



Library podcast

Lynda Mapes: Witness Tree and David B. Williams: Stories in Stone

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[00:00:36] Good evening, everyone. Thank you for coming to the Central Library tonight. I'm Marion Scichilone, one of the managers in the building, and Carla Mason is here from Reader Services, also for the program. We are delighted to have these authors here tonight. And I'm just going to say one or two more words. To me, it's so poignant that we're having you here tonight. If any of you drive north on i5. You have seen a lot less trees. And we certainly have had the viaduct come down in crumbles and more, so it's just been a delight to have this come here as a program tonight. Now, Tony Angel is going to say a few words and he's our moderator tonight. Thank you.

[00:01:29] It's interesting to reflect over the content of the two books that we're going to hear about tonight, because not only are they timely once again, but you pick up the newspaper, you see something on the screen and every other article seems to be related to the very thing they've written about in some fashion. And I was saying to Lynda a moment ago that in reading the two books, I felt that they were made for each other in a way, when you look at the fundamental foundation of the earth and what is necessary to produce the lungs and the breathing forest that keeps life on the earth, the two are inseparable. And when we see the rainforest burning in Brazil and an indifferent leader of the country, we see parallels here.

[00:02:25] And I think these are the kinds of wise and insightful remarks, well researched, thoughtfully on the spot experiences. Four years in the elm forest with the other trees. From traveling to the very source of the stone. That is in a way influenced humankind. Since we were starting to be measured or would measure ourselves.

[00:02:53] Over 50 years ago, I came to the University of Washington because I wanted to leave behind what I consider a lost cause of the San Fernando Valley. I had this high hopes of adventure and I wasn't disappointed at all. And what, moreover, made me delighted was to meet the company of writers and artists who cherish nature the way these two authors have done and done so well. I remember one thing I wanted to relate as I was thinking it over and what my opening remarks might be. Tonight I went to the College of Forestry. I was 17. I thought like Thoreau, I wanted to go to the woods to live deliberately and confront the essentials of life. And the first lecture I went to in the College of Forestry at the University of Washington in nineteen fifty eight, the professor got up and announced that the old growth forest is a dead and dying forest.

[00:03:52] Transferred out of the class about two weeks later. I didn't see it that way then and today we see the complexities again,

[00:04:01] Thankfully, we do because of the way in which educated, thoughtful, rational and reasonable people have given us a good look at where we are and where we're headed.

[00:04:13] Lynda Mapes, of course, has been recognized and renowned for all kinds of fine work on the native cultures, her work on the orca, the J Pod Southern resident orcas and the following with great empathy of a mother with a dying and dead calf throughout the world. Those are the messages that get us translated well into the world that we're so dependent upon and interrelated to. David

[00:04:45] And his writing demonstrated so well to me and so informed for me how stone has been a fundamental part of our culture. Whether it's the building ground that gives us the residents, whether it's a monumental form or whether it's a way in which artists can give tangible expression in a modeled appreciation of the aesthetic in the world around them. If we were going to proceed tonight, we'll be, David will open with a good direct summary of his work, followed by well, I.

[00:05:25] Maybe I overstated a summary of his work and highlights. Lynda will follow.

[00:05:32] And then what we'd like to do, if you wouldn't mind, is get things rolling between the two of the writers tonight. By my being a moderator, raising questions and let them interrelate, it's their night. They've got the momentum and afterwards, we'd certainly like to open it up to questions. But that's the way we're structured this evening. OK, David, great.

[00:05:55] How exciting.

[00:05:58] Is this on, am I on yet? You are always on. Yeah, well, I am.

[00:06:03] Well, it is, as Tony said, an honor and pleasure to be here. Tonight, I'd like to begin by thanking all of you for coming out on this wonderful evening. I'd like to thank Tony for the introduction and for joining us on stage. He has been a good friend for many years, so it is truly an honor to have him. I'd like to especially thank Lynda for her enduring friendship and support over the years. I'd like to thank Marion and the Seattle Public Library for hosting an Elliot Bay Books for selling our books, which is such a fabulous thing to do. I think the book arrived yesterday, so I was a little panic. So I'm very excited that they're here. To me, before I began, one of the truly great pleasures of Seattle is the amazing abundance of independent bookstores such as Elliott Bay. I thank all of them for the support they have given me and other local authors over the years. As we face what is happening to our country, it is even more critical to support and defend bookstores and libraries as bastions of strong community, diversity, freedom of speech and knowledge.

[00:07:02] You know that when you enter your local library, an independent bookstore, you have entered a place for the great ideals of this country are practiced, preached and promoted.

[00:07:11] So thank you very much to the bookstore and to the library especially. So I want to begin by telling you a little bit about this book, *Stories in Stone* was originally published 10 years ago. And like many books, it had one of those lives where it sold a few and then it sold fewer and then it sold fewer and then it sold none. Basically, it died on a vine. But I was lucky enough about a year ago to acquire the rights to the book back from my original publisher. And even luckier to have this wonderful relationship with the University of Washington press, which agreed to publish--republish the book. So this is in essence, the same book that came out ten years ago. But with a much nicer cover, a lower price, and particularly you think of inflation, it's really cheap. So I'd like to thank Nicole and an awesome ability of the press for all their support with this book and with the other books that I've been fortunate to work on with them. And so what I want to do is just tell you a little bit about the book.

[00:08:13] So it begins in southern Utah. I moved there after college with a degree in geology and basically became addicted to the rock of that part of the world, the Red Rock Desert. I hiked in and I biked in it, I canoed, I taught and it's really where I began to develop my relationship with the world around me to understand the stories of the place that I was living

and develop a better feel and better connections. And that was critical to me and I'd never thought I'd leave.

[00:08:44] But then I met someone, my wife who became my wife. I didn't meet her then, and she decided I'm going to go to graduate school and I'm not the dumbest person out there, so I followed her and she took us to Boston.

[00:08:56] And where we lived was in this building directly across from Fenway. And I'm not into baseball. And there are probably more people in the buildings than in the town we had lived in in Moab. And I lost that connection to place. I've affectionately called that apartment the hellhole.

[00:09:16] And but what I did, though, was I started to do what I've been doing in Seattle for many years. And if you're familiar with some of my other books, *The Seattle Walks*.

[00:09:24] I started walking the city and I started looking at things and trying to understand where I lived and start to develop those relationships and where it really began was on the Harvard campus at Harvard Hall and the base of that building has this brown sandstone. And I distinctly remember one day walking up to that building and rubbing it and having the grains of sand, the road and collecting my hand. And I had this epiphany and I realized, oh, the brownstones of the East Coast are exactly the same as the Red Rock of southern Utah. They're basically a sandstone with a little bit of iron in them. For some reason, the people on the east think that's brown and people in Utah think it's red, which it is. But this was one of the dominant building stones in the East Coast for decades throughout Boston, New York, Philadelphia, the classic brownstone, apartment buildings got that name because the stone is brown. Pretty clever out there.

