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James Anthony Schnur : USF 50th (2006) Anniversary Oral History Project: interview by Lucy D. Jones

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Lucy D. Jones

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USF Florida Studies Center
Oral History Program
USF 50th History Anniversary Project

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TRANSCRIPTION

J: Today is November 4, 2003. My name is Lucy Jones. I'm a graduate assistant for the Florida Studies Center. Today we're continuing a series of interviews with USF faculty, students, staff, and alumni in order to commemorate fifty years of university history. Today's interview takes place in the Special Collections reading room in the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library on USF St. Petersburg campus. I'm here today with Jim Schnur, who came to USF in 1986 as a student. Currently Jim is assistant librarian, Special Collections, at the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library as well as an adjunct instructor of history at USF St. Petersburg. Good afternoon and thank you for being here today.

S: Thanks, Lucy. I first came to USF St. Petersburg in the fall of 1986 as a student. My first actual visit to the campus was a little bit earlier that year. I was getting ready to graduate from St. Petersburg Junior College and was interested in staying in the area. [I'm a] native of St. Petersburg; I've lived here my entire life. I knew that St. Petersburg had a campus. I knew from going to concerts and things that the Tampa campus was there and big, so I just drove down. The first person I talked with here was Cyndie

Collins, who is now head of advising. At that time, she was the advisor for the College of Education. I came back in the fall of 1986, started working on a degree in social science education and another degree in history. The campus in 1986 compared to 2003 was a much different place. I think all USF campuses have an issue of parking. That seems to be the buzz word. Maybe fifty years from now, some future researcher will have the problem solved. Today, we have a parking crisis on the St. Petersburg campus. Space is always at a premium. When I came back in 1986, parking wasn't that big of a deal because most of the classes we offered here, it was an upper-level campus, juniors and seniors. Most of the people who took classes here like myself get off work at five and pray that by ten-till- six there was a parking space somewhere nearby. Parking was only a real issue after about five o'clock. During the day it was fairly empty. It was one of those situations where most of the offices were open eight to five and most of the students were here five to ten. It was a different environment. Class sizes were very small. One of the things that attracted me to the University of South Florida [was] it had an excellent reputation. I did some time at the University of Tampa as an undergrad starting out. I had the private college experience. I also went to St. Petersburg College and took a degree there so I had the public institution experience. When I came here to the St. Petersburg campus in 1986, it was like the best of all worlds. I had the university that was a public institution with notably lower tuition than the private institutions, but yet still had the benefit of a small campus, almost like a liberal arts campus. When I started taking classes here, what I found was that over a short period of time, I fell in love with the campus. The environment is great, the faculty was wonderful. I did a lot of time

over in Tampa. I took a lot of classes over in Tampa. I'm not one of the people who believes that St. Petersburg is the only place in the world to go. I think that you need to go out and broaden yourself. I think that when my degree said the University of South Florida, I was proud that I had taken advantage of all the resources and all the places. At the time I started here, I think there was a general feeling among people on the St. Petersburg campus that they were very distant from Tampa. There was that aloofness. Tampa generally looked at us as a kind of, oh, they're way out there somewhere, and occasionally they come and visit us. It was a different environment. When I first came to campus, I started my degree in social sciences education, which by the way, I never finished. I jumped to history soon after that and stayed there. I could walk down the hallway in what is now Davis Hall, it was then Bayboro Hall, and within forty feet of each other, I could talk to a geographer, a historian, a political science professor, an education professor, [a] business [professor]. One of the things that really struck me about this campus, aside from its beauty, was the interdisciplinary focus of the faculty, that you saw a lot of cross- discussions among faculty. The advantage to being small was the advantage that you didn't get separate buildings where there were separate little worlds where people could cloister themselves. If you go down to your cafeteria you would often see a couple of the psychology professors like Bob Fowler and Joy Klingman sitting with Harry Schaleman who was a geographer or Ray Arsenault who was in history, and you knew that they talked with one another regularly. You also knew that there was that sense of camaraderie. One of the big differences from then to now is that when I first started here, the campus was a little bit smaller. The city was in the

process, at the time, of buying some of the land where the activity center, the Snell and Williams House, and some of the things off to the periphery are. The campus was growing at that time. When you came onto campus, one of the first things that you saw as you came to where the Florida Center for Teachers is today, were two old houses - the Potter House and the Black House - that were these beautiful historical structures. Unfortunately, they were beyond being able to be saved. Most of the classes were in what is now Davis Hall; it used to be called Bayboro Hall, and Coquina Hall. Down on the peninsula where the marine science building and the joint- use are, there were the old maritime station barracks. My favorite place to take classes was in what was called the “B” building. The A building was where the marine science people were all located. That was the original maritime headquarters. B building was where the barracks were during much of the maritime base history. By the time I got here in the late 1980s, they had one of the parts of the B building that was still standing. First of all, going up the stairs, it was a rickety old building. There were more termites in that one building than there were students on the campus. It was great because it was this kind of sense. You had these earth-tone musty rugs that were in the building from the 1960s or 1970s. You had this pool hall area that was an information commons and pre-computer information commons where people would get together and socialize between classes. It was a wonderful place to be. Classes were very small. Again, one of the benefits of coming over to St. Petersburg compared to a lot of the Tampa classes, is that generally the numbers of students in a classroom were small. Of course, that didn’t stop certain professors from getting their groupies. Probably the best example [of this] is one

[professor] who is no longer with us, unfortunately, Harry Schaleman, who is a geographer. Professor Schaleman came here, I believe around 1968 or 1970. Professor Schaleman, for many years, was involved with a number of things on campus, including the lecture series and other activities; the Bayboro Geographic Society, which was a student organization. Schaleman's classes used to be filled. What would happen is we had, what was very popular in St. Petersburg, were seats that seniors could come in and audit classes. Schaleman would have these groupies of seniors. They may have taken a class with him on European geography ten years ago and they want to take it again. Again, I think that's one of the things that you really saw about the campus at that time that was so distinct. The faculty that you had here, not all of them had Ph.D.'s. Many of them had master's degrees that didn't complete their doctorate. Professor Schaleman, for example, was a person that had a master's in geography and did some post-master's work. The irony is today, if he were to apply for the old job he had, he probably couldn't get it because he doesn't have the Ph.D. But boy, could that guy teach. If you came to campus, most of the time that you saw people was in the evenings, Monday through Thursday. Weekends were fairly quiet. Again, the library was a big center activity and the pool and the sailing club at the Bayboro Harbor. Other than that, it was a different environment. It wasn't a twenty-four-seven campus the way that it's starting to become today. Really by the first four or five years when I was here as a student, what I began to do was get into the classes. [I] took a lot of classes here. One other reason St. Petersburg was much more palatable and much more enjoyable for a person who lives in this part of Pinellas County; I lived in central Pinellas County. This is before the new Howard

