

NOTICE

Materials in our digital Oral History collections are the products of research projects by several individuals. USF Libraries assume no responsibility for the views expressed by interviewers or interviewees. Some interviews include material that may be viewed as offensive or objectionable. Parents of minors are encouraged to supervise use of USF Libraries Oral Histories and Digital Collections. Additional oral histories may be available in Special Collections for use in the reading room. See individual collection descriptions for more information.

This oral history is provided for research and education within the bounds of U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.). Copyright over Oral Histories hosted by the USF Libraries rests with the interviewee unless transferred to the interviewer in the course of the project. Interviewee views and information may also be protected by privacy and publicity laws. All patrons making use of it and other library content are individually accountable for their responsible and legal use of copyrighted material.

USF 50th (2006) Anniversary Oral History Project
Oral History Program
Florida Studies Center
University of South Florida, Tampa Library

Digital Object Identifier: U23-00016
Interviewee: Ernest P. Boger
Interview by: Andrew Thomas Huse
Interview date: December 5th, 2003
Interview location: USF Tampa Library
Transcribed by: Renee Perez
Transcription date: January 27th, 2017 to February 2nd, 2017
Audit Edit by: Renee Perez
Audit Edit date: February 2nd, 2017
Final Edit by: Carla Butel
Final Edit date: July 12th, 2018

Andrew Huse (AH): Today is December 5th, 2003. My name is Andrew Huse, program assistant for the Florida Studies Center. Today, we continue a series of interviews in our studio here in the Tampa campus library with USF faculty, students, staff and alumni, in order to commemorate 50 years of university history. Today, we'll be interviewing Ernest Boger, who came to USF in 1961 as a student, and today, he is the director of the School of Hospitality at the Bethune-Cookman College. Did I get that right?

Ernest Boger (EB): Actually, it is the Department of Hospitality Management within the School of Business, technically, but same thing.

AH: Okay. Well, good afternoon. Thanks for being with us today.

EB: Good to be here, absolutely.

AH: Well, we're going to concentrate on your USF experience, for the most part. And to start with, what led you to USF? I know you graduated from Blake [High School].

EB: Absolutely. Well, specifically, it was the recommendation of the assistant principal, Mrs. Margaret Blake Roach was her name. I actually wrote an article, an editorial, in the Blake High School, school paper, and editorial suggesting that Blake students enroll in the University of South Florida because of, you know, our taxpayer's money and that sort of thing. And I was suggesting that our students, in fact, enroll. She read it, and she said, "You know, when you wrote that article, did you consider yourself at all?" And I said, "Well, no. Really, although I said 'we,' I was not thinking of me," because I was headed

for either NYU, or Columbia, or Morehouse, or Knoxville College.

And then I had a football/basketball scholarship, believe it or not, at Fisk University. So I was sorting those out, not really thinking of staying here at home. But when she said that, I don't know, it just suddenly struck a chord. And I said, "Well, actually, I hadn't thought of it." But then I did and here I am. And I think of that all the time because it's amazing how one person's recommendation can change your whole life. I think of that often when I talk to students.

AH: So what did you want to major in when you started out?

EB: Well, I started out with the idea of being a chemical engineering major, or that was the career I was headed toward, which would've put me into—we didn't have engineering at the time, so I would've been doing chemistry or physics. That's the way I started out. Of course, then, we had the College of Basic Studies. You simply took general studies courses for a couple of years, and, as I was exploring the different courses and that sort of thing, it occurred to me that—at least, it seemed to me, at the time—if I was going to be a scientist, I was going to be locked in a laboratory and not be dealing with people.

That may not be 100 percent true, but I thought so then. And I kind of felt like I was kind of more of a people person, primarily after taking behavioral science courses. And I switched to psychology, really. And then, too, I didn't have such a great experience with Mr. Calculus, either, so I said, well, maybe I need to—of course, later on, I discovered that, that also was a part of being a good behavioral scientist. But basically, that was it. I came in with the idea of doing chemical engineering, and through exploring the different courses in the basic studies curriculum, I discovered psychology or behavioral science was the way I wanted to go.

I would say, too, until I took that course, I really didn't realize—I had never looked at the study of behavior as a science. I mean, I kind of did very well in science all through high school, and so, I came to college with the idea of doing science but not realizing that behavior, also, was considered one of the sciences. I'd never had any course like that in high school and never really thought about it. But once I discovered there was something dealing with people that was also scientific, it was kind of a marriage made in heaven, and that did it for me.

AH: Well, USF was one of the first—was the first urban university in Florida. So how did that affect your decision? You being able to stay near home, et cetera?

EB: Well, that was really the key. That was really the key for me. Often, when I talk to people about being here at South Florida, they want to talk about the social statement, so to speak. But, as far as I was concerned, it was a simple matter of economics. It sounds unbelievable here today, but it was \$112.50 for all the courses you could take, basically, at that time. That figure, I could comprehend.

Staying at home and that figure was really not a problem, even if I did not have scholarships, which I did. But that was pretty easy to do. I really wanted to go to Columbia. That was my first choice. I can't remember exactly, but I want to say the cost of going to Columbia, even then, was about 3,000 a year. I had a scholarship for 1,500, but that's still a pretty big gap. So when you look at staying at home and going to USF, it's a no-brainer. And that's really why I went. Strictly economics.

AH: So just over \$110. Was that for a semester or the year?

EB: That's for a semester. And you could take a full load of 15 hours or something like that.

AH: So when was the first time you actually, physically came to the campus?

EB: Well, it was probably—I don't know, six or seven or eight months before I started school. At the time, there was something called a tri-racial committee in town, in Tampa, which was really light-years ahead of its time because, today, we're talking about multiculturalism. In Tampa, in 1959, '60, there was a tri-racial committee. This lady I mentioned, our vice principal, Margaret Blake Roach, was a part of that committee, and the committee actually met here on the USF campus, which gives you some idea of the involvement of USF, even back then.

From year one, it was the whole site for that kind of dialogue. So she brought some of the students our from high school to see the dialogue, and, of course, that was long before I even thought about coming here, but I had physically been on the campus and saw the construction and there were probably five or six buildings, something like that, at the time. So that was my first time here. And, when I actually came out for class the first day, it was probably my third or fourth time because I had rode out to look around and that sort of thing.

AH: So what did the campus look like the first time you came out? You said there was construction?