[00:10:20] So this was one of the stories that this connections I started to make with the city and with the geologic landscape. And for me, that was critical to developing a passion for Boston that I did not have up until that point. And so from there, I started looking out into what other stories can I find? The probably the most commonly used building stone in the United States is a stone quarry in Indiana called the Salem Limestone, or the Indiana limestone, 330 million year old white limestone. Most famous building would be the Empire State Building. And the stone formed when what we think of is the Midwest look basically like the Bahamas. So a little bit different, the picture on the left,

[00:11:03] That hole, that quarry hole is the hole that the Empire State Building came out of.

[00:11:09] It's never been used for anything else. And you can walk up if you know where you are and look down in and see the Empire State Building where it came from, which I just think is sort of a magical thing. And that building stone is found everywhere in the United States. All fifty states, go to the second Seattle Art Museum. I'm not sure what you call it. Now, the old one that it's the new of the old ones are the old the new ones that's made of Indiana limestone, the Rainier Club. It's widely used everywhere you go. And when you look at it, you'll find it's filled with fossils. It's a really wonderful stone. And I like it in part, too, because it's the star of my favorite movie. Breaking away, biking, geology. What more could a boy want in life? So and going from that, the most commonly used building stone in the United States to one that's used in only one building or two buildings in the U.S. This is Petrified Wood. This is a gas station in Lamar, Colorado, out on the Eastern Plains, built in 1930 at the time when vernacular architecture, particularly if gas stations as people are starting to drive, how do you attract someone? Well, you build your building with petrified wood. And the person who actually built it achieved fame later because he went on to develop Tang and more importantly, pop rocks Candy. So and it's true, kids did blow up. If you know the story, it's horrible. But.

[00:12:29] And then from there, I started thinking about what is the oldest building stone that I could find. And that is gneiss G N E I S S a metamorphic rock quarried about a hundred miles east west of the Twin Cities and a little town of Morton. And it's three point five billion years old. And I regularly lead building stone tours around Seattle. And there is a building, the Seattle Exchange building, and if you're familiar with it, that beautiful art deco building at second and Marion. And I always encourage people to reach out and touch the building because you are reaching back into the deepest time of our planet. And it's just a lovely it's as if you could take bubble gum and add brownies and mix it together this pink and black. So it's probably just don't think of that like as food to eat, but think of the colors. It's really beautiful. And so people have been using that. It's again, pretty widely used, but probably the most commonly used building stone. But not commonly, but the most famous building stone in the world is the one used by Michelangelo. And that's the Carrara marble that built that stone. It is best used as a sculpting material. The building on the left is the Standard Oil building in Chicago. And if you know the story, Standard Oil, a company that is my understanding oil has to do with geology. So they hire a lot of geologists, but apparently they didn't look at the stone and understand what it did.

[00:13:52] So they cover the buildings, about eighty some stories with forty-four thousand panels of Carrara marble.

[00:13:59] And about a year and a half after they put them all those, they'd finished the building, one of the panels popped off the eighty second floor. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

Next year, another couple of panels popped off. Turns out if you take Carrara marble and you cut it and you put it in a situation where it gets hot and cold and passes through the freezing temperature and freezing point, it has a tendency to bow and bend. And so after about twelve or fifteen years, they ended up replacing all forty-four thousand panels on the building. Yeah, and I actually have a piece of one of the panels. I mean, that's kind of dork life that I lead. So even though the book does not necessarily deal with any building material from Seattle, as you wander the streets through here around here and look at buildings, you can find as it shows stone from all over the world, Africa, Asia, North America, India, I mean, you name it, we have stone. These are just some of the examples. And the reason I got into this was several fold, I've come to realize. One is the fact that, as you're probably well aware, there's a lot of crappy architecture out there and you can ignore it if you focus on the stone and think, OK, the building, who cares about the building? But you can look at the geology. So that's really cool. So it allows you to avoid ugly. The second reason is people use stone for a reason.

[00:15:25] The reason Standard Oil used Carrara marble is they wanted to show that they had the elegance, the money to cover a building in the most famous rock in the world. If Michelangelo could do it, Taj Mahal could do it, so could Standard Oil for only about ten years. That's another issue. And the final point in this for me is something that I think will probably come up in later in the talk. And it really, I think, links what Lynda and I are passionate about is that building stone exemplifies the idea that people are often told that nature is out there. It's a way from us. And I firmly believe that the natural world is all around us. If you take the time to observe, to ask questions, to pay attention, and that's really what this book is about, is paying attention to the natural world that we walk by every single day. As I said, I leave these buildings, stone tours, and people always come up and go, wow, I've walked by that building fifty one hundred a thousand times, and I never noticed X, Y or Z, so it's about being observant and I'm sure Lynda will tell you more. Thank you.

[00:16:34] That was great, many times as I hear you speak and enjoy it all over again.

[00:16:39] It's beautiful. Thank you. Thank you, everyone, for being here. I want to also

[00:16:44] Say a big thank you for the Seattle Public Library for having us and shout out my thanks to the University of Washington press, a proud independent press is gonna be celebrating its one hundredth anniversary next year. Wow.

[00:17:00] I worked for a newspaper that some of you have heard of and I hope a lot of you read and we're celebrating our one hundred and twenty third year of publication this year.

Thank you all for being readers. And thank you for being our friends and sticking with us as family, writers are not the easiest people to live with

[00:17:21] I'm just guessing. So *Witness Tree*, this tree is in the Harvard Forest on the other side of the country, but actually at the moment it's sort of a little bit of a worldwide sensation because it's tweeting. It's the largest, oldest thing on social media right now because the Harvard Forest after I left, carried the witness tree idea into a whole new realm, which was to brilliantly, I think, take this idea of a single tree and what it can tell us about our world and about climate change and actually make the tree literally speak.

[00:17:56] They wired up my beautiful hundred year old oak tree with a bunch of different sensors to check everything from sap rise to atmospheric exchange to water use and with some very pointy headed graduate students, figure out how to convert that into tweets that are translated by a dear friend of mine name Clarisse Hart at the forest. And so if you go to @awitnesstree and I encourage you to go ahead and follow the tree, it's got more than six thousand followers who've signed up in the last three weeks, which I think is hilarious.

[00:18:25] You will read things like, wow, I really grew a lot today or God, I lost a lot of water today or what it said most recently, which is this is the hottest summer of the last seventy five years.