Frankland Bridge opened. What is now the 1960's span that currently is eastbound into Tampa used to be a four-lane monstrosity. It made malfunction-junction look like a picnic. To get to Tampa from anywhere in Largo south and Pinellas County, for a five-thirty or six o'clock class, if you weren't on the bridge by three-thirty, you had no guarantee that you were going to make it. You had the obligatory twenty drives around the parking lot in Tampa by the social building or wherever you parked just to get to class. It was easier from a St. Petersburg perspective to come here where parking was relatively abundant and parking decals were not that expensive and take classes here and go over to Tampa on the weekends and take advantage of those resources like the library being open late and stuff like that. I finished my bachelor's degree in December, 1988 in history. I started in the master's program. At that point I decided to make an important professional decision. During my first couple of years here at USF, I was working full-time during the day in dropout prevention in the Pinellas County School System. I made the decision when I received a graduate-fellowship, a small stipend, to quit the day job and put it all on the line and go for a master's degree in history, knowing, of course, that there are tons of jobs waiting for people with master's degrees in history. That said, I knew that I loved the discipline and I thought that I could decide down the road what career path I would take. Over the first year or so that I started to do that, I was very close to a number of faculty members here on campus. As a beginning graduate student I had the opportunity to do an oral history interview with former Governor Lee Roy Collins of Florida. I told professor Schaleman about that and he said, Jim, you need to go and give a talk for the campus lecture series. I didn't know what that was. I knew that

they had the lectures every Wednesday at noon that were free that a lot of community people came to and a lot of students, too. I said, sure. So me, mister I've-never-given-a-public-speech-in-my-life, who exempted out of the speech requirement because I was before the Gordon Rule of the speech requirement at St. Petersburg college; I was so lucky. He gave me a three-month notice. It was like the impending date. I started to look for the word toastmasters in the telephone directory and got a little concerned when I got into toastmasters [and saw other people] shaking the glass of water even more than I was nervous. The date came, and it was in 1990. I gave this talk in front of a number of people about my interview with Governor Collins and about Florida history. Before that, that was really my first foray into Florida. Most of my research at the undergrad level [and] most of my studies were on European history. I did very little American. All of a sudden, it clicked. When I got to meet Governor Collins, I was probably one of the last people to interview him before he passed away. He passed away a couple of months after I interviewed him. What made the interview very tough for me was that he was talking about a number of things that he was in a very reflective stage in his life. It was wonderful. Back to USF though. After I gave the talk, I met a number of people that I had seen around campus but didn't know, like Sudsy Tschiderer and a number of others. Within a very short period of time, maybe eight or nine months after that first talk, I was working as a student assistant at the activities center right after it opened and working here in the library and working in the Tampa library for a little bit. The next thing I knew, I became chair of the lecture series. It's like, when it rains, it pours. It was great. I had opportunities here that I wouldn't have taken advantage of had I been on the main

campus in Tampa. I wouldn't have spoken, even though there might have only been five people in the room at the Marshall Center, I probably wouldn't have done what had I been asked over there because I would have been a nervous wreck. Here, I knew the campus well enough. I saw a lot of the seniors and the community people who came to the lectures on a regular basis. It was a very safe and great place to learn. From that, I became mister introducer to all these events. Over the next couple of years [I] was either the chair or vice-chair or historian or archivist or whatever you want to call it of the lecture series. We did a number of symposiums. We did Spain in 1992 to commemorate the five-hundredth anniversary of the arrival of Columbus and the issues that that brought about. [We] did a number of other countries culminating with our last symposium, which was, ironically, on Florida. We did this great number of programs. What was really cool with the lecture series and I think one thing that I'd like to get into the record, is that this was a student-run organization. We received about \$8,000 to \$11,000 a year in student government money. With that, we put on weekly lectures, a major international program and brought into some big speakers. During my time, we brought in Russell Means, a man from the American Indian Movement. We brought in Stetson Kennedy, who at that point, was writing some more. [He was] a very prolific writer in Florida. We brought in a number of big people, and a lot of not-so-big people, but people who had some great stories to tell. When you consider that, for the cost of \$8,000 a year in student funding, we were able to put on probably forty to fifty events a year, bring a lot of great speakers [in] that would complement the curriculum. It was a very wonderful thing. It also was a springboard for a lot of us that had leadership positions. Other chairs of the lecture series

committee had been student government presidents and other things like that. One of the things that I dealt with early on was making sure that the students knew what kinds of programs we did. One way I did that was I got involved with student government. I also served some time over there. The nice thing about this campus, Lucy, is that in a very short period of time, I was able to go from a person who went to classes and got out as quickly as possible to a person who was very involved in the campus and who all of a sudden really adopted it as my second home. Sometimes my friends and colleagues said it was my first home. It was a great experience. In early 1992, the campus really took an important milestone. When I first came to campus, the first couple of years I was here, the big name that was associated with the campus was Lowell Davis. I never really knew Lowell. I met him on graduation. I saw him around campus. He was always so friendly to the students. I can't say that I have an insight into Lowell Davis, except that he was a heck of a good administrator from what I saw as a student. He unexpectedly passed away, and for a period of time we had Winston Bridges, who was one my former professors, a social foundations professor who was the interim dean. Dr. Bridges was, again, a great guy. They decided to have an initial search. One of the really important things that defined the campus during the 1990s was their decision, and I think it was an excellent one, to bring over Bill Heller. Bill Heller, first we called him Dean, and he'll be Dean until he retires even though the position has changed to VP/CEO. Dean Heller, when he came on board, one of the things he knew, was that this is a jewel. This campus was a jewel. It was an asset to the city. It was also one that the community needed to understand and appreciate and to work with. He also realized that it was very important

to the university to not only say, here's what we do for St. Petersburg, but also to show, through good faith, what types of things they could do. You see during the early 1990s a stronger commitment to building ties with the community. I think that's one of his true legacies. His other legacies, of course, is his work that he's done as a professor of special education as a mentor for many great educators. One of the things that happened in the early 1990s is that to some people over in Tampa, they saw the St. Petersburg campus as this little-bitty campus on this little spit on land by Bayboro harbor, that wasn't really connected in the bigger sense. It had been about eleven years since Nelson Poynter's spirit of opening up what is now Davis Hall and Coquina Hall and Bayboro Hall and that library that they started to open. It had been a number of years and the community had lost a little bit of touch, in my opinion. Heller didn't let St. Petersburg forget how important we were. One of the things you really see him doing is working closely with a number of projects and in a number of ways. Heller's arrival coincides with another transformation that you see happening on the campus. It's during that time, around the early 1990s, that some of the vestiges of the old campus are starting to disappear. For example, the old B building that I mentioned earlier is torn down around 1991 or 1992. They begin to work on the new marine science and joint-use auditorium. Some of the other associated buildings like E building are also torn down within a couple of years. A lot of the older structures that earlier students from the 1970s and the early 1980s would have associated with Bayboro campus, or Bay campus as they used to call it, were starting to disappear. The activities center springs up. The two houses, Potter and Black House that were on the corner of Second Street and Sixth Avenue South are torn down.

