directed by Henry King in 1939 with Jerome Power than one that Sam Fuller would direct in the mid-1950s with Robert Wagner as a troubled teenager trying to make sense of the world around him. In the Henry King version, you have a very Depression-era oriented film. You have the images at the very beginning of that movie that look like Dorothea Lang’s WPA photographs, and Robert Baron railroad magnates who are kicking people off their land. It’s not much of a stretch from there to John Ford and Darryl Zanuck’s *Grapes of Wrath* where John Qualen is being thrown off his land, and he’s asking the banker, “Who do I shoot?” “Well I don’t know, if I knew, I’d tell ya.”

There’s the Marxist analysis of the oligarchs, creating what the masses will see; but you can’t eliminate the audience influence on what they are willing to see as entertainment, as well as information.

If the audiences don't make it to the box office, they can be social philosophers all they want to be, but it's going to be in a room about the size of the room we're doing the interview in right now.

BYU Film Professor

My going over to the Theatre and Media Arts department—I think at the time, was it still called the Speech and Theatre Arts Department—that we had at that time, in 1990? Dr. Harold Oaks, who was the chair of that department—he was a lovely man, a wonderful man—asked if I'd consider going over to teach film courses. It seemed like a good thing to do. I perceived that there was a transition, maybe, in my career from collector and archivist to full-time teacher and disseminator of all of this information. Perhaps a wonderful bridge to get students to come over and use the material that had been collected for so many years. So I consented to doing that. Shortly after, I became concerned that not being over in archives and manuscripts full time would perhaps compromise my ability to, for lack of a better word, lobby for continuing to get more material. So it was worked out that I would have a joint appointment, where I would have an office over in the Harris Fine Arts Center building and keep the office that I had in archives and manuscripts on the fifth floor of the library.

Well, I should have learned from the example of Solomon in the Old Testament. In what way can you successfully cut this little child in two and still have it a living, breathing, efficacious organism? At length, I concluded by the end of the first year that that wasn't possible, because forces were already in work in the Harold B. Lee Library where I was, and I was very concerned that that area was going to be compromised. So I decided to go back to the Harold B. Lee Library and do what I had always been doing for the previous 14 years: being the crusader for and acquiring these kinds of collections, dealing with the motion picture industry. So, I returned in 1991 to continue what I was doing.

Development of the BYU Film Program

I think the growth and the development of the department, the academic department, and the growth and development of a film component, or at least an emphasis in Archives and Manuscripts grew independently. Why did it grow independently? I think the faculty and department were excited to see a growth like this over here, but the direction in which they were going in a pedagogical way was not similar. When an archival entity is focused on film, it hopes that there is going to be film scholarship that is done in the department that utilizes these primary resources. The two major collections that were acquired here in 1976 and 1977, here in special collections, were the collections of Howard Hawks, who was then, and maybe now still, acknowledged as one of the top five directors ever, and that was a major coup to get his collection. That was the good news. The bad news is, it wasn't a large collection. Garage fires and moving decimated the collection to about ten archival boxes of material. But the fact that that collection was here helped collection development. The other collection was much more significant in terms of scope, size, and significance, and that's the Cecil B. DeMille papers. That was and is a world-class archival collection, and we have had people from around the world come to use it. I have always been disappointed that it hadn't and hasn't been mined sufficiently by the faculty in Theatre and Media Arts, because of the wealth of material that is here. Now, I understand the—what I will call in an umbrella fashion, the Film Department's direction, primarily in those early years was not film history and criticism, but it was filmmaking. And there was an institutional reason for that.