[00:18:38] And the reason my tree knows that is because there's all this great data at the Harvard Forest, which enabled me to take one tree, just one tree and tell the story of climate change. And as a reporter, I could tell that people were tuning out the climate change story. Who could blame them? But I thought this is the existential story of our time. How do I get people to connect to it? So I thought, what if we could take one beloved living thing and show how its life is changing because of climate change? And I thought. A treat, and I was fortunate enough to be at the Harvard Forest for a Bullard Fellowship in forest research and work there with a lab to look at these trees at the Harvard Forest, it's four thousand acres of just a natural native New England wood. And ask the question, can we see climate change in a forest? Can we see it in a single tree? So the people who work at the Harvard Forest like to say there's just enough Harvard in the Harvard Forest, the red brick. Very nice. But it's an hour and a half from Cambridge. It's out in the woods. The people there really get to follow their passion, do what they want. Get away from the stuffiness of the main campus, is it? It was a beautiful place to be embedded as a journalist. It was you know, these these Bullard fellowships usually go to scholars. There's always one sort of other person every year.

[00:19:59] I was the other kind of person that year. And to have the treat of being with these scientists and working alongside them in the woods and learning what they were learning about these trees was just, such a fantastic experience. It started one year earlier than that when I was a science journalist fellow at M.I.T. and I hooked up with this gentleman. That's Andrew Richardson from Harvard and he had the idea of doing something that had never been done before, which is taking bank security cameras and putting them on towers in the forest. That's what's at the top of that tower. You're not watching for crooks, of course, what these cameras were doing is looking at the tree canopy. Andrew had the idea that if you could watch the color change in the tree canopy and the coming of senescence of winter, the first bud burst in spring, which you would really have as a digital observatory of the seasonal change of the forest. What this gave us for the first time was scale instead of the kind of day to day phenology observations that all of us have always done forever, whether it's noticing the first swallow or when the first frogs start to sing. Andrew could track the seasonal changes in the canopy at scale, not only across this forest, but because of the National Science Foundation got so excited at these so-called Fino cam stations, all over North America.

[00:21:22] And so this was brand new data.

[00:21:25] But it wasn't enough to be able to see an entire tree canopies is great but what's going on below the canopy? What's going on? As a matter of fact, in the understory in the forest floor. What about all the other creatures of the forest? How was their life changing because of the changing cadence of the seasons? Well, that's where John came in. John O'Keefe was my partner on this yearlong project of watching seasonal change in a single tree. We teamed up with Dave Orwig who you see here coring my tree because we needed to confirm that it was old enough to really get a sense of change over time. And sure enough, my tree was about a hundred years old. And so between Andrew and his look at the forest at scale and John in his more intimate look in the understory in a nice long look over time, we learned a lot. This is how you learn a lot about trees. You look at its cause, you know, they are first journalists. Trees are our first diarists. They tell quite a story. If you know how to read their core. Each one of those bands in a tree, it tells you about a year in its life. Did it grow a lot that year? Did it grow just a little? That means something happened. The weather changed. There was an insect attack by studying the core of my tree as well as observing the forest as a whole, quite a picture began to emerge. I think one of the reasons I was so comfortable working with John as he did his forest walks was how he worked. Look what's in his hand. Clipboard. Pencil. Paper. That was refreshing. As a reporter who takes notes just the same way, I felt very comfortable working with John as he walked through this forest and follow these same fifty trees that he'd been following for twenty five years to watch their seasonal progression. Pay attention to these very subtle changes as the seasonal year turned. I also had access to fantastic archives at the Harvard Forest to look back in time and how these trees had endured.

[00:23:29] Here's what I started to learn about my beautiful tree.

[00:23:34] We found out that climate is affecting my tree very intimately, you really could see climate change in even a single leaf of my tree. There's now so much CO2 in the atmosphere that it doesn't need to open those mouths. On the other side and on the underside of the leaf cold stone matter as much that meant it was growing faster and using less water to do it. In fact, at the Harvard Forest they were really surprised to learn that my tree, while it's 100 years old, is bench pressing carbon like a teenager. It's growing faster than it's been growing throughout the rest of its lifetime. In fact, the Red Oak at the Harvard Forest is sequestering carbon faster than at any time in the last twenty five years. Here's the other thing, that come autumn time, the weather was still fine. These growing seasons have become so supersized that the leaves were falling off my tree, even though they really could have still been further synthesizing. The frost is now so much later. It was coming just about Thanksgiving when previously had have been coming almost a month earlier. So winter was also getting squeezed. Winter is getting squeezed on both ends. Spring was coming earlier. Fall was coming later. These growing seasons now so long that they're actually outlasting the leaves.

[00:24:56] To me, that was disturbing. It really meant to me we now have two kinds of timing in nature. We have the seasons that are still in the ancient DNA of the trees and other living things. And we have the seasons made by us.

[00:25:13] But I don't want you to think that this was an ominous year. It was a beautiful year, closely observing the beauty of nature every single day, whether it was the spring, ephemeral flowers, the change in the autumn leaves, these fantastic mushrooms that would burst out, hearing those first frogs.

[00:25:32] These unfinished poems in the snow every morning, I used to love to go out and see what had happened overnight. To take the time to see even the beauty of a bark magnified by a single drop of rain. To learn how to notice, to take notes not only with a pen, but also maybe press a few flowers. I even climbed my tree.

[00:25:57] I thought, what the hell? I'm fifty five. I got health insurance. I'm not afraid of anything. Let's do this. And so I took lessons and I went up in my tree because I felt like if I'm going to write about my tree, I really need to feel it. I need to feel it move in the sky, river of wind, feel it pull my weight. It changed my relationship with the tree completely. And I have to

say, this was one of the best days of my life. This was the time I got to climb the tree and its full leaf of summer.

[00:26:26] And we packed a big picnic and my teachers surprised me with a hammock. And I spent quite a bit of time there, even writing some of the last sections of the book. So I think the thing that links David and I in our stories is it's really it's how we notice, it's how we listen for the stories that nature can tell us, whether it's in the stone or in the tree. Thank you.

[00:26:56] One of the questions that occurred to me, both in Lynda's remarks, but also in reading her book and also David's was the degree to which there were mentors and instructors and people out of history who inspired them.

[00:27:14] And I was struck by some of the conversations you had with the professors, and I was struck by your references to 19th century naturalists and how they were inspiring to you, David. And likewise, you, Lynda.

[00:27:32] And yet, at the same time, the naturalists who you've encouraged in your remarks to and you did it as well, engage, contemplate, pause, immerse yourself in the world around you and connect.

[00:27:49] One of the professors referred to phrenology as a squishy science. And it was discounted. And I and I immediately leaned forward. I was reading that. And here you, Barbara was one of your great heroes. And Audubon, likewise with a mixture of observations, gave us a legacy here. Would you comment? Both of you, on your feelings about the squishy-ness or the non-squishy-ness of being a naturalist?