EB: A lot of sand. A lot of sand. A lot of wild foliage and that sort of thing. It was just totally isolated. I mean, you drove for miles through nothing but brush and then, suddenly, there was this—as you entered the college, there were just two brick—what do you call them? Standers or something, with the logo in the middle, and you drove in. Today, there's big stuff there. But it was, even so, there was a certain freshness about it, a certain newness about it. The color of the brick, it was exciting and modern. It's still modern today, but you can imagine what it was like in 1960, '61. The Testa-Secca murals were there, as you entered there, as well, so you could feel the university coming alive. And I had no idea how big it would get. I mean, today, I think we're the largest in the state, as I recall.

AH: Just about, yeah.

EB: Yeah, I think we were number two, then number one, so there are a lot of folk around. There were 2,000 students when I came out. I know that. My student number was actually 2,000. So there were a couple thousand of us here. And when I graduated, I want to say there were maybe 7,000, something like that. Which is interesting because I'm at a small college now, Bethune-Cookman College, and our population is just under 3,000. So when I tell them that, when I went to USF it was smaller than Bethune-Cookman, the students have a very difficult time relating to that. So, anyway—

AH: So what were some of the first academic experiences you had? Were there any teachers that stood out in your mind?

EB: Gosh, the names sort of fade, at this point, a little bit. I have to think on that. But, more so than the individual teachers was the approach. We had a sort of team learning concept, and that kept a group of—my numbers may be off a little bit—but I want to say there were a group of about 100 of us that did maybe four lectures together and four professors lectured in four areas of English, math, science, and probably behavioral science, as well, I think. We broke up into groups of 25 and rotated around for individual instruction. So that gave us a group of 100 people that you kind of get to know pretty well. So that was, really, my first educational experience: being a part of that group-learning team.

And we were an experimental group; all the students were not in that particular program. So that, plus the fact that we had a trimester system going. You could take all the courses all the time, which meant, if you went straight through, you could actually finish in two and a half years. Some people did that. In my own case, I finished, I guess, in three and a half because all of my requirements were done by December of the previous year. In fact,

I was looking for my picture in something, not too long ago—it turns out that I'm with the '64 group in the pictures, as opposed to the '65 group; although, my degree is '65. So those were the two first academic experiences, I guess I'd have to say.

AH: You mentioned earlier that you had trouble with calculus, but you almost got a perfect score on the entrance exam for the college?

EB: Yes, well, that's something that I probably should say a couple of words about from a historical standpoint because, at that time, there were—and it's somewhere placed in the archives, there—but there were separate entrance exams for Blacks and for Whites. That was a fact, at the time. Now, I don't think that was, generally—it certainly known, and legal, and official, but it wasn't something that was really open to, I guess, the public didn't think much about it. Besides, very few Blacks had applied to enter non-Black schools. The Black state school was Florida A&M. If you wanted to go to a state college, you applied, and that was that. It basically never came up.

Except, in my case—and, of course, I didn't know about it at the time—when mine came up, I discovered on the television set, "Today, a Black student has applied for admission to the University of South Florida, and there's confusion as to exactly what his scores mean because there are two exams," you see, and they were not the same exam. And so, the question was, Well, yes, he made pretty much a perfect score—492 out of 495, as I recall—on that exam, but that was a Black exam. And nobody was quite sure how to translate the Black exam into the White exam. And so, a fair amount of—and I would, at some point, like to look into the records, and there's probably some memos and stuff like that. Now that I'm a college administrator, I can imagine the difficulty that there would've been at that time, trying to figure out how to make it all work out. And this went on for, probably, six weeks or so.

Finally, somebody said, Well, we don't quite know what the translation is, but if he made that much on that exam, it must be enough for him to pass, it must be enough for him to meet the minimal requirement for getting in here, whatever that is. So I don't think they ever translated it. However, the next year—you can check that, too—the next year, the exams were put together. There was one exam from either the next year, or the next year after that. So, I guess that I made some contribution to the change of history without even knowing that there was such a thing.

AH: Sure. Was it often that you heard news stories, articles about your attending here?

EB: Um, well, huh. I would say yes, but not so much because I was different. It's just that I was doing things that college students normally do. I was in all the bands, and I was in the choir, and I was Vice President of the Russian Language Club and active in my

community, you know, and all that sort of thing. So I got a fair amount of coverage. I guess I should also mention that my mother was the partial owner and publisher of a Black community newspaper, *The Tampa Bulletin*, at the time. Today, you have *The Florida Sentinel-Bulletin*.

The *Bulletin* comes from the old *Tampa Bulletin*, which *The Sentinel* bought out some—I can't remember the year right now. But being in the newspaper business, I was also a reporter for sports events and stuff like that. So I got a fair amount of coverage just for things, "Ernest Boger is doing da-da-da-da." You know, "Ernest Boger appeared in the concert," and there might've been somebody out to take a picture, like that. So, I got a fair amount of coverage just for doing, you know, regular things, not so much about me being the first Black student here or anything like that. Not a whole lot on that—a couple of things, but not a lot.

AH: So what was it like, being the first and only Black student at USF for a time?

EB: Well, it's, uh—I guess I have to say, I didn't really feel particularly different in hardly any way. I've found in life that people kind of treat you, by and large, the way you treat them. I participated fully in all of the college activities, and, unless somebody pointed it out or asked me that question, I basically didn't think about it. On a day-in, day-out basis, I was too busy trying to study and get my grades, and, you know, the rehearsals and music and that sort of thing. I was also a student assistant in the music department and the psychology department, so I had a full student life in every way.

Um, so, you know, I can't—there were no—there were very, very few points of stress or concern or ugliness, shall we say, that came up. A couple here and there. So, basically, on a day-in, day-out basis, I didn't feel particularly different. And one of the interesting things about that, too, that, I guess, behavioral scientists will tell you, is that you basically look outward, and so, you have no idea that you look, shall we say, any different from anybody else because you see what is around you—it only occasionally will come to you when, maybe, you're shaving or something, and you'll say, "Oh. I don't look like all of those people out there." You know what I'm saying?

If you go to a Caribbean country, let's say, or an African country, you won't see yourself; you'll see everybody else around you. And you will have—unless somebody points it out to you or whatever—you have no reason to believe that you actually look any different, and you kind of, sort of, forget about it, as long as you're treated okay. And then, every now and then, it might occur to you, Oh, I'm a little bit different. But, by and large, the feedback that you're getting is the people that you see around you. So you really don't think—at least, I personally didn't think a whole lot about that.

AH: Uh-huh. It was a strong contrast to the experience of, like, a James Meredith—

EB: Well, exactly, exactly.

AH: —the same year, which, the national guard had to be called in and all these other things.