In that place is a parking lot, and over time the Florida Center for Teachers is later constructed. The campus is projecting outward. The city secured a donation of land that it gave to the university so it could grow outwards as well. You've seen a lot of things start to happen. It's a new era for the campus. Generally speaking, one of the things you noticed about the student population from the early 1990s until around 1997 [was] it remained decidedly older. [There were] more working professionals working on a degree, people who may have jobs, as opposed to freshmen and sophomore. Here's the case and point. One of the things that you had to have for a bachelor of arts degree when I graduated, which is still in effect, I think, is a foreign language requirement that you had to either CLEP [College Level Examination Program] out of and show proficiency in a foreign language, or take credits. Back then, again, this is before distance education was the way it is today where you can do a lot by computer and classes are available online, the Spanish classes that were offered on the Tampa campus, most of them met Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from eight o'clock to eight-fifty or nine o'clock to nine-fifty. Which meant, if you wanted to take your foreign language proficiency on the Tampa campus, you had to drive over there three or four days a week. It was not convenient. At the time, USF was not allowed to offer undergraduate courses at the 1000 or 2000 level, with very few exceptions. You could take it as a transient student at St. Petersburg Junior College. Today it's so strange because when you look at the campus as it's evolved from about 1997 when you see the first arrival of freshman up to this day, the class sizes have grown, the students have become younger, and the campus has had to change in a number of ways. It's not just that the needs of an eighteen-year-old student

are different than a thirty-five-year-old finishing a master's degree enhancing their job. It's also that the library needs to buy new books on topic for freshman comp and a lot of other things. A lot of changes have taken place over the last couple of years. One of the things that has remained the same is that if you look at the campus and if you look at the community that surrounds it, I think Bill Heller's legacy is the strengthening of the town relationships with town-and-gown relationships. One of the things that you see happening over time, too, is that the community's relationship with the town, again, largely through the work of Bill Heller, the Campus Partnership, the Campus Board, the business folk in the community allow for some wonderful things to happen. For example, during the early 1990s, right across from where Baywalk is today on Second Avenue Northeast, near the pier, there was a place that was called the Colonial Hotel Annex. The Colonial was right next-door. Originally, in 1904, it was the home of Perry Snell. [It] was one of his first homes before he went out and developed Snell Isle. The land, as I understand it, at the time was owned by Bay Plaza. Through a little bit of work between Bill Heller and Bay Plaza, city officials, a couple of flights up to Tallahassee, some grant writing, and some feverish deadlines that were met, sometimes by the hair of chinny-chin-chins, we were able to secure funds to move the Snell house to campus. That building, which is now part of the Florida Studies program of distinction on the St. Petersburg campus, was no light thing to move. They had to literally cut it out of the ground. One of my favorite stories to tell, because by the early 1990s I was Mr. Lecture Series, Mr. Student Involvement. Just like any student who was so committed to the campus and sometimes committed on the campus, I was there at two o'clock in the

morning when they were moving the house down the street. Everybody was there. Bill Heller [was there]. All the big names were there. A lot of the faculty members [were there]. There was a real sense of community. Just as an anecdote to talk about how the campus grew, but it wasn't always without its problems, as they were beginning to move the Snell House off of the site and onto the street, just as they get over one of the curbs, they had a truck attached to another truck with the house on it. They needed two engines to move the thing. They get over the one curb, and all of a sudden you hear this boom! This chain pops, and all of a sudden this window inside the house shatters. What happened, is a tire blew out. Here we have a situation where, on the middle of First Street, at eleven-thirty at night, they have to change a tire with a house sitting under it. You have this guy, and I don't know what his life insurance premiums are, but my God, I couldn't afford to pay them. There's this image that I have, we took this on video, of this guy who's changing a tire with a huge twenty-ton house. I don't know how heavy a house is. It was all solid concrete and construction. [He was] changing a tire. The house got to campus. A few years later we had a similar event in that we moved another house to campus. That was the Williams House, which was originally part of a hotel that was called the Manhattan Hotel. Originally, the Williams House was built around 1890. The house was in a situation where the building that had been added to it over the years had served for a while as a hospital and later as a hotel, had more termites than the B building, which was a lot to say. With a little bit of work from the state, we went up to Tallahassee for both of those houses, for the grant meetings, we flew on this little Cessna or small plane out of Albert Whitted Airport. [I flew with] Bill Heller and Sudsy, on one

occasion, and a couple of others. Mr. Brames, who did not like to fly, especially anything that was a small plane, drove up and met us up there on both occasions. We're flying up to Tallahassee and we get into Tallahassee airport, and it was pretty turbulent. We rush to the RA Gray building, which is where the state archives are for the hearings. We get through all of that. For the Williams House, what strikes me the most is that, whenever you lobby for historical grants in the 1990s, what a lot of people did, is whatever structure they were trying to save, wherever it was in Florida, they would dress in period costumes. Sudsy went as Sarah Armistead Williams, John William's wife. I went in full gear as the General. [I went] with this long, gray beard like many of the pictures of them. We're rolling around, schmoozing with all the law makers and the people on the committee, saying how important it is to save the Williams House and how USF will do what it can to preserve it. All the other people have been around from other homes. I don't know if this was a tactic to throw us off or if it was just cute. They would go and tug on beard, which was glued on. Of course, by the end of the day, I was just a disaster case. The good news was, that by the end of the day we got some good funding for both of the houses. We were able to move the Williams House. One thing about the Williams, that was pretty funky as well, again, we're out there at eleven-thirty or midnight. We had a big pot of coffee. We're on the corner of Fourth Street South and Fifth Avenue South, right by St. Mary's Church. We're watching as these tow trucks start to move the Williams House. They even had to raise the traffic lights at the intersections with special poles because of the structure being two stories. They start to move this structure a little bit. One of the things I remember, it was about one-thirty or

two o'clock in the morning. We were all sitting there; we had drunk a lot of coffee. They were closing the street as the house would go down the street at about one-tenth of a mile an hour. There was this one guy, who I guess had a little bit too much fun at one of the local drinking establishments, riding his bike at around two o'clock in the morning. I remember his gaze in his eyes. He saw this house going down the middle of the road. He didn't quite know what to make out of it. We all knew what was happening. We knew it was a great event. The houses were here; the campus was starting to grow. I think those two structures coming to campus tell a lot about our relationship with the community, our desire to preserve the community's history, and also our desire to be an important part of the community. You see [that] happening by the mid 1990s, the campus was really starting to grow. There was starting to be talk about what direction we should take. We were at a fork in the road. I think in the late 1990s we had a number of different decisions we had to make. Should we offer more lower-level classes? Would that be something that would be competing with St. Petersburg Junior College, which at that time could only offer freshman and sophomore classes? Should we try to become more autonomous from Tampa? What are the consequences of those things? One of the things that was a very common thing that a lot of people may have said on campus at some time earlier on, back when Tampa really was the final destination for all decisions, is it was very easy for people on the St. Petersburg campus to say, well, I did what I could, but it's over in Tampa. It's Tampa's fault, or it's Tampa's problem. I'm not saying that everybody did that, but Tampa was a very easy scapegoat. Every time you put your coins in the Coke machine, the Coke revenues ended up somewhere in Tampa.