[00:28:16] I think one of the great joys of what's happening right now in science is the rediscovery of this style of observation.

[00:28:22] What for a while was dismissed as just a hobby, maybe something that only women did, you know, or Dottie Gardeners. There's there's a real rediscovery now that these datasets that are out there, whether it's birding records or the bloom time of daffodils painted on a bar and going back twenty five years. This stuff is suddenly being rediscovered as for what it truly is, which is the gold, it's the granular understanding, the day to day experience, our lived experience of being in nature and that, you know, it doesn't all come out of a computer or some kind of model. This this observational science is suddenly being appreciated for what it

is. It's the. It's a way to see the fingerprint of climate change on the land. Not only that, it's the way to actually see what's going on in our world. I was out on a research boat recently on the outer coast with a scientist who was pitching a lot of very expensive gear with side.

[00:29:15] And these are sensors that they're putting out there to keep track of adult Chinook salmon as they're beginning their journey into the sea from the Columbia River. Why do they want to know that? Well, they're being paid by the Navy. So the Navy wants to know basically where the workers are. So hopefully they don't blow them up when they're testing. That's a whole other subject. But I love the fact that the scientists felt the need to know where they were. Well, instead of just modeling it or guessing he was putting a bunch of recording devices out there to literally track these fish, which had been stuck with a computer chip. So it's, you know, mad science for sure. But I love the humility, the understanding that they really didn't know what in the world was going on out in the ocean. And the only way to find out was to interrogate nature itself. And so I think these observational practices, the respect for actually knowing what's going on on the ground is regaining currency in mainstream science. But I would say most of us never let that go. And, you know, our lived experience is of a changing world. And, you know, if you're a gardener, if you're a birder, if you're a hiker, and I know all of you out there do some of these things, it's just undeniable how much things have changed and how fast they're changing in terms of the seasonal shifts that we see.

[00:30:34] David, a thought here.

[00:30:38] Yeah, I was thinking about what you're saying and particularly about the historical aspect of it. For me as a writer, what inspires me or what I'd love to do is the research aspect and going back and finding these records that people have as they've been out and describe things. Bartram, a good example, this early naturalist, one of the earliest naturalists in European naturalists in this country, and just the detailed notes. And to me it's about connection and it's about people paying attention and developing this relationship. And that's what you get. I think by being a squishy scientist, I have nothing against people who are labs because they're doing wonderful things. But to be out in the field and to feel it to me is such a magical thing. And I have never really been a practicing scientist, but I've always been out observing and paying attention and keeping notes. And like Lynda, it's it's that writing down the notes on a piece of paper. It sort of brings it to life and to be able to then go back and find the handwritten notes someone else took one hundred years ago or see it in their journal or read their letters that they wrote. It develops a relationship with them. It develops a relationship with place. And for me, it helps me find the stories that I think are that show that passion, and I agree with obviously all of what Lynda says in terms of understanding the knowledge and our understanding of how the world has changed. But getting those moments in time. It's just such a beautiful thing. And that's what I keep trying to do as a writer, is to try and pull in what they've done and continue to be an observer around me. And that, to me is the critical thing. When I'm

out with my wife, she's always sort of like, you saw what I said when I saw this and this and I mean one she doesn't see very well.

[00:32:26] But I'm always sure of looking up in. And to me, that's really important is to pay attention. And it's looking up. It's looking down. It's looking all the weird things around.

[00:32:35] It's slowing down and taking in the world. And that's, I'm getting inspired by people who did that when the world was a different place. On one level, but also very much a similar place. The world still out there.

[00:32:48] I had a great experience when I was at the Harvard Forest. One of the things I did was I went to Widener library and I checked out all of Henry David Thoreau journals. This took two very large sized bean bags to haul these back to the forest. I actually like his journals better than his finished work. There's a freshness about them and in the moment, quality. And every day while I was at the forest, I would crack open the journals and say, well, what was he doing on January 18th? And I had the experience one day.

[00:33:16] We had a very beautiful light, dry snow, and I went out as I did every morning for my walk. And I like to wear wool, Filson coat in the woods. That silence warm keeps me comfortable in any weather. And it's charcoal gray. And I had my sleeve out and the snowflakes were just perfectly defined, really, as if they were diamonds on a jeweler's black velvet case. And I thought, wow, look at the geometry that each one of these--is just, it's snowing geometry. And I went back and I was having my coffee or cocoa or, you know, this might have been anything, wine, bourbon.

[00:33:51] And I crack open and what does it say on that very day in the same geography? Thoreau says it's snowing geometry.

[00:33:59] And so to David's point about how the world is changed so much, but it's still the same world.

[00:34:04] I--I hold onto that.

[00:34:07] I hold on to that, because it is. You know, I write a lot about the dire situation of the orca and the salmon, one thing and another. But you know what?

[00:34:15] It's still the same beautiful world and it has these powerful, mysterious, dynamic, I think, unbeatable forces of life.

[00:34:25] Well, I agree with that. I was still.

[00:34:28] Struck by the remark, again, one of the professors who said that he was impatient with the conservationists reference to extinction.

[00:34:41] And that, well, after all, we are evolving, there's always been extinctions, which I think David's geological summaries provide real keen insight on.

[00:34:54] But while there are extinctions, these are dire signs and they are first alerts. The changes in the tree, which you described in your remarks, could likewise the suggestion of what's moving in this direction that those trees cannot evolve beyond looting insect invasion.

[00:35:14] And I see what you've written after I've read a kind of charging of more charging of my batteries in terms of evolution is indeed and, you know, three point five billion years.

[00:35:28] And that face of that building is quite a message.

[00:35:32] And again, do you want to comment further on any of those matters of evolutionary insights that you gain?

[00:35:41] In course, you read not only the journals of Thoreau, but you were reading diaries and people who were there and watching the farm and the dependency of that farm on the very substrate of the rock that was on and how that's evolved.

[00:35:53] You want to comment any further on any of that?

[00:35:56] Well, not. OK, then I'll keep talking, yeah.

[00:35:59] I mean, I do what I do want to say something here about this tension you brought up between. Well, you know, life goes on and something else will move into that space. Eastern Hemlock is dying, but black virtue is surging in.

[00:36:11] But that doesn't mean that we're not witnessing a hemlock hospice in the northeastern woods. I mean, it's I think it is right to grieve. I do. The day that I don't care if a baby orca doesn't make it is the day I don't want to be here. I know that life goes on, but sometimes it's also important to acknowledge it's our fault. What we're watching right now is the first existential extinction.

[00:36:37] This extinction is happening because of us. That has to be owned. It has to be said out loud. It has to be confronted.