EB: Exactly. And I did have some concern prior to coming in because that was going on—before I actually started here, that was happening in the news. And there were a number of other situations throughout the South that were happening. And so, I am a generally positive person, and I say, “Well, that’s not going to happen to you here in Tampa.” Of course, I was right, but there was no particular, logical reason to believe it wouldn’t happen; I just, kind of, felt that it wouldn’t and hoped that it wouldn’t. I don’t know how I would’ve responded, had I had any difficulty. Because, again, as I said, I wasn’t coming to make a social statement.

I was coming because of economic advantage, shall we say. And, had it turned into something like that, I don’t know how I would’ve reacted. I possibly would’ve become, you know, militant and stayed with it. Or I might’ve left and gone to someplace else. I really can’t say. At that time, at age 16, you just never know how you’re going to respond. But I do say to people all the time that USF opened up as a school with multicultural diversity. We had, as you know, the Hispanic community and the history here, so, you know, there were tons of students here who—you heard a ton of Spanish being spoken on campus, as well as Italian. And myself. So, pretty much from day one—and I think that’s the real key.

There were no traditions here, like in Mississippi, that still exist today, unfortunately, and some of the other states of the so-called Deep South. Florida is actually deeper south, but, technically, we’re almost an island in many respects, with all of the people coming up from the Caribbean and South America, even then. Well, of course, you know the story of José Martí, you know, being pretty much headquartered in Ybor City and all that kind of stuff.¹ So I think Tampa was a good—Tampa has been a melting pot for a long, long time. And that spirit kind of flowed over onto the campus, then. Very, very few incidents in the whole time I was here.

AH: Um-hm. So you mentioned you got into a lot of extracurricular activities. What were

¹José Julián Martí Pérez (1853 – 1895) was an important nationalist political leader in Cuba and a prominent writer of the *Modernismo* movement. In 1871, he visited Ybor City and Tampa, giving a number of speeches about the Cuban independence movement.

some of the first ones you started? What got drew you to these different activities?

EB: Well, number one would be music. I was playing piano since I was 12, and I was band captain in high school and all of that kind of stuff. I was baritone soloist in the choir and all of that, so I actually had a music scholarship here, to USF. I have to think about USF because UCF now exists, and I worked with them a lot, so I always have to think to say “UC” or “US.” Sometimes I say USF, and so, “You mean UCF?” I say, “Well, yeah, that’s where I went to school, so.” I have to think very carefully. But the band was the first thing, and that automatically brought into play a peer group and a social group of people that I had something in common with, so that made life very, very comfortable. That was number one.

As we’re talking about historical stuff, it’s probably not very well known that, well, I was here when the school song was written, when the Bull was chosen, and all that kind of stuff. And in the school song, there’s a lyric in there that refers to my being here. I presume the school song has changed, but there’s a part where it goes, uh—I have to try to remember now. “Hail to the alma mater / May thy name be told / Where above (inaudible).” Yeah. “Be thou our guide in the search for knowledge.” (EB singing) “Be thou our guide in the search for knowledge.” And then it goes (EB resumes the song), “where all men are free² / University of South Florida.”

When Dr. Hugoboom wrote that, he said, “Well, you know why that’s in there?” And I said, “Yeah, well, I guess so.” And he explained to that, in writing that, it could’ve been, “Be thou our guide in the quest for knowledge / Where all men are free” [pitch descends] or something like that. But he thought it needed to be a soaring lyric, so it becomes, “Where all men are free” [pitch ascends]. You know. That’s kind of in there too, reflect[ing] the fact that we did have a different, progressive environment here at South Florida. And I’ve always been very proud of that, and that’s kind of, probably, one that’s little known. Uh, Tom Joyner, a radio show, has this little Black history fact type thing, and that would probably be one of them.

AH: Uh, so, did you sing baritone? Or did you play baritone sax?

EB: Uh, both. Well, I sing baritone. I played tuba, primarily, in the band here. I started off with trumpet, and then, as I got bigger in school, I got baritone horn. As I got bigger, I got a tuba. So basically, I played tuba all the way through here, as well as valve trombone in the jazz lab band. And that’s pretty much it.

AH: So what kind of—you talked about the jazz lab band.

²USF’s alma mater has been modified and this section is now, “Where we all are free.”

EB: Uh huh.

AH: What kind of compositions would you play in the band?

EB: All the classic stuff. All the classic stuff. There were, you know, the Duke Ellingtons, the Stan Kenton, all of the big band compositions of that time. A few of our people wrote some things, some really great guys. I guess, the one, as far as I know, who has achieved the most prominence since then would be a guy named Terry Plumeri, who was the bass player on Roberta—[he] also played string bass as well. Now, today, it's that kind of thing, but then it was upright. Terry Plumeri was the bassist on Roberta Flack's³ first album.

That was like, maybe 1966 or '67 or something like that. I left school and hadn't heard from him or anything, and then I saw on the back of the album. "Terry Plumeri." I said, My god! There can only be one guy like that who plays bass. And sure enough, it was him. I went to a concert in DC and went backstage to see if, in fact, it was him. And it was. We had a great reunion. So, of the guys in the jazz lab band, he's probably the one who has gone the farthest. I don't know what he's doing today.

There was a guy named Carroll Barris [sic] who played a lot around Tampa here, and probably still is. This guy named Mark Morris on drums. It was a bunch of guys, mostly guys, a couple of ladies. But it was a class. It wasn't just something we got together. It was a class. It was the concert band ensemble. It was a reading band. We would just read literature and stuff as a jazz lab band. A couple of choirs, you know. I was into all that stuff. I'd have to look at my transcript because you get one hour of credit for everything like that. So I'd have to look at the transcript to see exactly. But so, yeah, that was my first social group, so to speak.

And a continuous social group right on through. Activity group, as you mentioned it. Campus basketball. At that time, I always tell people now that John Allen, the president, said that there would be intercollegiate sports on campus over his dead body. As soon as he died, (AH laughing) we had a golf team, and I think track followed, then baseball, and then on, and on, and on. And, of course, finally, we got football a few years ago. I'm sure he's turning in his grave every night. But his theme was—and, as you can read back over the history—"Accent on Learning" was the theme at the time. And the campus intramural programs were very active, very aggressive.

³Roberta Flack, born in 1939, is an American jazz, folk, and soul vocalist and musician. Some of her most well-known songs include "The First Time I Ever Saw Your Face" and "Killing Me Softly with His Song."

The first year I came out, I was recruited for the campus basketball team, and they had a decent year. But the next year, John Gullett, who was in journalism—I don't know where John is today—he was involved. He was graduating, so I ended up being the team organizer, so to speak. And I kind of looked around the campus for guys who were tall and said, "Do you play ball?" And, yeah.