Sometimes we saw them, sometimes we didn't. One of the things that we had to, as a campus deal with, from an autonomy perspective, is if we get more of that autonomy, Tampa's not going to be able to be the convenient scapegoat any longer. Whether or not the issue is true or not, you couldn't just point your finger and say, well, it's because of those people over there. By the mid-1990s, I'd finished my history master's degree and did that under Ray Arsenault and Gary Mormino, who were very challenging in their research. One of the things that I really think about when I think back on my academic work, and especially at the graduate level, is that it was so rigorous. It was as rigorous as I'm sure some post-master's programs are. The faculty here are just amazing. The following year, I did a library degree. The reason for that is that, beginning in early 1991, I was working over in the activities center, giving out locker room keys to the gym. Jerry Notaro, and a student named Tony Smith, who was a friend of mine from classes, came over and over time, Jerry had seen me in the library. I had started to work on the lecture series. I met Sudsy in, and within a short period of time I was going from being mister get-to-campus-just-before-class to being, I have to go work here and there and everywhere. I started working in the library. The library that we had was what is now Bayboro Hall. It's the old 1981 structure. I started working in A-V. I worked at the checkout desk [and] in tech services. One of the things that I found by working with all the people over there, the student assistants, the faculty, the librarians, and the staff, was this is a great place to work. These librarians are really cool. There are so many stereotypes about librarians that I think people have. One thing that I'll say is that they were very great in encouraging professional growth. Even for a student assistant, they

were great at encouraging education and really great instructors, mentors, and colleagues. [I] fell in love with working with them so much that I hung around for a while and finished my MLS, my master's in Arts and Library Science in 1996. I graduated as a librarian just about the time that we were starting to move into the new library building. One story that I really have to talk about, which tells about how the campus had grown, is when we were in the old library building, we had a Special Collections that was about a ten-by-twelve room. [It] had probably 2,500 books. Some of these books date into the 1500s. [We had] about 1,500 silverfish, which kept the books company. For a while, it was used by the computer librarian who would sit in there with his coffee, so it was a real challenge. The new building was being constructed. At the time, the director of the library was a lady named Mary Grigsby. Mary had a fondness for Special Collections. Mary had come to us from the University of Missouri in Columbia. She had worked as a journalist and librarian. She was able to secure a donation of a number of underground newspapers that are part of our Special Collections here. She really liked Special Collections. That was one of her favorite areas, but not at the expense of the other areas. She worked closely with the media librarian, Jerry Notaro, to get him a beautiful, state-of-the-art media department with awesome window views, and just generally made sure that building worked for the different needs of the people. Mary came on board at the same time as Bill Heller. They kind of came as a one-two punch to really kick the campus up a notch. She came after Sam Fustukjian left. Sam started here on the St. Petersburg campus as a director of Poynter Library. In the early 1990s, [he] went over to Tampa on an interim basis and later permanently. Sam was another person who was an

important part of the campus. He had been acting dean for a while. Every interaction that I had with Sam was just wonderful. He was a very good man, from my interactions with him, and a good mentor in the library field. Mary was also very encouraging of me as a student assistant, as a grad student, to get my library degree and to take advantage of whatever opportunities come along. Unfortunately, Mary left to go off and become a library director in Nagano, Japan. The Southern Illinois University Carbondale that had an extension library. Mary and her husband, Gary, were very fond of Japanese culture. She knew some Japanese and it was a wonderful opportunity for her. It was a sad day to see her leave, but it was a great day when her replacement, Lanny [Landon] Greaves came on board. Lanny [is a] very wonderful [and a] very personable-type of person. [He is] the kind of director that, like Mary, encouraged a lot of professional growth. Lanny really took the bacon from Mary and oversaw the construction of the current library building. I give him a lot of credit because I know that he must have had some really wonderful meetings with the architects and construction people to put some sense into their heads. The only thing that I was frustrated about when we moved into the new building, was when I came into the Special Collections closed stack room and saw the sink sitting there, I thought, great, a faucet with running water right next to our books. You can't have it all. Lanny also ran into a number of budget obstacles that I'm sure he had to fight and was able to win over. The building opened up on time. In the summer of 1996, the building was done, signed over, they did the final walk-throughs and all that. One of the things that [happened to] those of us who were on-campus in 1996 during the summer that I remember, is we closed for a few weeks because we had these kids that

were hired to help move this collection. They had to move 150,000 books and journals and all that. The great library fire of 1996 was something that really showed Lanny's love of the library, and also his leadership skills. Lanny had been in the military for many years. He had done a lot great services as the library director at another academic institution in Louisiana. They were moving books back from the old building to the new building, it was on a Sunday afternoon, I believe. There were boxes, probably about four feet high, between what is now Bayboro Hall and the library. These were boxes with all the furniture that they had unpacked. We had this mountain of boxes. Somehow, I guess an ash from a cigarette, [or] something, hit the boxes. The next thing you saw were these flames that were going up to scorch the second floor of Bayboro Hall. It was a pretty big fire. Of course, it gave the new building's alarm system an opportunity to be tested. Smoke got into there. The old building, of course, it was just craziness. I remember the pictures that were taken. There was this one picture that was taken of Lanny, in shorts and his polo shirt, commandeering a fire extinguisher. Lanny and myself, and a few of us went into the old Poynter Library, which at that point was pretty much vacant on the first floor. With our fists, [we] smashed every fire extinguisher container and went and used every one of them. They did work. We were very happy about that. The great library fire of 1996, it was one of those things that probably is not a very big thing, but it really shows how we all came together as a team on one Sunday afternoon. When the new library opened, of course, it was just wonderful to be in the structure. I think, when they constructed it, they were under the impression, the architects, that it was going to be the library to end all libraries in terms of space. I think it was the early years of the Internet

and electronic technologies and people were looking at that as a great solution. They didn't know how much book publishing would remain important. Now we're about seven years into the building, and we're already starting to feel a little bit [like] the pants that we bought at Christmas are feeling a little tight on the waist now. We're already seeing that we continue to grow. Special Collections, for example, we're growing so quickly that I hope I have room for some of the wonderful things I'm trying to pursue right now. It's a challenge. There's an old saying that people say about libraries; the heart of any good institution, a liberal arts college or a university, the heart is its library. I think that our library, and by extension, the USF library system really has done a fantastic job of that through its many initiatives. I'd like to say, too, [that] one of the things that those of use who either have been students, or staff, or faculty for so long hear a lot is all the change that's come on board. Within the last year we've hired almost an entirely new senior administrative team. We now have separate deans of colleges. The dean of the College of Business physically located in Tampa has Sarasota people and Lakeland people report to them, but we are a stand-alone college. We've gone through a lot of changes in the last year. One of the things I'd like to say is that it's important, and that's why I really appreciate the opportunity to be a part of the oral history program. People have come to us bringing great talents and great skills. I think it's really important to remember that while we may have been a smaller campus, while we didn't have the parking, the crowds, and the issues that we may have today, that we still did a lot of great things back then. Some of the things that we used to do, we don't do as much anymore. For example, after 1996, after some controversy, student government decided

to zero-fund and get rid of the lecture series. I remember one student government president who complained to me when I was chair that all we did was attract, what they called, the quote, gray-hair crowd. What I did is reminded them that many of those quote gray-hairs were people who were auditing classes. Some were quote gray-hairs that were taking classes for credit. Also, we would hurt ourselves and hurt our relationship with the community if we stopped being all the special things that we were. We have had other lecture series since then: the ethics program, and the Monday night lecture programs. It really says something that Harry Schaleman could get one of his colleagues to come over from Tampa or Sarasota to talk about current events in China. We could fill up a room with 200 people. The marketing that we could do, and I don't mean marketing in a for-profit way, but the marketing of the campuses being a center of knowledge and learning and a community resource was just immense. It was an incredible experience. If I had been a student at Florida [University of Florida] or Florida State or the Tampa campus and I had taken my classes in a big setting like that, I would have gotten my degree, [and] I would have walked away from the university. When they sent me things in the mail I would have said, oh, that's cute, and thrown it away. One of the things that really made it great for me to come back here was, it was almost like a total homecoming when I was able to return here as a professional in February, 2002. I really had an affinity for the campus. It really does grow on you. It's a good part of you.