[00:36:47] Well, David, and we're going to open it to questions, so I hope we have some primed. But I wanted to ask you again because I found in reading your accounts. Well, both of you did the same thing, once you immerse yourself in a particular place and time, you found yourself in a historical setting as well. And in your case, you went and described the process of the various stones that you, chapter by chapter treated and the way in which those stones, in fact, influenced humankind. And that I found fascinating because I took a little geology. But I now feel much better steeped in understanding the evolution of slate, which I found after I, after I read one particular section, that my God I had no idea what was essentially behind the composition of this stone that made it so special.

[00:37:49] And when I was engaged in it, and engaging in it.

[00:37:52] Yeah. Did you have anything you really got into every one of those stones?

[00:37:56] As far as I could see from Carrara all the way back to Slate and of course, sandstone, limestone. Yeah, I.

[00:38:03] I see the world through a geologic lens. And to me, the reason to see it that way is it's understanding the world that's around me. And it's the world places I go hiking. I'm always

out there. You know, when you're out hiking like that, people send me all the time. Question like what is that rock or what is this? What is that? And I think we have this innate desire to understand the planet that we live on. And to me, as you've said, geology is the foundation. It's the way things connect with depending on the geology will affect the plants, will affect where animals live. And it's that inner relationship. And so in doing the book, I purposely chose a bunch of different types of rock so that I could explore these different stories because they're just amazing.

[00:38:45] The fact that you can look at a rock and understand what the pressure and temperature was, that Carrara marble started as a limestone, little critters dying on a sea two hundred million years ago. And then this micro continent runs into Sardinia a fifth, 20 million years ago and piles up all this rock. And then down deep down, it gets baked and altered.

[00:39:09] And all of a sudden you have Moses and David and the P.A. job, these amazing rocks, these amazing sculptures that Michelangelo and many other people did, it's because of that geology. And it's how we understand to me our will. My relationship to this, the earth that's around us. And it just makes it more interesting. I mean, I've long said I watch a bit of television. But to me, the stories of a planet is way more interesting than anything that's out there. And there's a lot of good sex if you sort of read the stones right. Just you know, I know people are interested in that part of the story these days, but it's really just a fabulous way to connect to the world. And I sense that from friends who are not geologists and write me and go, what am I looking at? We all want to know what are we looking at and geology is a great way to try and get into that to develop that relationship.

[00:40:04] Lynda's in the top of the tree and I remember reflection over hearing things that you normally would not have heard. And you're around the stone and some of it.

[00:40:18] Finished out of the ground. Do--do you ever.

[00:40:23] this is not intended to be metaphysical, but it's--it's an honest question. Do you ever feel that there's a communication in the central way with auditory experiences that you can't really define as much as you just feel?

[00:40:39] Absolutely.

[00:40:40] Ok. Well—certainly—could you elaborate?

[00:40:43] I'm sure my tree knows my presence. I'm positive. I spent so much time with it. Um, in it. Around it. Under it. On it. I'm sure that when I come back and visit, when I haven't been there in a while, I'm sure it knows up there. It's funny. You know, there's this camera on the tree all the time. You can look at it. If you go to the Harvard Forest Web page and you search for Pheno Cam, which is spelled P-H-E-N-O-C-A-M, you'll see they've got these things, different places of the forest. And there's one right on the witness tree and it's called witness tree cam. I look at it all the time. I watch my tree when I'm in the newsroom. Check out what kind of day it's having. You know, there's a picture uploaded every half hour of daylight hours and the temperatures there.

[00:41:27] And I can see, oh, it's losing its first leaves or its first buds, you know, I keep track of it and I feel connected to it. And I guess I just feel like it's a living thing. And I just believe we live in a vast intelligence since my friend Lyanda Lynn helped so beautifully puts it. And so, yes, I do believe that there's a connection.

[00:41:51] And the fact that I don't understand its language to me is insignificant.

[00:41:57] No, I don't know.

[00:41:58] I mean, for me, it's I've it's maybe in my own direction that I feel good with the rocks that are out there, I enjoy touching them. I'm always reaching out and touching buildings and and--and the geology. I like the textures, whether there is communication or not.

[00:42:15] But there's a, there's an enjoyment.

[00:42:17] And I don't mind being selfish and enjoying that and deriving pleasure from being--touching the rock. And again, when I tell people to touch this three and a half billion year old rock, I'm always pleased. So many people do go up and do it. Maybe they're just humoring me. But it is it. You just reach back and you do. You do have sort of a sense. I have a sense more with that than any--any other rock. And again, it's just a great age. Just the fact that there is something that old is in downtown Seattle. And we walk by it every day.

[00:42:49] But I want to ask you that question. You're a sculptor and you very often harvest these rocks yourself from local rivers with your own hands, and then you bring the shape into being with your own hands.

[00:42:59] Do you feel?

[00:43:00] Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, definitely. Yeah. Some years ago, our mutual friend Ivan Doig and myself thought about proposing an NPR program on the radio because I got into discussions probably 20, 25 years ago with Ivan on the sound of stone.

[00:43:19] And each stone has a different sound to me. You apply a chisel and you hear things in it. You don't hear the purity of the stone in the sense of what it is without rough edges until it's polished in some way and then it sings. I said Ivan it sings. Basalt's different, Carrara's different, sandstone, limestone.

[00:43:44] And we put it together. I recorded it and sent it off. Never heard back. But that was OK. It was it was an experience that we both enjoyed. And I think we both related to. So, yes, definitely. It's true for me, it's a central experience tactically, auditory and olfactory. You smell the sulfur of the sea and some of the stones that you break and cut you also, of course, the stone is gonna tell you if there's an imperfection. Yeah. And you want to know ahead of time, you want to finish that sculpture and have two or three pieces.

[00:44:23] Well, they did. They discourage me from taking a hammer to the building. So I'm not able. But there's a building if you've ever there's a building in L.A. called the Getty. I'm sure you've heard of it, it's this big building. And it's made a travertine, which is a type of limestone forms and hot springs. It's what the Coliseum is made out of. And if you go, all the panels are suspended slightly because of earthquake so that they don't rub against each other during an earthquake. And if you knock every stone has a different sound quality. And I talked to the architect about that and he said, oh, I never noticed that. It wasn't Meier. It was Paladino, the guy who assisted. But I don't think Richard Meier would either. But yeah, I mean, it is they all have different qualities.

[00:45:07] There's a limestone in the desert that when you walk across it, has this musical quality that none of the sandstone has there. So, yeah, it's there is a music. There is a tap calling.

[00:45:18] It is it is time for questions. And we have some.

[00:45:22] I saw a hand go up right over here. Yeah.

[00:45:25] I actually have more of a comment that might provoke some other comment. It strikes me that David in your work with stone, we're talking about the enormity of time that we really can't grasp very well. We are, we--we have to end up touching something to get a feel or maybe if we're lucky, we'll hear metal ring against its surface. And in your work

[00:45:58] Captures us at a moment when we cannot believe.