Well, as it turned out, we had a pretty good squad that year. We were called the All-Stars. And we actually won the campus championship. It was a neat group of guys. Some had been in the army, some had—one guy had actually played for Ohio State, but academically didn't quite make it, so he ended up back here. As a matter of fact, we used to go over and scrimmage with the, um—(speaking to his wife) what's the school that your nieces went to there?

Mrs. Boger (MB): (softly) Saint Leo's.

EB: What's that again?

MB: Saint Leo's.

EB: Saint Leo's. We used to go over and scrimmage with the Saint Leo's guys, you know, like once a week or so. It was a very, pretty decent group of guys there. So that's athletics. What else is there? I was part of the Russian Language Club. The thing there was that, although I've always felt like you should take advantage of the uniqueness of situations, we had Russian language on campus. That was not available a lot, at that time, although it was becoming more and more available because we were, sort of, in a race of some sort with the Russians.

They had just gone to the moon, or we had gone to the moon or something. I forget the exact details. But it was the space race, science situation with the Russians. And so, every American kid who had an interest in language was encouraged to do Russian, so I did Russian. I actually was one course—I guess I still am—one course short of having a Russian teaching minor. That required X number of hours in Russian and X number of hours in education. I'd be three hours short of Russian or three hours short in education from having a Russian teaching minor at that time. I don't know what the qualifications are today, but, you know. I guess that's probably it for activities.

AH: Did you live on campus? Did you stay home?

EB: I actually lived on campus one term. And I still do today. I apply for everything in the way of scholarships, and loans, and work, and whatever—I apply for everything. One semester, I got everything. I had so much financial aid from one place or the other, and it could all only be used for school activities. So I ended up staying on campus because I had the money to stay on campus there in Alpha Hall. That was a great experience, too, so I actually spent one year on campus; that was my junior year. Other than that, I stayed at home. My family lives in Progress Village, which is just on the side of Brandon. It's a good 45-minute drive from there to here.

Interestingly enough with that, going through college, I must've had at least six automobiles, between six and eight automobiles, which means that they lasted about a semester each (AH laughs). The most expensive one was probably \$350. They were all something less than that. But there was a group of guys from Robinson High School here that I hung out with, Mel Tucker, Harry Hickinbotham, Cecil Holladay. Those three guys were pals from high school. I kind of, and again, as a part of our team group, we became groups within groups. So I hung out with them. And they were all great mechanics. They had actually been racing, um, what do you call them? The bumper cars where you run into each other at Phillips Field on weekends and stuff.

And so, as long as I could get some kind of piece of car, they'd keep it running. Generally speaking, it would last a semester, and says, "Well, Ernie, we've got to junk this one." And they'd take out the automatic transmission and put in a standard transmission. So I really had a lot of fun with that.

So cars were—my cars were not always reliable, and, as it turned out, a couple of the custodians, a couple of the groundskeepers, and maintenance, and custodial people also lived in the community where I lived, so it was not unusual for me to be knocking on their door, "Hey, you know, my car is not running this morning. Can I catch a drive with you?" So I had another way of getting here by hitching a ride with the custodial workers sometimes, when the car wasn't running. So it was an interesting experience in survival, so to speak. So, when I see my students today complaining about their new Lexus that needs an upgraded (inaudible), I say, "Well, you know."

AH: Or a new computer chip.

EB: Yep. Exactly, exactly.

AH: So, your time living on campus, what kind of activities were there? What was dorm life like?

EB: Dorm life was fun. I guess, the main thing I remember is the food. You know, the regular meals, so to speak, when you're running back and forward to home, and you're on a different schedule from your parents and stuff, it gets kind of weird. But at least, in the dorm, you've got three meals regularly. They used to do a special Saturday night, a special, either a barbecue cookout or Italian theme or something like that, to keep Saturday nights interesting.

So that's a thing that immediately comes to mind. A Ron Resler was my roommate. He was also a band member, really a great musician. I don't know what he's doing today, either. He was from Clermont. As I came through Clermont today, I thought of Ron. I don't remember anything specific about the dorms. I mean, it was just—it made my life a lot more orderly because I had books, a place to study, a place to sleep, so it really, really, made life, as I said, more orderly. But other than the food itself, a few hijinks. One guy had a pet squirrel, stuff like that. You know, the normal things.

AH: Oh, we like hijinks, yeah.

EB: Yeah, yeah.

AH: Many pranks or anything?

EB: I can't remember any pranks, right off hand. I'm sure there must've been some. I really can't remember anything specific. There was something about—this really wasn't a prank, but there's a communication system that goes through all the rooms or something like that, I think. At certain times of night, they used to run comedy stuff through there, risqué comedy, actually. I'm not quite sure how that happened. You didn't need a radio, just, through your intercom system, there were these stories that would come through. I don't remember who the comedians were, but, other than that, I can't remember anything that's really far off the chart.

AH: Well, that sounds pretty funny, anyhow. So, what about other social activities? Was there much of a chance to have social activities off campus, anything like that?

EB: Well, of course, you know, this is my hometown, and we were a commuter campus then. Most people were off campus anyway, and again, for three of the years, I was off campus anyway. So I did everything in the community that there was to be done. You know, as much as the pocket of a college student can afford. You know, you'd save

money for concerts and that sort of thing. And Tampa's always had a rich variety of entertainment coming through and tons of restaurants, movies, all the regular stuff was there. So, yeah.

AH: Were there any hangouts that USF students seemed to gravitate to when you talk about restaurants or pubs?

EB: Not that I recall, at least not that I was involved with. Now in the later years, well, four years—not a lot of years. The first year, I was by myself. The second year, there were maybe three or four of us here, including a Benny Small, a Dr. Benny Small, who stays pretty active with the alumni association I think. About four of us here. The third year, maybe 10 or 11, something like that. One of those was a lady by the name of Jackie Valdez, who actually passed not too long ago—well, probably 10 years ago now by one of the cancers, I forget which one—but she as an older lady.

Probably, when we were 16, 17, 18, she was probably in her early 30s, something like that. And, I guess today that would be a non-traditional student, I suppose. And she already had been married, and divorced, and had two kids and like that, but she was coming back to school to get her life in order and that sort of thing. But she had a nice house over in Ybor City, so that was kind of where we'd hang out, if there was a hang out. There were probably a dozen of us Black students who would kind of make that our headquarters.

That was about halfway here. So when my car was running, quite often, I brought her to school and back and forth. So that would've been sort of a hangout for us there. I also included some other folk, Rene Villa, a Hispanic student. On the way over, I looked through my directory and looked up some of the names of people that were along at the time. But as far as a specific club or anything like that—the University Restaurant down here was the only thing I can think of.

