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## **John T. Ware : USF 25th (1985) Anniversary Oral History Project: interview by Milly St. Julien**

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John T. Ware

Milly St. Julien

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JUDGE JOHN WARE

St. Julien: Today I am speaking with Judge John Ware and this is for the USF Silver Anniversary Oral History Project. Judge Ware, how did you first become involved in the formation of the Bayboro campus of USF?

Ware: I was first in the State House of Representatives in 1964 and one of the needs of the community at that time was to expand the facility and provide an upper level educational opportunity for the people of Pinellas County. The federal government had already provided the property to the state, and it was agreed to be used for an educational institution. So it was part of my responsibility and I became involved in that and I felt the need myself. I considered it a high priority item.

St. Julien: Was there a lot of support from the community for a university in St. Petersburg?

Ware: There was a good deal of support for a university. There was some question about where it should be located.

St. Julien: Why was St. Petersburg the choice? Was it because the property was there or was there more pressure put on from that community?

Ware: The downtown business community was very active and the St. Petersburg Times supported the project.

St. Julien: Do you remember who some of those people were at that time? Do you remember some of the business people or individuals who were the most active?

Ware: The legislative delegation was active at that time. It seems to me that Chester Ferguson of Hillsborough County was active. Raleigh Green from Pinellas Country. Jack ( ) from the Times. There was a young Dean from the Bay campus that was actively involved.

St. Julien: I know there was some question as to whether the campus should be placed in Clearwater or Seminole. Was it just the business community that put the pressure on to putting it in St. Petersburg or were there other reasons?

Ware: I think that the fact the site was there and had an educational requirement, as I recall, the deed to the property agreement called for it to be used for public educational purposes. I'm not certain of that. That was my impression. There was condition receiving the property that it be used for an educational facility.

St. Julien: What kind of response did you get from the other legislators?

Ware: That was interesting. As the thing developed after several years I passed a bill creating a campus as a matter of statutory law. I had considerable opposition from some of the people in the legislature as well as some of the people in the Department of Education because it was a little inconsistent with the theory of developing ( ) the university system around the state where they have control over the branches. But I found that if those branches had any independence that it should have some special statutory ( ) creating it and also designating a dean or a president on the campus because that is what the law does say. I'm not sure if I can find a copy of it right now, but that was my recollection. At one time I got into a considerable hassle with Hillsborough County.

The legislative delegation has tried to repeal that law not because they were against the campus particularly, but they just wanted the prior structure to remain based on the main campus. I think here there has been some degree of independence for the branch campuses. It is still pretty much done by the main campus in Tampa.

St. Julien: How did the funding work when they went to ask for funding for this university?

Ware: It was always a battle to get funds. There was nothing unusual in that everybody is always trying to get their share of the funds that are available. There is only so much money each year that can be allocated to any particular service or facility. So it's been a constant battle to make sure the growth of the campus was ( ). People in St. Petersburg participated ( ).

St. Julien: Did this take place after the reapportionment or before?

Ware: Predominantly after the reapportionment. I don't really think that the reapportionment of the legislature was a significant factor except that it might have been a little more difficult to get funds for an urban university campus. But the campus was still very small in those days. I don't recall ever being faced with the problem with there not being funds allocated because of the location.

St. Julien: I have heard it said that when St. Petersburg wanted a campus, when that first came up, that the Hillsborough campus was told that if they didn't do something about establishing a branch campus in St. Petersburg then St. Pete might go ahead and establish their own University. Is that the way it happened or was that just a tall story?

Ware: We used all kinds of tactics in getting legislation passed and of course, the threat of trying to get an independent campus is one that typically would be used in a situation like that. Also the fact that we have Eckerd College here played an important factor ( ) with Eckerd or cooperative in the establishment of this campus even though ( ) to some degree. ( ) was the president of Eckerd College at that time as I recall.

St. Julien: Who were some of the legislators from Pinellas at the time that were also involved?

Ware: Senator ( ) has been actively involved. Senator ( ) was ( ) at that time and was actively involved in the delegation. Former representative Jack Savvy who was ( ). (I cannot make anything else out of his answer - sorry!)

St. Julien: Do you recall the ones from around the state that gave you support in this? It must have been a fight.

Ware: In later years Senator Bill Louis who became president of the ( ). He had been chairman of the Appropriations Committee at one time. I don't recall anybody other than the education committees themselves that were particularly supportive of our delegation.

St. Julien: What was the reaction from the Tampa campus when they were first approached with this idea of the branch campus?

Ware: What year was the campus originally established in St. Petersburg?

St. Julien: I think it was in the middle '60s. 1965 was when they first started having education classes, but it wasn't until 1968 that it was founded. The 25th anniversary is for the Tampa campus. The St. Pete campus is included because it is the oldest branch campus. I think the St. Pete campus has been around for 20 years.