[00:46:05] That time we're in right now is so highly fraught. Because we grew up.

[00:46:17] 50, 60, 40. 30 years ago. And it always was.

[00:46:23] And so we're stuck in this place where we don't have, as humans the ability to deal with these extremes of time in ways that we really need. Thoughts about that?

[00:46:39] Oh, I have to fashion a means to do so. Yeah.

[00:46:42] Yeah, I think that a centeredness in that confusion is really important. And I think it's okay to be bewildered by it, but also to let the center hold. By going out into nature and reckoning. Confronting that fact that the things we thought always would be because they always were. Well, maybe not. And I think it's like any other reckoning. That's the first step. And I think one of the reasons I wrote this book was I really wanted people to take seriously their emotions as they are in nature and feeling a little bewildered about what's different. And it's OK to say, OK, it really is different, isn't it? It's not just me. It's not just this year. There's something wrong here. And so to me, that is the center is our place on the earth in our day to day. And with one another and standing up for what we actually see. So, you know, it's not just an opinion. It's a fact. And I see it in front of me.

[00:47:52] Yeah, I think that to me, the idea of deep time in some sense gives me some hope.

[00:47:58] I mean, I've seen the way the planet has changed and it's constantly changing and it gets sort of get back to what you're saying, Tony, I mean, we still have to be aware of that that change happens. And, yes, it's going to happen, but we are so much part of it now. I think as we've introduced ourselves into--into the global change that's going on. And for me, I'd like to see understand to see how--how is the planet reacted over time. We've had these great extinction. So, I mean, in the long run, if you take the geologic time view of the world, then you can think whatever we do, whatever happens, happens. But I still think you recognize, I recognize that this change occurs.

[00:48:40] But we still need to be aware and we still need to, as people been we've been saying is to--to act and react to it to under to learn from how the planets changed in the past, to maybe give us some lessons on how we can learn to deal with it now. And unfortunately, it's such a different those timescale is probably one of the greatest challenges we live with right now.

[00:49:00] It's a great point you made really beautiful point. A unique, unique place.

[00:49:06] And I think each of us will fashion a way to confront the challenge. Look back in time. Human history challenges unique to the

[00:49:16] The civilization and the community or whatever it might have been, ours is global. And I just think we've had this conversation at a dinner table last year and we pick what we can do with some authenticity, honesty and--and do it when we can do it or we make time to do it. And each of us pitching in in our own way does make a difference. And you know, mine. For good or worse, I find myself confronting denial.

[00:49:51] There in the problem--somebody else did it. Here we are. And you know, the old pogo cliché ad that rather than just admitting to it, saying, all right, what can I do about it?

[00:50:05] And I this is what I'm doing about it.

[00:50:08] I'm very personal, modest levels, larger levels. And so, yeah, that it's fine question. OK. Other questions from around the audience here. Yes. Up there. Yeah.

[00:50:23] I think the idea you're expressing of what have we learned in—what? I couldn't hear that at all.

[00:50:30] What? Would you summarize the concern and then comment, please.

[00:50:35] I always had partially to do with--with. I think you're saying, of, what have we learned and how do we, um, how can we unlearn what we've done? But I mean, I think what--what are we learning? And I think to me, one of the things that I mean, Lynda and I've talked about this, I've been working on a book about Puget Sound for the last couple of years. And Lynn and I both have talked about this idea that you can talk to people and they'll tell you that all Puget Sound is just totally screwed. We're in dire shape, but both of us have this belief that we've made this change. And to me, it's very important that Puget Sound is much cleaner than it was 30 years ago. And so we have learned from our mistakes. And in terms of I don't that's learning, unlearning. But we are. We do have this better understanding and we do again, getting back to what Tony said.

[00:51:21] We have this responsibility. We are at a critical point with the sound. If we are, are we going to keep making it better or we to let it go back to what we thought was the right way. And I think we at that--that break, that tipping point, to use that overused phrase. But we have learned and I think we are benefiting. If that's what that's what you're.

[00:51:42] Yeah, it's a nebulous. This. How about that?

[00:51:48] Yes. Up in the corner, yes.

[00:51:52] Nice and loud. What became of all the marble, and the Standard Oil, what replace it with and I thought I heard that in mining, before in Italy they used up all the marble. OK.

[00:52:08] So I will answer those in the order they ask. So what happened to the marble from the Standard Oil building? They--the forty four thousand panels because, I've nothing against lawyers, but lawyers got involved and the lawyers said you can't reuse any of those panels because one might fall and hurt somebody. So they crushed up almost all the forty four thousand panels and used it for landscape purposes.

[00:52:35] At the Standard Oil refinery in Indiana, a very small percentage of it was made into trinkets. And then another very small percentage was used to line a pond at a university in Illinois and all the fish died.

[00:52:50] Now, it had nothing. They discovered it had nothing to do with the lines. The marble is marble is limestone in limestone. If you've ever eaten a Tums, you've eaten limestone because it's just calcium carbonate. It's just calcite. And that's the piece of marble I have from the building as I found one of the professors who did that. The second they replaced it with a granite from Mount Airy granite, which is one of those states out, those states out in the east somewhere. Pennsylvania, I think nothing against Pennsylvania again. And the final question of how much should they've been mining Carrara?

[00:53:25] The entire mountains outside of the town of Carrara are made of marble as if we were in downtown Seattle, looked across the Olympics and 365 days a year. It was white because the mountains had were--what you're seeing is marble. And yes, they have removed lots of it and much of it. Now you are sitting on because marble goes, the calcite is used in plastics. So much of the marble it comes out of Carrara. Michelangelo's marble is used purely for industrial purposes. They blow it up, crushed it into small bits, into powder and use it.

[00:54:00] There's my. And toothpaste. Up there? Yes. Makes for interesting talk. This is a little bit off the topic but I'm wondering about naturals. The training that getting they be under a lot of pressure because of.

[00:54:21] Of their interests. Your interaction with them. I'm curious about this whole science of being a naturalist. Sure. Well, I would say there's a phonology boom. I would say there's a naturalist boom. I'm--I'm really excited about the education that's going on in the schools. There are a lot of public education teachers who have taken this to heart and are actually teaching phonology programs using trees in New England. And they have phonology programs that a lot of the Audubon chapters here in Seattle, they're nature programs in the Seattle public parks, public education programs. There's quite a lot of this going on. There's more of it all the time, it seems to me. So it and of course, because of the whole digital aspect of our lives these days, there's Web sites. There's one called Bud Burst that's all about following trees through the seasonal year that's attracted thousands and thousands of people. So it's it's very much alive and well. I think, in fact, it's been rediscovered in a great, great way, which I'm excited about.