J: I was wondering if you could tell me a little more about how the library system is set up and how the different campuses, within the library system, coordinate?

S: I'd be happy to. The St. Petersburg Library, the Nelson Poynter Library, the earliest

incarnations were what used to be called the State University System Extension Library, which was formed in the 1960s. There was a mid-1960s something called FICUS, the Florida Institute of Continuing University Studies. For a while, [it] operated out of the maritime base. FICUS coordinated a lot of the, what we used to think of as distance learning, which is when you would write a check to the Department of Continuing Education in Gainesville, and the bookstore at the University of Florida would mail you the books. If you needed support materials and you lived in Sopchoppy, or somewhere along the Oklawaha River, they would mail them from the extension library. That was a big part of the way the distance ed. used to be. The St. Petersburg campus library started as a small room in the A building. The early librarians there were probably dealing with space issues from the get-go. 1978 was a very important year for the University of South Florida, and especially for the St. Petersburg campus. After much work over the years, Nelson Poynter was a big part of that as the editor of the *St. Petersburg Times*. The St. Petersburg campus was able to secure land to expand. As part of that expansion, it was the growth of the campus to what is currently Coquina Hall, Davis Hall, and the old library, which is Bayboro Hall, and the lands around it. On June 15, 1978, Nelson Poynter attended the groundbreaking for this expansion, and later that day passed away. It was almost within a couple of months that the wheels were set in motion for them to rename the library on campus in his honor. His papers are now part of the university archives. The library really started to grow. When the old library building opened in 1981, they probably thought that that was state-of-the-art. We had a long-time audio-visual guy. [We had an] audio-visual equipment operating [man] named

Bob Thrush, who for many years, [he] used to wheel old sixteen-millimeter projectors and filmstrips into classrooms. When they opened the new 1981 building, they had the state-of-the-art media center, which is about as big as two faculty office buildings. At that time, that was probably sufficient. When Jerry Notaro came in 1986, [and] started to lay down the law about buying videos and growing the video collection, and as faculty began using more media in the classrooms, it showed how quickly that became obsolete. The library grew over time. If you look at the library system today, one of the great things about being at the USF libraries is that you have a lot of integration of services, and also integration and communication between faculty members and the different libraries and staff members. When I started as an undergrad student in 1986, the online catalogue had just been introduced. [It was called] LUIS, not WEBLUIS, it was just LUIS: Library User Information System. They had these old telex terminals with either the amber or the ugly green screens. To use your student I.D. on the Tampa campus, you had to get your I.D. punch-holed. What they would do is take your old, photographic, laminated USF I.D. and they would put some number into a thing, and it would actually punch it like an old 1970s card reader. The book pockets in the back of all the books in the Tampa library were these old computer cards that were probably seven-by-three, with a punch. When you would go to check out your books on the Tampa campus, you would give them your I.D. and they would run that through this old punch reader and then they would run the cards through. It could really be a pain, because if somebody wanted to play a dirty trick and swap cards around, you could check out a book that you didn't actually check out. Over here in St. Petersburg, we were even less sophisticated. You

used the sign out books. It was still the old cards and stamp and date due. If there's one thing I'll say about being a librarian, I'm sure glad I wasn't a librarian when they had to sort cards at the circulation desk. The closeness of the library system was in large measure, the result of the potential of automation. When I first started here, [it] was one of the first years that when you bought a decal, it wasn't specific to a campus. During much of the 1980s and 1990s, the fees may have been different, but there was no note on it that it was a St. Petersburg hang-tag or a Tampa hang-tag. It was just a USF hang-tag. With the library system, once circulation records went on-line, after a couple of years, you could already go to the library catalogue and locate whether a book physically existed, but also see whether it was checked out. To find out if they had a book at the University of Florida in 1986 was like asking for the water to be parted and the mountains to be moved. It was very hard. It would take 50,000 keystrokes for the librarian to do that. You could do it, but it was difficult. What you began to see by the early 1990s was the introduction of CD-ROMs and other databases, in a very primitive way, coming into the libraries. To me, a database is going to the physical printed volume of book review index and looking through the book. To most students today, if it's not on the search engine on the internet, it doesn't exist. One of my jobs, especially in Special Collections, since most of what I deal with is not readily digitized, it to use those skills that I learned as an undergraduate here, the tools of the trade, to help students today who got through high school on Google or one of the other search engines. [They] don't understand that sometimes the 1831 *Charleston* newspaper that they need to find for their Civil War class is not scanned on the web. They might actually have to go and put a

microfilm onto the microfilm machine. We often talk about how you really learn, and you really become knowledgeable as you go through what are a series of epiphanies. It's like when you first learn how to walk, and then you learn how to talk, and then you learn everything else. I think the same is true with research and scholarship. For people who think that just because something is on the web it's correct or it's easy, sometimes you can spend ten hours at the microfilm machine and not find anything, but then you get the next reel and you hit the jackpot. That feeling that you get when you do that, which is usually after two pots of coffee at midnight as they're kicking you out of the building, is a wonderful thing. The library system has really grown closer over the years simply because we do a lot of shared resources. We purchase databases in a shared way. We use the former virtual library. Now the USF electronic resources are purchased in a way that they benefit all the university campuses. If you're a St. Petersburg student, it works out with the people over in Tampa, so that a lot of the things that are available to you at home are transparent. You don't know where the portal is that gets you to that distant database; it's just there. I think it's really important. As the library system tries to move closer to prestige and looks at designations like ARL status, it's important that we continue to work together. They have some great Special Collections over in Tampa. My job is not to become a mini-Tampa. My job is to focus on the things that I need to do to complement the curriculum. Somebody came up to me with the two truckloads of books on Ybor City; I can't take them. A, I don't have the space, and b, they don't serve the researchers best here. Tampa would be the place for them. It's important that we all work together in that way. That's only going to continue as the library system continues

to move into new dimensions with electronic books and other things that are going to require guidance and advice from librarians of different fields. It's going to be an important thing as we continue forward.

J: In addition to being in the Special Collections, you've continued some involvement with your history background.