Ware: ( )

St. Julien: Right.

Ware: So there was an educational facility of some type in the state university system already established there.

St. Julien: I think it was continuing education.

Ware: Continuing education and also some marine science courses that were taught there.

St. Julien: I think the freshmen were there for the first time in 1968. From what I have heard the Tampa campus was required to take this branch campus on otherwise they might be competing with another university. This is how they viewed it.

Ware: Like I said that is one of the tactics you use in trying to get legislation passed. I think the threat of actually ( ) I'm not certain, but whatever was used was effective enough to get the law passed to use the campus even though the Regents had set it up as a branch prior to the statutory legislation. It wasn't really funded in the development at that time.

St. Julien: I have heard that the St. Pete Times gave alot of support and really helped push for the University or the branch campus. Do you recall any kind of debates that might have gone on at that time?

Ware: There are two elements to the debates that went on. One was just the theoretical debate that the instruction of the university system ( ). It had an organizational structure that put the branches in a subservient role to the main campuses over at one time the University of Florida. The legislature went away from that and created a system of universities. The next issue was how much independence the branches should have. Some of them actually became independent universities and so there was always a fight on creating a new university or creating a branch. The economics of the matter showed that the branches were probably the best way to go particularly in an urban area. So there is some logic to that argument. The other aspect of it was the funding and who would control the budget for the branches. The funds would come through the main campus or you could have an independent funding scheme.

St. Julien: How much effect did it have in getting support for the branch campus considering that the main campus didn't have football or intercollegiate sports?

Ware: I never considered it to be a major factor. Football programs more or less come along after the university has been established for awhile if you are going to continue to fund that type of thing. An increase in cost to the university system, cost to the students, student fees, and everything else has mitigated against recreating that type of university in



this area. While I think that sports are great, I don't think that the lack of sports created any real problem in this area. It was designed more for the educational needs both for the young students and the community. The idea was that it might improve medical center facilities and the medical education in the area, provide the business community with business and accounting courses, and provide the opportunity for advanced educational training after the community college programs without leaving the area.

St. Julien: When you all were discussing getting a university in St. Petersburg I think the fact that it became a two year, the last two years, juniors and seniors, did that come after or was that established from the beginning? Was that one of the conditions?

Ware: As far as I can recall it was always one of the conditions, that we have an excellent junior college system. We didn't want to create competition for that program and should be oriented more towards being an urban educational center rather than the technical college campus.

St. Julien: So the fact that these were branch campuses may have kept some of the north Florida politicians from really giving you alot more difficulty in establishing a campus?

Ware: Yes, I think that is true.

St. Julien: So if it had been a regular four year college . . .

Ware: Because it would cost so much more money, although some of the universities that were created around the state fill in the ( ) of that. The state was growing so rapidly that the need happened to be met in the

urban areas. You couldn't expect all the students to go to Gainesville.

St. Julien: Wasn't West Florida established about the same time as the branch campuses? I think it was in 1968 at the same time . . .

Ware: ( )

St. Julien: Was there any kind of . . .

Ware: There is a two hundred mile run from Tallahassee to Pensacola so it is quite a distance.

St. Julien: Do you recall any other university that was being established at the time?

Ware: ( )

St. Julien: So they didn't just leave them . . . They just didn't keep putting the schools in north Florida. At that time they were starting to expand the university system all over the state?

Ware: I couldn't argue with the logic there ( ).

St. Julien: Do you recall getting any kind of letters, pro or con, from your constituents for the development of the University?

Ware: It seems to me there was a little opposition, but principally the commissions that we typically had over the years the location of the facilities ( ) facilities kind of we would rather have it in our area than in your area. The same type of thing you have with the stadium.

St. Julien: What about the establishment of the art atmosphere at the University? Was that ever brought out--like the theater, art galleries, or musical facilities?

Ware: Nelson Poynter had some . . . I'm not sure ( ) big library program ( ).

St. Julien: I understand that they were very influential . . .

Ware: For a long time they created a ( ) library books into the facility and somehow they were lost or stolen.

St. Julien: What other kind of programs do you recall that the community developed to show their support of the University?

Ware: The St. Petersburg Progress Group was very active in helping to acquire and develop the land to the University ( ) and expansion. Of course we used that to a large extent in acquiring the Dali Museum. The fact that the museum didn't come under the auspices of the state university system created a tax opportunity for the sponsors to be under ( ) and creating the feeling in the legislature that the ( ).

St. Julien: Besides the fact that the city already owns those buildings down there, was there ever any consideration of any other area in St. Petersburg rather than the downtown area?