AH: Yeah, actually, the USF students took part of an effort to integrate that restaurant in the early '60s. Do you remember anything about that?

EB: Oh, yeah. I remember that very well. That was one of those kind of ugly things; probably the worst situation that that happened here. It wasn't vile or anything, but I think maybe my second year here, something like that. After a band concert, the band always goes someplace for dinner.

And so, the University Restaurant was a place to go. That was the selected place because

I, along with a couple of other people, were on scholarships. We would have to take down the stands, put away the music and all that kind of stuff. And so, we got there probably 30 minutes after everybody else had already gotten seated and put their orders in. And the orders were just about to start coming out. As I walked in, I could see the manager kind of get frantic there. And I, you know, when you're a person of color, you tend to anticipate some of these things.

A lot of times, they don't materialize. But when they do, you know exactly what's happening. So I saw him scurry over there to our band director, and there was some whispering going on. I'm sure he was saying, "Who is that person?" And the band director said, "Well, that's Ernie. That's our student assistant." And he said, "Well, we can't serve him." And he then announced, actually one of the students announced, "Well, guys, it appears that they can't serve Ernie here, so if they're not going to serve Ernie, we're not going to eat here." So they'd also, by that time, called a couple of other places—actually, Frisch's Big Boy, I don't know if it's still here, it's further over there.

They called Frisch's Big Boy to be sure there was no problem. They said, "We're all going to Frisch's." So everybody got up and left and went to Frisch's. And I'm sure that hurt them that evening because, as I said, all the orders were already in, and they were about to come out as we arrived. So that sent the message, at least, from our group of probably 100 people. Then, the next day, students and the faculty began to picket for, I don't know how long the picket lasted, but it was around the time that the public accommodation laws were about to be passed anyway, so they would've been required to serve everybody anyway in the next few weeks, or months, or whatever. So I don't know that, that particularly helped anything because, as I said, the tide of change was already in place. But, you know, to the credit of USF students and faculty, they recognized a situation and stepped up and did what was the right thing to do at the time.

AH: Well, it should be noted, too, that a lot of restaurants in Tampa had integrated in 1960, kind of a gentlemen's agreement behind the scenes. Obviously, the University Club wasn't signed on to that gentlemen's agreement.

EB: Nineteen sixty, okay. I didn't know about that. We'll talk later about that because I'd be interested in hearing. The only place, and then I'm sure that's true. Again, I was not an adult, not with the income available to spend, so I can't really say yay or nay on that. But I do know the only, as far as I recall, the only places that Black people felt comfortable were the restaurants in Ybor City, and most of them are gone now.

But there were at least six or eight restaurants on the calle above the Colombia, at the time. Las Novedades was one, and I remember taking my parents there for some celebrations there. So if there was a gentlemen's agreement, it probably wasn't—very

few people actually knew about it and actually took advantage of it. But then, we'll talk about that some other time.

AH: So, uh, what else? What have we overlooked so far? What about other academic experiences? Anything else to share there? You got into behavioral science and psychology.

EB: Yeah. I can't think of anything specific, except that I liked behavioral science. I wasn't exactly sure what I was going to do with it. My theory was that, if I liked it, I would do well with it, and that would take me to the top, whatever that meant. But in terms of specific experiences, I can't think of anything. Now, for me, at least in terms of being African American, the whole experience was great, in the sense that it gave me an opportunity to, shall we say, compete in the White world before it really mattered.

At that time, that gave me kind of a leg up because most people in my generation, in the South, were coming out of historically Black colleges, and whatever competing with the world beyond that was all about, it was something you had to learn when you got into the workforce. And there were many subtle things that you don't really think about. Even my name, for example, I was never called "Ernie," for example, until I came here. That's kind of an Anglo thing, shortening people's names. In my community, I was basically known by my last name, as Boger, most of the time.

I was very—either Boger or Junior because I'm a Junior. I was, actually, never called Ernie until I got here. And other stuff like that, that other students would not have experienced until they got in the world of work, when it, probably, was more important. Here, I had an opportunity, and it really was an opportunity, at that time, to live and work and play with individuals I had not grown up with. So that was a very valuable experience for me, more so than the academics because I could have gotten them anywhere.

But I would say that the socialization of being here was a very good thing for me because I didn't have to—whatever one has to go through to shift the gears and all of that sort of thing. There's a million questions—differences of hair, and there's just a million, little things that are probably not as—like the fact that Black people tan, for example, that's a miracle that White folk often don't understand.

A million little things like that, that people kind of learn about each other as they grow up today, in many communities, which wasn't happening when I was growing up. And so, I dealt with all of the developmental discovery, so to speak, here. And when I entered the work world, it was like yesterday's news, so to speak. So that was very valuable for me. I

wouldn't do it any other way, you know? Really, as I look back on it.

AH: So it was kind of an early initiation to, kind of, getting out into the workplace, the real world, and mingling with all of that, I suppose.

EB: Exactly. Exactly, to the multiculturalism that America has now become. Yeah, sure.

AH: So what about some other statewide events? The Johns Committee⁴ was kind of a big deal at the time, and universities were singled out for looking for communists, and homosexuals, and all that stuff, and USF was singled out. Do you remember anything about that? People getting upset about it, or?

EB: Not really. You know, I'm amazed at, as a student, how little I and my fellow students knew about the things that were going on around us. And that's still true today, and I try to make an effort for my students to know. Vietnam was the happening thing. But, then, I could not have told you why we were in Vietnam or how we got there and all that kind of stuff. I knew there was something about Vietnam. So, like, today, I ask students about Afghanistan, about Iraq—same thing.

They have no real idea about what the issues are, they just know that there are people there. It was a little bit different in my time because the draft was in place, and we knew—all the young men, anyway—that we would probably be doing military service. But in terms of issues like that, I'm generally aware that there was something going on with teachers and faculty, but we were just trying to make it through.

AH: Sure, sure. So, obviously, you got deferred from the draft while you were at USF?

EB: Yes.

AH: That was never a concern of yours?

EB: Not while in school, no. But, one year or so after, I was holding up my hand and being sworn in right here in Tampa. From here, I went to New York and worked on a

⁴The Florida Legislative Investigation Committee (also known as the Johns Committee) was established in 1956. Similar to the investigative committees during the McCarthy period, the Johns Committee conducted wide-ranging investigations; they focused on academics, Civil Rights Movement groups, suspected communist organizations and homosexuals with an aim to expose what they believed to be subversive activities.

bank there for a year before the draft caught up with me, so to speak. And I did go in and serve as a military officer and made use of my—while I was training infantry and all of that, ended up being transferred to the AG corps, where I held a position of personnel psychologist and chief mental testing officer, which was directly related to my degree. So that was neat.