S: [I] started off as an adjunct at Eckerd College in 1996. I taught a semester at St. Petersburg Junior College as well, but I really fell in love with teaching. In large measure, I have to give credit to three professors who were very important to me in the history department at USF. The entire department was very important. Ray Arsenault, Gary Mormino, it goes without saying. Also, two others that are very important to me are John Belohlavek, who was a third member of my thesis committee who, like Ray and Gary, watched as I put papers through their hands for my thesis without a passive voice sentence construction in them. My last professor was Roy Van Neste, who's in the history department, but teaches European history. I took many classes with him and directed readings with him as an undergrad. They were very instrumental in my learning how to become a scholar and my learning how to write. I give them a lot of credit, and I think that over time, one of the things that they instilled in me was a real love of learning and a real passion for it. It's something I've continued down the road through my research and also through the teaching. One of the advantages that I've had by having good faculty members as mentors is that it's made me as an instructor at Eckerd College become very interested in my students and try to work towards them. I tell every class that I teach that I don't know everything, but like a good reference librarian, my job is to

help find information that a student is looking for. I tell my students when they're writing papers in my classes that it's important that if they have questions and they're taking one of my Florida history classes, [to] come see me. Together we can look at resources and work through that. Over the past seven years I've probably taught about thirty or thirty-five classes in independent studies at Eckerd [College]. It's been great. When I graduated here with my library degree and the student funding ran out, I worked for a while as the assistant library director at Tarpon Springs. [It is a] beautiful library but I hated the drive up U.S. [Highway] 19. I worked for a while at another library. In October 1999, I was given the opportunity to become the first college-university center coordinator for Eckerd College, which was an interesting situation. At that time, there were some issues between USF St. Petersburg and St. Petersburg Junior College, soon-to-be St. Petersburg College about who should be offering what courses in Pinellas County. It was a very delicate situation. My job for Eckerd College was to be the Eckerd College liaison for their courses that were offered through St. Petersburg College's University Partnership Center. I was their advisor and mentor. I worked closely with people at SPC [St. Petersburg College], [I] worked closely with people at USF. What was really neat about the whole situation was I found out [that] just like being a reference librarian requires that you listen to people and that you help them find information, being a good academic advisor is the same thing. I found that it was very easy. I went into the position without any background in academic advising and became an administrator of the center. [I] started a very ambitious and very good program with Eckerd College where they offered in-house bachelor's degrees for people at Tech Data Corporation in

Clearwater, where I was advising at some point, over a hundred students. [I was advising] students who went from the gamut from business management to org. studies to information systems to history. Mr. Florida History was all of a sudden trying to articulate credits from years ago on some diploma from 1965 and what that could bring in. I think the relationship between Eckerd College and USF St. Petersburg is also very important. I stayed at Eckerd until I came here full-time as an advisor. I continue to teach there occasionally. The nice thing about Eckerd is that Eckerd got its beginnings here at the maritime station. Eckerd began as Florida Presbyterian College in the B building where I started taking classes. I think the relationship between Eckerd as a private liberal arts college, USF St. Petersburg as a comprehensive research university, and St. Petersburg College is one that's very important in Pinellas County. It's good that we have all these alternatives. I've worked at all three. I've been a student at two of the three. It's a wonderful relationship to see. One of the great things that I enjoy about teaching [is that] it doesn't have to be in a credit-earning class. One of the classes I most love to do, is I started about three-and-a-half years ago as an instructor in Elderhostel. It's not uncommon for me to do a number of Elderhostel programs a year, sometimes as a single lecture, sometimes as part of a week. We take them on what we call the Golden Treasures of Tampa Bay. These things book up sometimes six months in advance. I even had a couple of groupies who heard I was going to be doing part of one of their spring-training baseball programs and signed up. It's really neat that you figure that somebody's coming across the country in a Winnebago camper to hear you talk about something you love so much, and paying you to do it. I go back to the mentors I had over

the years, the many faculty I've worked with, the many colleagues I've had in the library to really make it fun to do what we do. It's a lot of work, but the dividends are so great. Whether it's at the reference desk or whether it's in the classroom, it's really neat to see a student who comes to you needing some assistance and they walk away satisfied. You feel like you've made their day, or at least saved them from the wrath of some professors somewhere else about them not getting that research paper done in time because you gave them the source that could really help them out.

J: As a student and as a staff member and as somebody who's taught classes and come in contact with students, how do your faculty and students interact at St. Petersburg campus?

S: When I started here in 1986, one of the things that was so revealing about this campus was the camaraderie and the closeness of the faculty. I'll never forget the first time I went into Ray Arsenault's office. I had just interviewed Lee Roy Collins shortly thereafter. I hadn't taken any classes with Ray as an undergrad; not that I had heard about his notorious reading list, which are legendary, and that's on tape now, but because I was taking mostly courses with Jim Swanson and Roy Van Neste and people in Tampa who were European. My background was really more European history. I got a lot of credits in from my AA degree from the University of Tampa, which was in history. I had a lot of European history. I remember coming in to see Ray and to introduce myself as a student. He knew my name. I was freaking out. How did he know who I was? Just because of grapevine of campus, in a very positive way. It was great because we struck up a conversation, and the next thing you know I was walking out of the bookstore twenty

pounds heavier with books every semester. It was a good thing. I think that was something that signaled the commitment of the campus to the students. I'll say that during the 1980s and the 1990s when I was a student here, one of the things I was continually appreciative of was that I had classes with Harry Schaleman, that I had classes with Ray Arsenault. They had a lot of great people on this campus who not only knew my name pretty early on, but also were great instructors and passed their love of learning on. After class, [we] went over to the Tavern or socializing. There was a real sense of community here. Yeah it was small, yeah it was quiet during the day, and you could get a parking space real close to the building, but it was wonderful. I think that that still exists, although I think that some of the changes that are inevitable as an institution grows have moderated that a little bit. Now we are big enough that we have separate buildings for separate colleges. There's no way to predict the future, but those of us who have been here for a while worry that one of the things that's going to happen as you bring in more eighteen-year-olds right out of high school, as you bring in fewer of the over-the-age so-called non-traditional students who were the traditional students of this campus, and as you have compartmentalized colleges is that some of that cross-disciplinary discussion might disappear. Some of the activities that were part of the campus that were the ties with student activities and student affairs were so important, as more students come to the campus and the campus grows, I think there's some of us that fear that might be affected. Sudsy Tschiderer is a great example of somebody who really looks for students who cultivate student leadership. I think they should name a building after Sudsy for all the work that she's done over the years to build strong relationships

with current and former students and alumni. A lot of the former student government presidents; people like Lou Kubler from the 1970s, people like Ellen Babb, the chair of the lecture series in 1980, Joe Alvarez. I can name lots of names that I know who are people who went off and did great things as a result, not only of the exams they had to study for and pass in campus, but also because of the extracurricular offerings. To say that student activities began as the campus grew in the 1990s is totally wrong. I think you can date that back to the work that Sudsy did with Mr. Haney [Donald Andrew Haney] and some of the early people on this campus. There was a real vision early on, that we had a very special place here. [The] setting's beautiful. Downtown St. Petersburg is beautiful. Over time, what happened is they took the opportunity with the students that came here and really made something wonderful out of it. The professors were part of the equation. It wasn't like you'd go to classes and you'd leave. When I took classes at St. Petersburg College, that's pretty much what I did. I went around, I found a parking spot, sometimes less successfully than others, I took classes, and I left. I'm not saying that in a negative way. That's what that was for at that point. I think when I came here it really started to be getting not only the curricular, but also the co-curricular activities as part of it.