Ware: Not that I recall. Like I said there was the northern county group who preferred to have it in the Clearwater area. I don't recall any other downtown location in this area. The Times for years were pushing in the editorial columns to get ( ) in Tampa and St.

Petersburg. Sometimes I do and sometimes I don't. They were very helpful in their news department and their editorial policies and supported the St. Pete campus.

St. Julien: Was there any question of the city having to match funds in order to get something started?

Ware: Yes, I think the city had to provide the land gratis.

St. Julien: So that was their way of showing support. What about city or county council?

Ware: Technically the mayor would be very active, I can't remember ( ). The city administration and the political leaders have always been very active in supporting it. There were some that didn't care for the particular location because of ( ) around there. Basically, as far as I know, they have always been supportive of ( ) political power.

St. Julien: Was there any debate over what would happen if the campus needed to expand? Now they are in a period where there had been a great deal of debate in which direction they should go.

Ware: Only with the Times almost paranoid attempts to close down the airport.

St. Julien: Was that ever mentioned at that time?

Ware: Yes it was.

St. Julien: It was mentioned then?

Ware: ( ) campus expansion. The Chamber of Commerce was very active.

St. Julien: What did they decide at that time?

Ware: It was a continuing argument. I think it is still going on today whether the campus should expand to the airport. My personal feeling has always been that they should expand towards the Bay Front Medical Center and open up a transportation system along the waterfront area from the Bay Front Medical Center to the All Children's Hospital, and I would like to see what happens along the interstate.

St. Julien: Was there ever any suggestion that the St. Pete campus might use those facilities like the Bay Front Center and All Children's Hospital to establish their own medical facility?

Ware: That has always been part of the concept. There is enough scope in your medical educational needs that there is an area for the St. Petersburg campus to participate in it. They have a pretty good intern program right now. ( ) for the last couple of years that they were beginning to get into sending the students from the campus in Tampa to All Children's Hospital for medical training and things of that nature. I think alot more could be handled with nursing education. We created a nursing education facility in the junior college ( ).

St. Julien: How important was the need for teachers at that time? I understand that one of the biggest departments when the school started was the Education department.

Ware: I suspect that it was probably a combination of perhaps a need for teachers and also a need for continuing education for teachers in this community, so they would not have to go away to get their educational requirements to keep their teaching certificate.

St. Julien: Was there any communication with the school board during this time or the teachers associations or anything about the development? Was there active support from them?

Ware: I think there was active support. There was always concern with the community college system that we might somehow impinge on their area. The need for teachers has fluctuated over the years. Sometimes it gets ( ) and sometimes ( ). So it is pretty hard to say exactly what ( ).

St. Julien: What kind of support or non-support came from the senior citizens? Did they see a need for a university?

Ware: I think so. I don't recall any organized groups that were opposed to it. I think most of them looked upon it as a facility that might provide some future educational opportunities for them.

St. Julien: There was no question of the increase in taxes?

Ware: There is always a thought, and luckily, as far as the campus goes, it was never raised as an issue in the political campaign that I know of, at least not effectively. Although sometimes people get behind a band wagon that says that there is going to be a lot of taxes raised by some particu-

lar issue. I think realistically the campus has been to the benefit of the community.

St. Julien: Were you ever opposed by any legislators from north Pinellas?

Ware: No. It was worked out in the delegation that they would support this facility.

St. Julien: So they were very cooperative?

Ware: It was very cooperative. There is always a little bit of "I would rather have it in my area." Basically, it was generally supported by the legislators from north Pinellas. Congressman Young was the state senator back in those days and was very active.

St. Julien: If you look back over the years that the University has been there on the St. Pete campus, have you seen developments that you strongly approve of or disapprove of as you watched it grow?

Ware: Of course every time that we need a new building, it was always difficult to get the capital ( ) and there was some satisfaction of seeing the bricks and mortar go up not only into this new building but it represents new opportunity ( ) for people in the area. Another thing that has been good for the campus is the academic chair program where people of various private contributions ( ) match the funds from the state ( ) excellence in ( ). The Marine Science program has always been able to attract a lot of support, but originally it wasn't a part of the university system as I recall.

St. Julien: Have you seen any developments that you think they might take a second look at that you might not think is for the best of the University?

Ware: I have been a little disappointed in the concept of some independence for the branch campuses. I think you have a little more community support or you have a great deal of community support if people were assured that the campus has some independence from the Tampa campus. However we were able to arrange it so the contributions made by the local groups were earmarked for this campus even though they went into the University of South Florida ledger. I think that is still the case. I was concerned that when we raise money in this area that it would funneled into the university system ( ) Tampa campus ( ).

St. Julien: Well, thank you very much for talking with us today.

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