I mean, Uncle Sam spent a year training me to be a combat infantry platoon leader, and then the next day, the computers were in and click and says, Oh, we've trained this guy to go out and, you know, do the heavy stuff, but he's got a degree in psychology, so let's send him to Dallas and make him a personnel psychologist. I'm saying, "Well, you could've done that first, so that I could've avoided Fort Benning, and the swamps, and all that kind of stuff!" But, you know, I suppose it makes a man out of you or whatever.

AH: So what kind of work did you do in Dallas, then, as a psychologist?

EB: I was responsible for—well, the stations where individuals are processed into the military service are called AFEES, Armed Forces Entrance and Examining Stations. I'm sure they still exist, but then, with the draft, with the need to get large numbers of people into the system, when you turned 17 or something like that—I forget—you had to come in and take a written test: the Armed Forces Qualification Test. You also had to undergo a physical exam, and there were some other questions about your background and stuff. All this was documented and put in a file.

I was responsible for the whole mental testing process. Had about a dozen guys, and they were all men at the time, who actually administered the exams, and graded them and, handled the file, and all that sort of thing. One interesting responsibility was actually interviewing individuals who had failed the Armed Forces Qualification Test, and my job was to determine if they were true failures or malingerers. If you got a guy like yourself, comes through with a college education and master's degree and he fails the exam, there's a very good chance that you're malingering, that you don't want to go. And so, I would have to talk to you and make a determination that you were or were not, and, in most cases, it was pretty straightforward.

A very interesting assignment, in the sense that you had people who, um, really had some educational challenges and going into the military service probably would've been the best thing in their lives, and they really wanted to go, but they didn't make the scores, so I had to say, "No, you couldn't go." And then you had other people, on the other hand, who were quite qualified to go but didn't want to go. Some offered bribes and that sort of thing. I remember one guy, he said, "You see that building over there? See the name on that building?" I said, "Well, yeah." He said, "Well, that's my uncle. He owns that building. Now, you know, he could do something very, very good for you, now and for

the rest of your life, if you just.” I said, “Well, no.” This was Texas, you know? Got a lot of interesting things like that.

So we had people who couldn't go who wanted to go, and those who could go who didn't. And so, it was a very interesting situation, and my studies here at USF really prepared me well for handling that job as a second and as a first lieutenant and, finally, there's what we would call captain designate, which means you've put in the time and the grade and everything else, and all you have to do is say, “Yes, I'll re-up and stay another five years,” and then that happens. If I go in again for whatever reason, if we—god forbid—I'd go in as captain.

AH: Uh-huh. So kind of, briefly map your course for us from there. From the military to your present position as director.

EB: Huh, okay. I can do that. And, as I look back on it, I have to feel like there was the hand of the Almighty or something like that kind of guiding me because I really didn't map it out and say, “Okay, this is where I want to be. This is what would—,” you know. Of course, we teach our students, and our kids, and everybody to do that today, and it works very well. But, let's see, I went from here to New York, actually, to spend some time with a cousin there. And also, I was invited to a job fair. Somehow this company, this headhunter group, had identified Black students from around the country. How they found me, I don't know.

And they had contracts with companies at the time, to help them identify Black students, African-American graduates. So they invited me to this job fair. I went up there, I said, “Okay, I'll see what my degree is worth and that.” Based upon the interviews, I ended up with a bank, a manufacturing title trust company, which today, I think is—which is Citibank today. They've evolved. That was kind of strange because I did not have any idea that I would be involved with a financial institution. But they explained, at that time—and this, too, is historical, certainly—at the time, it was impossible to recruit individuals with particular college degrees and match them with the job requirements because so many guys were going out for the draft.

So they simply wanted to know that you had, in fact, completed a college degree; that means you could set objectives and achieve them, and you can apply logical reason, whatever, you know, you were an educated person. And so, they had very extensive training programs that would, you know, give you everything you needed to be effective in their companies. Because I asked a guy, I said, “Well, you know, my background is psychology and behavioral science. I assume you're interested in me in personnel.” And he says, “No, no, no. Not at all. We're looking for financial loan officer trainees.” So I said, “Okay, well, that sounds fine, but now, what about the technical details?”

He says, “No problem. We will give you so much. When you finish our six-month training program, you’d have as much experience and exposure as a person with an MBA.” For example, when we’re talking about the gold reserves, we’ll be in the Federal Reserve Bank, looking at the gold. When we talk about what a specialist does on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, we’ll have one come up from the floor and explain to you. But, long story short, I went to work with the bank. That worked very well. I was moving up the ladder, and, of course, the draft came in, and away I went. They, of course, would hold my job for me and all that sort of thing.

But, from there to the military service. I already mentioned what I was doing there. I talked about training and what I was doing there. While I was in the military service in Dallas, we lived in an apartment complex. One day, the owners there said, “Say, young man, we’ve seen you come and go, and you look to be a clean-cut guy, and we know you’re an officer and a gentleman and all that sort of thing. Do you plan on making the military your career?” and I said, “Well, I don’t think so. But anything is possible.” So they said, “Well, you know, we need a responsible person here in the evening to kind of keep an eye on things. It’ll give you a chance to learn the business. We can’t pay you any money, but we’ll give you free rent.”

I said, “Oh, okay. Well, this could probably work.” So I began to operate as the night manager of that particular apartment complex for a couple of years. At the same time, I started working on an MBA at the University of North Texas. And when I got out of the service, finished the MBA, stayed with that company, they made me an offer to become a fulltime general manager at one of their new properties in the Dallas area. So I stayed with that company with apartment management for a couple or three years.

I did finish the MBA, and, of course, I remember saying to them that, “This is all well and good, but most of the decisions are being made in the central office and the main office, and with the MBA, I feel like I need to do something else.” You know, the day-to-day operations in the apartment complex are pretty straightforward. So I said, “Unless you can make me an offer in the main office, I’ll probably go someplace else.” They had a bank that was a part of their empire. So they said, “Well, we don’t have anything in the main office, but we can find something for you in the bank.”

So I moved to the South Oak Leaf Bank, which has now become a Guaranty Bank in Dallas, as a business development person. And my job was, broad, just to do everything necessary to keep the current customers and everything possible get as many new customers as possible. That, too, is historic in that, that was kind of the beginning of bank marketing. Before then, banks sort of sat back and waited for you to come in. But, about that time, banks were beginning to reach out, beginning to advertise, beginning to offer

various kinds of premiums and stuff like that.