J: One of the issues we haven't talked about yet is the question of diversity on campus.

S: One of the things that I'd like to say about the St. Petersburg campus is that if you look at the emphasis on diversity, you saw it from 1986 when I came on board, one of the organizations that was very important over time was the Association of Black Students, or ABS. For many years we had a very important role of Project Thrust, which was a

tutoring program that was available to anybody, but really focused on the needs of African-American students, first time in college, or upper-level transfer students. Over time, when I was involved with the lecture series, we did a number of programs that were co-sponsored. For example, they had a symposium, and this was a little bit before my time, where they did a weeklong international symposium on Nigeria. We had, through co-sponsorship, had ABS involved in other organizations. When they did the symposium on China with the campus lecture series, we did it in conjunction with a group called FACSS, the Friendship Association of Chinese Students and Scholars. [It] was a student group of primarily marine science graduate students who were Chinese or of Asian-American extraction. We did a lot of programs with different groups. One of the symposia that I remember the most about my ten-year shared lecture series was the South-African symposium that we did. It was the year that Nelson Mandela was taking the leadership of South Africa. We had a weeklong series of programs, of lectures, of events. I had one of the assistant ambassadors to the South-African government established from Washington D.C. fly down. We had people from a number of different groups who were involved, including some different factions within the African community of South Africa, including members of the Zulu party, the Encarta party. Some people who were fighting each other on battlefields who were in an academic forum, and through the program, we managed to have a great academic dialogue. [We] played some great balancing. Like with Spain, it was not a celebration of Christopher Columbus's arrival, but it wasn't a total denigration. It was a discussion that this happened, here are the cultural and logical historical consequences. We had a member of

the Spanish consul in Miami come up: Caridad Clemente. We had a number of other people who were involved who were representing the Native American community. Russell Means was on campus shortly during this time and shortly around it. I know many colleges that are small liberal arts college, and I know for a fact that Eckerd College from working there, is that with many smaller liberal arts colleges there's almost an expectation that you have an international experience, or global experience. In order to graduate from Eckerd you had an exit requirement of a global perspective course. Many of the students who were students on the campus during the late 1980s and the early 1990s were people who were working on a degree in the evenings, who had a full-time job, who may not be the type of student who would take a summer trip to Europe or somewhere else to learn about the world. In some ways, the lecture series was a portal for that. It was a student organization. Harry Schaleman was the advisor almost every year that it existed. Having a world-renowned geographer sitting there giving guidance and advice, a man who could pick up the phone and call somebody across two oceans and have them come in for the class, [get] a cheap airline ticket or maybe a night in a hotel. Some of the people who were Harry's colleagues or colleagues of Ray Arsenault or others, we always timed the big name speakers to come sometime between November and March. The reason for that is they probably were faculty members at the University of North Dakota, and they got tired of seeing white that wasn't sand. Some of them actually flew down on their own as part of a vacation, and as part of the packaged deal would do a talk or two. We had a number of people who came from the Tampa campus. The cost for their participation was lunch. It exposed a lot of our students to many

diverse views. We had people from different departments come over. We also had a symposium or a series of lectures that was done through the work of Lisa Worton-Turner, who was a chair of the lecture series and worked closely with me during a number of years that we were together on the committee, which was called the Hurstery Symposium. [It] dealt specifically with women's issues. Through some of my work on the John's Committee, which is a topic that deals with witch-hunts that attacked many people, [not only] African Americans, but also gays and lesbians. I also was involved with Jerry Notaro for a number of years, as a student member, the Committee on Issues of Sexual Orientation, or CISO, which is a Tampa-based committee. My highlight of that involvement as a student leader, is that right in front of the Marshall Center, with Betty Castor introducing, I gave a key note speech to kick off our gay and lesbian awareness week for the Tampa campus.

Diversity, in its many ways, is a big part of the campus here. I think that we really strive toward it. One personal example of diversity is that one of the students that started to work in the activities center while I was in the library was a student named Collin Ta. Mr. Ta, T-A, became a friend of mine. Over the course of a couple months, I met his family, and after about a year-and-a-half I ended up marrying his sister. Diversity actually springs to the home where I now have a wife who was originally a native of Vietnam. Who would have thought? It's one of those things that just happens. It is, in some ways, a great place to meet people from all over the world. You do see a number of students who are from China. You also have seen a growing number of students who are international students as American society generally becomes more

understanding of diversity, and as Pinellas County becomes more of a diverse area. It's a good thing.

J: In the course of a lot of your activities on campus, you've been working with faculty, back and forth.

S: In terms of the faculty, and again, to emphasize what I said earlier, is that there's a lot of interaction between faculty. You see great communication. I actually have talked to some people about this. You could probably get some great psycho biographer to do a dissertation on the architecture of the Tampa campus buildings. I'm not talking about the newer ones. What was going through people's minds when they build Soc. [Social Sciences building], and Cooper Hall, and all that. If there was ever an easier way to say, avoid this place like the plague, just put a picture of Cooper Hall on the front of all university literature. I feel so sorry because Russell Cooper [is] such a great guy and had such an ugly building named in his honor. The Human Services building is another one, which I think was originally the College of Business before they built the earthen bunker over there. [There is] one student experience I'd like to relate. This talks to the difference of the campuses. When I was doing my undergrad in history, a lot of my classes were in the Soc. building over on the Tampa campus. It might be hard for people today to believe that it actually was uglier back then than it is today. My one memory that serves me well was I was once taking a graduate seminar with Steven Lawson, who is now, I believe, at Rutgers University with Nancy Hewitt, his wife who was also a member of the USF history department faculty. We were in the seminar room, in the basement of Soc., which actually had on this wall, this 1960s meter system. I guess they

did some psychological experiments in there. It used to be one of the old psych. testing rooms. I'm thinking, here you have this brick room that's probably about twenty-by-twelve, with about ten students sitting in it, in this brick basement building with this thing on the wall that makes you look like you're going to get a lobotomy if you say the wrong answer. I'm thinking, if it could get any more uncondusive to learning, I couldn't figure out how. Then I compared that to taking a class on the St. Petersburg campus where often you would walk out of the classroom and go sit down there and watch the Bayboro Harbor at nighttime, or with the sun going down during the break. What a different environment [it was]. It's not said as a way of bashing Tampa. When the Tampa campus was constructed, and the land was made available, they did the best that they could with the budgetary situation that they had. I think that something that the St. Petersburg students should be very happy with is that the piece of land that we had for our campus was just the most beautiful place in the earth. Look at the St. Petersburg campus library, the Poynter Library. There was a conscious decision made early on to put lots of windows in the 1996 building. One of the toughest things for students to do is to research up there on the upper floor. The views are so distracting. Is that a good thing? Is that a bad thing? I think that only time will tell as the exams roll around the corner. The aesthetics I think [are] a big part of university experience. The aesthetics of the physical plant of the buildings, the aesthetics of the culture of the institution, and also the aesthetics of the dynamics of the relationship between faculty across disciplines and faculty within disciplines with students. It's very important. There's a lot of good karma on this campus.