[00:55:23] And now it's even on Twitter. But seriously, I think the teaching of nature education in schools and in the civic spaces is getting better all the time and better than it's been. I think we've kind of forgotten for a while and missed that it's really enjoying a resurgence.

[00:55:42] We had Washington state had one of the finest environmental education networks in the country.

[00:55:51] And the teacher dedication was extraordinary.

[00:55:56] I had an opportunity to work closely with it for a good period of time. The materials that were developed by the teachers for the students were taken to the field. Support to the educational programs were exceptional. Field trips, extended stays on the ground, study all over the state. It diminished under a different set of superintendents. Other priorities came forward. The legislature changed, the funding was removed and the program was still extant, but again, limited and it began to lose momentum. I still would argue that Washington has one of the most informed citizenry around when it comes to some of the details and an upbeat, hopeful view of what's ahead. Accepting the challenges because of what those kids got credit the teachers, please support them. And the outdoor environmental education programs that you have in your various districts are part of an answer to some of the things that came up tonight and education in general. That's right. Yes, ma'am.

[00:57:15] I was just wondering if you have actually found any of that tree observation in the Northwest. I have not. Or do you know of anyone who's doing that sort of thing in the park?

[00:57:21] Yeah. They're doing this sort of work in Audubon. They've got a phonology program going at Seward Park.

[00:57:31] Love those people.

[00:57:33] I think that for myself, when I finished the book, I came back and I went back to work and there was this net pen break. Remember that? The salmon escaped, then the orca thing happened and I just kind of went on in another direction. But if you're interested in picking up this kind of style of observation and learning it yourself, there are definitely opportunities out there. Audubon is doing a great job with it.

[00:57:56] And Citizen science. Citizen science, it's burgeoning. Yes.

[00:58:02] So the question was 100 year old oak tree. That's not very old. Did you pick it because of all the facts and basically data that you'd have to work with? I'll tell you, when I went back east to write a book about a tree, my editors at the paper all cracked up. Tell us again why you're leaving the Pacific Northwest to go to the East Coast to write a book about a tree. I would I would come home for vacations. And my husband, Doug and I would go for a walk, say, in the Snohomish Valley. And here it be this giant spectacular trees if they can. Huh? Yeah. What am I doing back there again? The answer to your question is exactly what you thought. I was at the Harvard Forest for the science of the data that was there and the access to, you know, these deep time records, granular, beautiful work.

[00:58:44] And also to be in that intellectual environment with tree physiologist, anthropologists, biologists. I mean, it was a very special opportunity to learn.

[00:58:55] Oak trees. It depends, you know, on their site on, on the kind of life they have, you know, three hundred years, nothing like our Doug Fir grandees. You know it. So it's a different deal. Definitely. On the other hand, I want to stick up for that New England deciduous canopy. It's special stuff. And I miss bugs. I love the sounds of the insects and I love the four season change. And there's a lot to be very excited about.

[00:59:21] Yes, those more intimate, little voluptuous forests. But, man, they they've they they can capture your heart and your soul.

[00:59:31] I do have one of those 10 books. That's right.

[00:59:39] I really find them. Some of the more interesting things are in the relationship between the quarry and the final product. Wherever the project is. But nowadays, that's still a consideration.

[00:59:54] Meaning. So the question is the relationship between the quarry and it's going to be nowadays, it's it--I've talked to architects and there is this worldwide availability of stone much greater than it ever was. I mean, I'm sure you're all where. I mean, look at your granite countertops are from all over around the world. We do have this. But there is a relationship between builders and quarries. It's a little bit less so. I mean, I've talked to architects and I would ask them so where did this stone come from? Oh, we have that especially manufactured

for us. It's a limestone. You didn't have it manufactured you bought it. Or how did you choose that stuff? Well, we were we were drinking some wine. And he said, well, that's a pretty good stone.

[01:00:36] And so I think it's there's the intimacy is maybe a little bit different in part because you now they're these books, you just flip. There's like, oh, well, I want a blue, I want a green.

[01:00:44] I want a red and I want three chocolates over there. So I think it's a little bit less so. And I also think that very few architects and engineers have any clue about that the stone that they use. It's just it's pretty. It fits a design thing. And when you tell them and I take I mean, I've taken architects out and taken engineers out on tours, like, really? I didn't know that.

[01:01:05] I mean, I asked one, well, how old is it? And they said, it's as old as the hills. Well, they were right. That's where those hills were. But yeah, I don't think it's serious.

[01:01:15] You know, as you point out, your book is that this is regionalism, which gives you something to talk about as far as your project, your house. It came from here. Right. Right. Yeah. The brownstone. So, you know, all those things used to all be local. You know, that has completely gone away.

[01:01:37] Yeah. You're right. I mean used to all be local stone was what they started with and then they expand out and it could be from anywhere in the world and people have no clue.

[01:01:45] You can get local stone. It's here in local. It's harder, though. Well, that's where I got all mine out of the river. Right. But when I was doing the well, we got that parking lot. Well, I did that, too. Yeah. There was a talc mill that had dividers of rock.

[01:02:02] They closed the mill down. I helped them clear the lot.

[01:02:05] But we--we would go and collect stone out of the Skagit--carving stone and tumbled stone was particularly interesting because it already had a shape going for it.

[01:02:15] But when I did a piece for the Redmond new not some 19, I guess 1999, the Redmond Public Library. I submitted some drawings. And when you submit drawings in a competitive moment, you try to make them as compelling as possible.

[01:02:36] So I use the stone as basically the most compelling part. So I said, well, I've got a piece of blue granite that's nine feet high, four feet across and two feet thick.

[01:02:50] And on the top will be a group of wisdom seekers raven's at different intervals and they liked it.

[01:02:59] And now the next thing was to get the stone. I went out to Marenakos, a supplier out here and asked him about cutting the proportions. Well, we'll do it for you. And of course, to cut it was greater than the budget for the whole sculpture. That wasn't, that was over. I was over Bob Simmons, a neighbor of mine. And I decided to take the architects and the engineer. That was the architect. And an engineer there at the White River has a quarry. And a lot of these are semi erratic, glacier born, tumbling kinds of things showing up there. Boy, if you've--you've been there. Oh, my God. The face of that quarry goes up forever. And they have machines that wouldn't fit into this room to get the rock out of the face. So I was away. This is the place. Let's see what we can find. We drove all around it and to shorten the story, I practically gave up. And as we're going out, I looked over to the side of the road and I said, hey, who got that piece?

[01:04:00] Looks pretty good. And the guy says, you want it, it's yours. It is? Seven, seven and a half feet high.

[01:04:10] No, nine feet high. Four feet wide, two feet thick. Wow. It's uncanny.

