The Chicago Economics Oral History Project

The University of Chicago’s economists have had a significant impact on the development of the American economics profession and economic ideas in the twentieth century. Today’s Chicago Nobel laureates point to the central figures of the post-war “Chicago School” as preparing the way for today’s success. And the post-war members of the School in turn often credit their predecessors in the department for laying the groundwork of their ideas.

The Chicago Economics Oral History Project (CEOHP) is designed to provide a permanent record of stories and memories from University of Chicago faculty (and former faculty), graduate students and alumni/ae, and researchers. CEOHP will provide researchers with more knowledge of the history of economics at the University of Chicago, its relevance to contemporary economic practice, and its reception in the economics community at large. The project covers the period from the late 1930s to the 1980s, a period which is still in the living memory of faculty (and their families), researchers, and students.

Ross B. Emmett, the principal investigator in the CEOHP, conducts video or audio taped interviews with current and former members of the Chicago economics faculty, former students and researchers, and those in related disciplines such as the Graduate School of Business, the Law School, and the Committee on Social Thought. The interviews are designed to supplement material already available regarding economics research and education at the University of Chicago.

Interviews consist of a number of questions related to the person’s experiences with economics at The University of Chicago. Interviews are expected to take approximately one-and-one-half hours each. Participation in an interview is voluntary, and the interviewee maintains rights over their comments. A transcript of the interview will be sent to the interviewee.

Material from the interview may be used by Dr. Emmett for the Chicago Economics Oral History Project and related academic papers, books, oral presentations and video projects. The video/audio tapes and transcripts will be permanently housed in the University of Chicago Archives, where they will be available for scholarly and educational purposes in accordance with University Library policies.

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