My perception of the mandate that the film department had was to provide screenwriters, actors, and actresses of faith, who could then logically feed the need of the then-BYU motion picture studio to produce motion pictures for in-service use in the church, as well as short films that they were producing for the outside world on education, on motivation, on various other things. So there was a filmmaking emphasis rather than a film history and criticism emphasis. It took me a while to understand the frustration I had as to why, in the academic courses, students weren't being sent over here to use the Hawks and DeMille and other collections that we brought in. About a decade later, we started going in the direction of film music with the acquisition of the Max Steiner collection in 1981. There was some hope that the music department would add a component to their curriculum to appreciate film music, but that didn't happen either, even as we were fighting our own struggles in special collections to persuade the

university administration that having film collections here, original collections, was a legitimate function of academia. It was frustrating that that wasn't being confirmed by more frequent use of those collections by those in the film department, but they had their own agenda and their own mandate to fill.

The greatness of the educational experience is when a student realizes, and hopefully faculty members too, that their realities are constructions. That many people, many different cultures have many different constructions. That's what the educational process is: to be able to see those and then to articulate your own from amongst those constructions.

People Important to BYU Film Culture

The person who replaced me in the department was Dean Duncan, who brought a whole new fresh view on film education, not necessarily from the nuts and bolts aspect of filmmaking, which had been the emphasis of the department up until that time. In fact, one of the things that I saw could be my contribution to joining the department, for the brief year that it turned out to be, was to strengthen the history and criticism aspect. I felt good that I was able to lobby and be successful in having the film history curriculum go from one semester to two. Dean Duncan brought in a fresh aesthetic of the philosophical underpinnings of what comprises film, of what film at BYU should be, the direction that it should go, and the merging of history and criticism into the filmmaking curriculum. I couldn't have really asked for a better successor to broaden and define the film program at BYU in a very healthy, challenging, rigorous way. So I thought at the end of it all, by the end of probably 1992, '93, that the right things had been done; that I, in returning to Archives and Manuscripts had done the right thing in getting Dean Duncan on the faculty. Then the next big step that I thought was positive was Thomas Lefler being added, because he could be—and *was*, turned out to be—that very wonderful, bright, intelligent bridge between the filmmaking and the more academic film history and criticism aspects. So I was in the happy situation of lasting long enough here at Brigham Young University to see all these players play out in a way which was good and which was healthy.

Things worked out the best way that they could to make their way along after Dr. Metten left. There was the tenure that Tad Danielewski had while he was here—highly controversial. There was a lot of consternation and a lot of conflict over which direction Tad Danielewski was trying to take, both with the theatre and the film programs, because he was talented and accomplished in both areas.

Contemporary Film

I don't like a lot of contemporary films, but I like Contemporary Film, because it shows the possibility of where film can go, and how the technology of film and the technology of electronics has changed. A contemporary film, *The Life of Pi*: wonderfully thematic and a search for God, but then it gets criticism from the craft of the cinematographer for saying, "Why should this film be lionized for its cinematography when it's hocus pocus blue screen and technology? Well, this isn't our craft at all." Well, welcome to the 21st century. Welcome to the craft of film. Thomas Edison could have said the same thing in 1948. He could have said the same thing in 1953 with Cinemascope and Cinerama. "Well this isn't what I intended it be at all as a founding father of cinema." Well, I just love to see how things morph into something new.

Sometimes the [founding fathers of cinema] have to change their hair color so that they're more attuned to what is going on in the modern generations. The fact that a film student can afford to buy a high-definition camera, shoot on it, and edit it at home in a proprietary way, all under his or her control is a marvelous thing. It's incredible. Well, I'm just filled with wonder at where the craft of film and the form in which stories are told—which is also changed by motion pictures—how that changes and what that does to how we learn things and how we experience things in the future.

I love to show film and to talk to people about what a film experience is, but I'm not obsessive about holding on to film and being the last one in the room as the bulb goes out of the projector and as the sprockets are stripped from celluloid. Archives deals with past masters and past forms. They need to be part of the educational mix of any student, whether the student is in humanities or whether it's a filmmaking student. And I'm here to preserve what I consider to be the best examples of those past

masters. I have headlights to the future and I have taillights illuminating the past. For me, that's essential for any scholar or any filmmaker to go forward, particularly at an academic institution. It all has to be part of the conversation, and it can't be forgotten.