So I was kind of, right there on the edge of that movement. I tell my business students today, actually, I was there when credit cards were born, if you can imagine such a thing. I mean, I actually used to go to companies and say, “Listen, people are not going to be using cash and checks. They’re going to be using these little plastic things. And here’s the way that’s going to work. They’re going to present them, and you’re going to have a little embossing machine, and you’re going to have a receipt here. And at the end of the day, you’re going to deposit those, and we’re going to give you immediate credit for those. We’re going to, maybe, take three percent or four percent, or whatever it is, off of that, but you’re not going to have to worry about bad checks and all that stuff.”

I actually had to go in and explain that, and they’d say, Well, I don’t know about this. This is very strange. I like cash. I mean, you can imagine how that was. But when we made a sale, I would—there was a big, big press announcement with a TV and everything. We put the MasterCard seal on the door, and one more company comes into the MasterCard fold. So I was actually there, doing that sort of thing in banking. Okay. From there, I moved to the National Alliance of Businessmen. This just kind of happened. I was doing very well at the bank, but it was a small Texas bank, and it was family-owned, and, again, with the MBA and everything, I wanted to do something else with that.

And the owner and I agreed that, well, he said, “Ernest, you’re probably doing as much as you’re going to do here because it’s a family bank and, as you’ve noted over the past year or so, we’ve ran into this and that,” and I wasn’t really being groomed to go to another level there. Family members were coming in from SMU and other places like that. So the president said, “Well, I can get you something in another bank, or you might want to do something else.” So anyway, ended up with the National Alliance of Businessmen, an 18-month project designed to find jobs for veterans returning into the Dallas area. That was neat in that, the individuals driving the office and the initiative were loaned executives from various companies around the Dallas area.

My job was—I was called the Veterans Job Representative. But I was the youngest person there and was—my role, they wanted someone who had a business background, who was himself a veteran to join that team of loaned executives, put together a strategy for finding 6,000 jobs for veterans coming back into the Dallas area over that time period. So that was the National Alliance of Businessmen. I would’ve paid for that experience because you’ve got to figure, there, again, men or guys who are senior executives with the local bank, with Texas Instruments, with Hagar Slacks, and like that.

Roger Staubach, at the time, who was a Dallas Cowboy Quarterback Super Bowl, was the

honorary chairman of that initiative. So the kind of exposure and experience that I got from working with that group was just, just phenomenal, and I still draw on that today. Anyway, from that, that also had me working with the Employment Security Service, the public agency that has jobs for people, so on and so forth. Something came through there, and that was, again, another head hunter was looking for someone who had a background in project management, which was what I'd been doing for 18 months, as well as some background in the hospitality industry, which is what I'd been doing with the apartment complexes there.

And I also had worked in a restaurant here in Tampa, the Hawaiian Village, all the time I was in school, as well. They wanted someone who could come in with that background and establish a hospitality management degree program in the Wiley College in Marshall, Texas. Went there, set that up for, probably, a couple of years. From there, I got an offer to go to Jamaica and do something similar there for the Jamaican government, which was help develop the Jamaica Hotel School, so I ended up in Jamaica, where I met my wife, who is over there.

I ran the—there was a hotel attached to it, the Hotel Casa Amante—so I was actually the executive director of the Hotel Casa Amante as well as being responsible. I had a dean reporting to me who handled all of the school operations and a resident manager that handled hotel operations for that, and it was about five years. From there, I evolved onto the University of the West Indies in Nassau, Bahamas. The University of the West Indies serves the 14 English-speaking countries in the Caribbean. They wanted to establish—because tourism is so important in the Caribbean, they wanted to establish their own training program.

So then in 1978, we were looking for faculty to start that program. Well, I went there as senior lecturer in hotel tourism management, maybe '78, was there for five years, went on to the University of South Carolina for, I guess, another four years as a—actually, I was the international programs coordinator there, which basically meant, I kind of scoured the world for consulting projects that would make use of the talents of our faculty, and most of those were in the Caribbean.

That's kind of why they brought me in because this was during the time when President Reagan's Caribbean basin initiative was in place. And the University of South Carolina had kind of been identified as the key institution one needed to deal with, if one really wanted to get contracts in that area. And, of course, a lot of what happened in the Caribbean is tourism, so they brought me in as a person who had been there for 10 years to kind of make that happen. And I did, and that was fun.

Tape 1 Ends; tape 2 begins

EB: Oh, okay, I missed all of that.

AH: Okay, so, we just left off with you in South Carolina.

EB: Right, and, from there, I came to Bethune-Cookman College in 1989, where I have been ever since, and that's 15 years now.

AH: Okay. Well, and I always like to end interviews with, kind of, a little reflection.

EB: Sure.

AH: So, first of all, I'd like to ask you, if you have anything to give to later generations—any advice, any insight—for people that might be just, kind of starting out, and maybe they're just graduating from high school, maybe they're even thinking about dropping out. What would you tell future students?

EB: Well, for one, you simply must (tape skips) have a college education today. It's really not an option. It's not a matter of "if I'm going to college." You have to go. The money is available, so you simply have to go to college. There are a lot of them out there in America, and you have to do that. The statistics show that a college education puts you light-years ahead of everybody else, in terms of earning power, masters and doctorates even more so. But, so that's one: you have to go to college. Beyond that, you need to make a plan for your life. Talk with someone of another generation, and plan what you're going to do because you can do that.

I didn't do that, as I said; the hand of providence kind of guided me, but you can't totally count on that. So, you know, you have to go to college. You have to make a plan for your life. What I try to do now—and, actually, I probably started this back in my 20s, and I'm in my 50s now—I try to look ahead a full generation, at least 10 years, anyway. I try to talk to people who are 10 years ahead of me to try to figure out what issues they're dealing with. Right now, in my case, it's retirement.

I'm 58 right now. So I'm talking to 68-year-old people trying to find out, what kind of lifestyle do you have? How are you sustaining yourself economically? How about your health? That sort of thing. So I encourage people to do that. Try to talk to folk who are 10 years beyond where you are, get a feel for what it's like. That way, when you get there, you can be prepared. So that's one, little, personal thing that I do that I would like to pass

on to anyone.

AH: Uh-huh. Well, uh, I guess, I just want to end by thanking you for driving across the state to see us today.

EB: No problem. This is home.

AH: Yeah. And, now, even though you ad-libbed it, as you say, which is a great tradition in jazz, I think that the song turned out just fine. And thanks again for being with us.

