PLU Oral History Collection, Mortvedt Recollections Erving Severtson interviewed by Heidi Yoneda on April 10, 2000

MORTVEDT'S FOCUS ON ACADEMICS: Mortvedt wanted professors who had their doctorate from good universities. Mortvedt himself had high credentials and wanted professors to be the same. During Severtson's early career, Mortvedt added another position to the Psychology department. It attracted candidates with high credentials and at the time there was a shortage of doctorate professors. Mortvedt was also conservative and also wanted faculty to fit in with the university. He reorganized the administration of the university; he had a Dean of Arts and Sciences, a Dean of Professional Study, and the first Vice President of Academics. Mortvedt strengthened the university academically and gave the departments a lot of freedom.

FACULTY: Many of the Deans when Mortvedt was here became administrators. Interim course (January term) was established. He reorganized the leadership within faculty by focusing on liberal arts. Before Mortvedt it was mainly an education college.

MORTVEDT'S INFLUENCES: He had studied at Harvard and was the National Director of Lutheran Colleges. He was able to travel around to many Lutheran colleges and was a president at Bethany College. He brought in Tom Langevin to be the Academic Vice President who came from the University of Michigan. Mortvedt was influenced by Kierkegaard through Paul Homer. He was also influenced by Joe Sittler.

NEW FACULTY: Mortvedt surrounded himself around outstanding faculty. He attracted new faculty who had new ideas. Some good staff left when Eastvold left leaving gaps in the university.

COHESIVENESS: Mortvedt wanted new ideas and wanted to move the university forward. He was religious but wanted the university to become more academic.

MORTVEDT'S FAULTS: Mortvedt's hearing was going. He left earlier than his contract allowed. His health was a factor in his leaving early. Mortvedt came in at a time of conflict and felt like he was able to focus Pacific Lutheran University to an academic level while still retaining its religious beliefs. He was mentally capable and would have stayed longer if it was not for his hearing. Pacific Lutheran University took its first steps to being nationally recognized under Mortvedt's Presidency.