J: It may seem like there's not time for play, but there has to be. What sort of social gatherings do the faculty and students have?

S: A lot of them in the 1980s and early 1990s revolved around Sudsy's Herculean efforts to really turn student activities into something that was above and beyond just the curriculum. Also, another person who was very involved was Cliff Bear. Cliff was a student here who later became the director of watercraft. Cliff, in the 1980s and early 1990s was responsible for the swimming pool and also the sailing classes. One of the things I remember about my first student orientation here when they did it all in the first-floor lobby of Davis Hall, and this was before this kind of tour-guide orientation that a lot of schools have today, you showed up for this orientation, you took your photo, you did this and that. I looked through this book that they gave me which had all the different clubs and organizations, and I said, my gosh, this I.D. which has all these holes punched in it now, I can take that and go and take a sailboat out. It was really great. Because I was a history major, I never had time to take the sailboat out, but it was nice knowing that it was there. Above and beyond that, there were a lot of things to connect, and especially since we had a lot of students who had children or youngsters in their family. One of the things that the activities office did for many years was something called Family Fest. They would have a number of things like clown face-paintings, and balloons, and things like that. [It was] often done on a Saturday when parents didn't have class. They could come down and park on campus and go and take the kids to do all kinds of great things. Sudsy and the others in the activities office were behind a lot of those types of things. You had a lot of things that were geared towards children. Probably one of my less-

notable moments in history was when we had a program on campus where we were doing some environmental program with one of the local organizations. I was put into the costume and became Drats the Blob of Pollution. I'm dancing around the campus activities center as Drats the Blob of Pollution. Of course, I was the evil blob of pollution and they basically kicked the pollution into the garbage cans. They had to wheel me out of the building, I think. It was great. That same campus activities center, at other times, would be converted into a place where, when we had our symposium on Spain in 1992, we had dinner for 250 people. We had dancing that went on. The core of the activities center really was a kind of commons for the university throughout much of the 1990s. There were programs that were academic there, the Monday night lecture series that started in the early 1990s, the classes that were there. You had huge numbers of people who came to those events. [There was] a good mix of town and gown. A number of students who signed up for the classes and had no choice but to attend mixed in with students who would have been there anyways, like myself, and members of the community who were there because this campus was really a great place to meet and greet with great minds and a great center of learning. There were a lot of those types of things that went beyond just the pure academics, or even the pure lectures. There were a number of programs that were done with in mind the students that had families or other things like that. The fitness center, and over the years the people in charge of the fitness center have done things to encourage different programs. Around New Year's time, often with resolutions [they do programs]. They've really tried to build around the idea around the university experience being much more than sitting in a classroom taking

notes. I think because of the size of the campus during the 1980s and the early 1990s, and to the same extent today, although in the future it will depend on how quickly we grow, you see that students really see these co-curricular opportunities. I never received and compensation or any stipend for being involved with lecture series. The reason I was here sometimes late at night, sometimes running things to the printing shop and things like that, was because of the real love of learning to do it and because I knew it was more than something that would look nice on my résumé. It was something that gave me some real-world skills. When I graduated from here, I had my degrees that the university gave me, but I also had my degrees in project management from the university of hard knocks, from really putting it together. Those types of opportunities are really what drove students. Now, did the free pizza at student government meetings help? Yeah, it sure did. It was just part of the overall picture.

J: Where do you see USF St. Petersburg going in the next decade?

S: There are two ways that it could go. It's at another fork in the road. I'll tell you where I hope it goes and I'll tell you where I hope that it doesn't go. We'll go with the negative route first. One of the things that I really hope I do not see happen, is that I hope I do not see us erect more barriers between us and the Tampa campus. I do not want us to be the University of South Florida St. Petersburg at the expense of the University of South Florida. I do not want to see us become St. Petersburg University. I think there's something to be said about being part of a larger research institution. Although there are some people who would hope and pray that they never have to set foot on the Tampa campus, I'm not one of them. As a student, I took a lot of classes over there. As a person

who works here, I hope that I continue to have them as colleagues down the road. The university, as an organic body, is very important. My big hope is that we do not become so autonomous or so independent that we lose being part of that picture. If we do that, we risk the possibility of becoming a good senior college, but not part of a great university. Where do I hope that we are? I hope that ten years or twenty years from now we, along with the university, grow. One of the things that this university, on a whole, struggled with during its ten or fifteen years, aside from the Johns Committee's assaults on its existence, was that it had no alumni to fight for it in the legislature. If you look at USF from its opening in 1960 through the early Mackey years, John Allen had great ideas about creating a city on an anthill over in Tampa, with lots of potential. The first faculty that this university hired were amazing people. The people that I've met with or researched on are the all-university approach that was talked about. The all-university book; these are ideas that today people talk about. Now, in Pinellas County public libraries, they have one bay, one book. This idea, this coming together to talk about ideas, is so important. If you look at our campus, one of the things that I hope is that we, in many ways, take the best of being a smaller campus with the liberal-arts type of setting, and mix it with the resources that the full university has to offer. Should we offer every degree that is in Tampa? Absolutely not. We should build upon the programs and distinctions that we have. We should encourage our faculty to work closely with them. I hope that just because we now have a separate college structure, and we now have an associate vice-president of academic affairs, that we don't see ourselves as being separate from the provost in Tampa. [I hope] that we continue these relationships. If we get to the

point where St. Petersburg is so independent from Tampa that there really is no communication; if we get to the point that you have to get transient student forms to take a course in Tampa, we've lost what we really were. At that point, we aren't going to be part of that big university anymore. Now that we are more autonomous, we can't point the finger at Tampa all the time anymore. Sometimes we have to look at ourselves and try to make ourselves work better. With challenging financial times, sometimes that's not as easy said as done. I think that this campus holds great promise because it has a heck of a good alumni. We have great people who have graduated from here. Not all of them are big names, but [they are] people who have gone on to do wonderful things. I think that the campus is going to benefit from their guidance from them coming back from them discovering who we are. We are going to continue to be an important asset for the Tampa Bay area.

J: Jim, do you have any final sentiment that you would like to share with future colleagues, students, staff?

S: The most important thing for future generations is, for those of you who are students here, appreciate what has been done over the years. A lot of people have learned how to crawl so you can break speed records. I think that's important. For people who come here to the campus, hopefully the legacy of projects like this, of the Special Collections department that I'm helping to build, will help them, in the future, have some good resources to work with. Somebody who comes down the road fifteen or twenty years from now says, you know, it's not just that they have a great Florida Studies program or great Environmental Sciences program, but man, they've got the greatest campus around.

[They've got] the best university in the world. That's what I hope.

J: Jim, thank you for sharing your thoughts with us today.

S: It's been a pleasure.

End of Interview