EB: Yes, indeed. My pleasure. If there's anything else that you want me to do, just give me a shout. I'll be happy to elaborate, or whatever the case might be.

AH: Yeah. Well, as long as we have about 10 extra minutes, I'll just keep the tape rolling, and we'll talk about some of your experiences here. You mentioned Las Novedades. That was, certainly, a venerable institution.

EB: Absolutely. Absolutely.

AH: It gave Colombia a run for its money the whole time. Any memories there? You said you went there for celebrations and stuff?

EB: Yeah. My grandmother actually worked for Spanish people in Key West—actually, from the time she was probably eight years old. So she grew up, although she was from the Bahamas, she grew up as a native Spanish speaker. And so, Spanish was spoken in my home right on through. So, while we were not fluent, we knew lots of words and phrases. It was a real thrill to be able take her—she was probably in her 80s at the time—to Las Novedades on just a couple of occasions. I can't remember what they were right now. But certainly, it was nice for her to be able to experience something that she could not have before the laws changed, so to speak, or the social situations changed.

AH: Any dishes that stand out in your mind?

EB: Oh, the paella. It was a paella valenciana, absolutely.

AH: Sure.

EB: Yeah, I can taste it right now.

AH: Hawaiian Village? You said you worked there?

EB: I was the opening dishwasher. When they opened the doors, I was there as the opening dishwasher. I was a little underage at the time, but we didn't have computers then. If I looked like I was 18, I was 18. So, you know, I was the opening dishwasher there. And I tell students today, my big thrill was to move from dishwasher up to glasswasher because I got my set of three compartment sinks, and I was able to become an artist.

You know, an individual, as opposed to part of the dishwashing team. And so, at the time, I had no idea that I was going to be in the hospitality industry later on in life. I was doing psychology. But I worked there continuously, all while I was here. And I worked up through, put on pot washer, which was important because that was the big macho thing. You know, you had to be a big guy to handle the big pots. And then onto the bakery, where I became a baker's assistant.

That was an interesting operation because you had an American, a Polynesian, and a Chinese kitchen all in one. And they had some interesting encounters with each other there. So I learned a lot about kitchens, and restaurants, and that sort of thing that, later on in life, now that I'm on the board of the National Restaurant Association, for example, and the American Hotel and Lodging Association. I'm on the national board as well, and several others. I still draw on that experience from that time.

AH: Well, it sounds like a pretty big operation, I mean, to have all these different kinds of food.

EB: Yes, yes, it was.

AH: What was their specialty, like, dishes-wise?

EB: Oh, gosh. Moo Goo Gai Pan, one of the Cantonese specialties there. We had Peking duck. They also did a Hawaiian duck. It was very popular. Lots of shrimp dishes, coconut shrimp, all that kind of good stuff. They did, I think most people—well, I don't know if most people, but a lot of people came for the drinks as well. They had a full array of, you

know, Polynesian drinks there.

They had something called the Goddess of Love, actually. It was a giant drink for about eight people, a big bowl type thing. And the lady would come out and do the dance and everything and put the leis around the necks of the people, usually guys, again, and the long straws. Everybody had a great time, you know. I bump into some of those people every now and then, who were back there in those days. And we kind of reminisce a little bit.

AH: What other restaurants stand out in your mind? What about in the African-American neighborhoods? Any places that stand out there?

EB: Well, they're all gone now because they were mostly on Central Avenue, but a Moses White—well, actually, Moses White and his sons now have an operation.

AH: Uh-huh, in Ybor City.

EB: In Ybor City, now. Yeah. But on Central Avenue, that was like the fast food place, so to speak. There was a Shelley Greens, which was a soul food, sit-down, diner-type operation and others I can't remember there.

AH: Was the Rodgers Dining Room still in operation there?

EB: Rodgers was there, yes, absolutely. There was one on the corner called the Greek Stand.

AH: Yeah, yeah. I remember hearing about that. What did they specialize in, sandwiches?

EB: Sandwiches, actually. Long before Subway and those people. Of course, we used to do—and it's still actually—a Silver Ring there, in Ybor City there, was the place for Cuban sandwiches at the time. They've gone way down now. But, back in the day, that was the place.

AH: Yeah, they finally moved it downtown, lately.

EB: Okay.

AH: I don't know, I don't even know if they're still there anymore.

EB: Yeah.

AH: When they moved, it was kind of like, "Oh, there goes a piece of Ybor City."

EB: Uh-huh. That's for sure. So let me think about the campus experiences here. I mentioned that, of course, the old library annex now was the library. Band tours, those were interesting. Each year, the concert ensemble did a statewide tour. Sometimes, I could stay in the hotel, sometimes I stayed with families. Most times, they had called ahead and arranged accommodations for me and with a family, sometimes a Black family, sometimes not a Black family. Mostly, I stayed with families, and the hotels just occasionally, back in those days as we traveled around the state.

So that was interesting. Probably, from another standpoint that's not directly UCF [USF] but is probably important historically, at the time, Blacks and Whites could not be in the same classroom at the University of Tampa. In order for me to take my SATs, which, if I was interested in Columbia, you had to have SATs; I didn't need it for the state schools, but, for, you know. When I appeared the day to take my SAT, with my name, you can't tell anything—there's no suggestion as to what I might look like—so when I appeared, they went into panic. And they said, "Well, I guess we have to administer the exam, but you can't be in the same classroom with the other students." So I had my own SAT room, and examiner, and clock, and everything at the University of Tampa there, back in 1960.

AH: Wow.

EB: So I always regard stuff like that as being, it was a positive thing because, hey, I got my own, special, custom treatment. It's kind of like when you look at the glass to be half-full or half-empty. For stuff like that, for me, most times, to me the glass is half-full not half-empty. And so, I didn't have to contend with the other 500 people who were there trying to work on the exam.

AH: Sure.

EB: And the whole situation so, you know. Stuff like that.

AH: Yeah, it's an interesting thing that UT would've been the state university here, but they refused to integrate. So.

EB: See, I didn't know that. That's—

AH: Yeah, we did a bunch of interviews with Sam Gibbons, and he kind of talked about that. And that was the original idea, was to make UT. It was downtown, it made sense.

EB: Yeah. That would've made a lot of sense. That would make a lot of sense.

AH: Yeah. So they refused. They figured that all the White people would just flock to UT. It didn't happen.

EB: I'm glad you mentioned that because that's one of those little-known facts that I really didn't know about. As I said, as a student, you kind of do your student things. There's so much going on that you're really not aware of.

End of interview