[01:04:18] I had dreamed it up about two, six months before. And then we found the stone. It's there today. You can take my word for it or see it. If you're out in Redmond, go to the library.

[01:04:29] But it was remarkable. And the stone definitely set the tone. And the moment. Stone has that presence that is undeniable.

[01:04:39] And I actually just came from this area. Yeah. Yes. Yeah. And I think people I mean, that's what's so important. You're right. Special, right?

[01:04:49] Yeah. I mean I have a paper. Yeah. The book, I make this point. It wouldn't be great if we were using. Stone more. But yeah, it's just harder. Everything has changed and sadly of me, I go someplace and there's these massive blocks from that arrived from China. And you think, how could you do that? Mean that the Getty Museum shipped shipload after shipload after shipload from Italy. And the part of the reason they chose it as they wanted a stone that made a connection to place. They didn't use any local rock, but it's all from, from Italy, he said.

[01:05:21] Yeah. The blue granite piece would be cut for me and exceeded my sculpture budget weighed about weighs about sixty five hundred pounds.

[01:05:33] And when we got it up to weigh it, I said, OK, what is this going to cost me? Eighty five dollars.

[01:05:45] Twenty years ago. Eighty five dollars.

[01:05:48] Local stone. Now what it took to get it to my studio. Well, that's another story. But. But that's what it was.

[01:05:56] Yeah, that would have been the same cost regardless of where you go. You're right. It was what? That would have been the same cost no matter where you got this, the shipping, right? Yeah.

[01:06:04] Well, yeah. Yeah. But hauling it too. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. Yeah. OK. Up in the back.

[01:06:10] Yeah. So wind and stone and the local stone stop being regional that that they were using it. It was pretty early on. I mean you see the main rocks that were used in this area. There are three sandstone quarries, one in Wilcox and one in Tenino and one up and Chuckanut and then the index granite quarry. Those were all more or less by the 20s. Stop being. They were being used, but they started bringing things in. Then there was a real slow down of stone that wasn't used that much at once

[01:06:40] we restarted buildings in the 80s, really, when you started to get towers that had a lot of stone. All of that was, of course, international. But it's--it's been decades. I mean, the quarry in Tenino is open, Chuckanut's been closed for years. Index been closed for years. So it's been a long time since we were using the local material. But you can still get it first. First, very specialized purposes. You can get it some from Tenino quarry. There's one person I think is doing it.

[01:07:09] Why do we take two more questions and then we want to have time for signing books? Yeah. And so, Kate.

[01:07:20] Is there a correlation between plants and botany? Our plants are plants.

[01:07:23] Yes, there is definitely a correlation between plants and botany. And I want to clarify, that's why I write about geology.

[01:07:31] She writes about trees. There is definitely correlation in geology and plants. But yeah, I mean, you see that one of the great examples is there is a type of rock called Serpentine or Serpentinite, and it's a very calcium and magnesium rich rock. And you see it in there's a classic hike up in the up Navajo Mountain and off the Tiena way. And the plants growing there are completely different from--from 50 feet away because it's such an unusual soil that comes from there.

[01:07:59] And I also remember being and when I lived in southern Utah for a while, there was a one of the rock layers out there was even though opinions and juniper trees grew everywhere. There was one that they really seemed to grow especially large on because whatever the chemistry was--was helped. So, yes, there is a direct relationship and there's also a bigger scale relationship in terms of how the rock or roads is an area where a tree can grow because there's a site that's protected, it's north facing or south facing. So yeah it's very, very inter--.

[01:08:34] It's a beautiful interrelationship. Thanks to. Yes, Mister?

[01:08:40] This question for each of you and David, is there a stone that to you signifies the Northwest and why? And Lynda, is there a tree that epitomizes Northwest values?

[01:08:56] And what is that and why? Well, I definitely know what I think. CEDAR. So the reason the cedar to me epitomizes the northwest value is because to the native peoples cedar it--it was a tree that signified both utility but also generosity. And to me, when I think about the Northwest in its essential modesty, its purposeful character and its generosity, the cedar. It's the tree. It is also the tree that for me, with its with its grace, its architecture, its beauty and any light, any weather, it has a kind of grace to it that I think also reflects the character of the Northwest in it. It's a tree that across time millennia. It's always been essential to people. And it's interesting to me. You know, at the newspaper we just recently read redid our entire publication platform.

[01:09:54] And you know what we named it?


[01:09:54] Cedar. Mm hmm. You know who named it? Me.

[01:10:02] David. Well.

[01:10:06] I guess Mount Rainier, I mean, the the the the volcano to me is very much northwestern to me.

[01:10:15] Yes, sir. The first part the question was, do I have one that represents the Northwest?

[01:10:19] And to me, I guess, as I said, the volcano, because we think of this landscape that we live in. What really impresses me about it is how young this place is and how dynamic it is. The five volcanoes in Washington State are all under a million years old. And we live in this incredibly dynamic place and those volcanoes they're--they're just babies. I mean, you go to the East Coast. Nothing's happened on the East Coast for 200 million years. Geologically, it's just really sort of dead out there. Yeah. Maybe a couple of little things. But here there's always something going on and that and Rainier really sort of exemplifies at that something, you know, a thousand or seven thousand years ago, fifty seven hundred years ago, it blew the top thousand feet off, created a landslide. A Lahar. That you've covered the entire region. So yeah, it's that dynamic aspect of it. To me I guess would symbolize the--my understanding of the Northwest and that someday is going to kick the crap out of us. So. And we live in a geologic landscape and we always have to be aware of that. We can't live that way every day. But it is definitely part of what makes this a place that I think people like. I don't think we would want it other way, any other way. I think we value that the potential for significant change.



[01:11:43] But that's not a rock.

[01:11:45] He asked you what rock, what rock? Mount Rainier is a rock. It's just a big rock.

[01:11:51] I can help them out a little bit. Yeah.

[01:11:55] There's basalt associated with Rainier, I believe. A little bit. Yeah. And basalt to me is--is my northwest stone. The. It occurs in the Cascades, but particularly on the Columbia Plateau. Right. And the column, and the basalt that you see on the horizon in the extraordinary forms that exist in different times of the day.

[01:12:21] The exploitation in the best sense of the word of all the species that are over there using those cliffs. And it carves beautifully. It does, requires a pretty, pretty hard tool to get it to yield a bit.

[01:12:37] But it's an amazing stone. I really cherish it.

[01:12:42] Well, listen, we want to thank you for being a great audience. And they are here and if you got some more questions. They're ready to go over here at the tables, so thanks again.

[01:12:58] This podcast was presented by the Seattle Public Library and Foundation and made possible by your contributions to the Seattle Public Library Foundation. Thanks for listening.



