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Andrew Huse (AH): Today is June 11th, 2004. 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 Joe Busta, who came to USF in 1971. He came in the capacity of assistant director of student organizations. Today, he works at the University of South Alabama, working with development and alumni relations. Thank you very much for being here.

Joe Busta (JB): What a pleasure to be here. Thank you for inviting me.

AH: It's been a long road since that first e-mail many months ago.

JB: Yeah.

AH: He just happened to come into town, and we're lucky enough to have him in the studio today. So let's just start. How did you first get involved in the university and first get your position?

JB: When I graduated from Auburn [University], my first job was in student affairs at the University of Tennessee, and [I] was there for a couple of years doing adviser work for veterans and fraternities and student government and all kinds of groups at that time. The person who was the director of the university center in Knoxville was a friend of Phyllis Marshall, who was director of the university center here. Phyllis had an opening, and the person there recommended me for that job, which I got and came back to my home state.

AH: Okay, so what were some of your first impressions when you came to campus for the first time?

JB: Well, it was obviously quite different from the terrain of Knoxville, but growing up in south Florida—Fort Myers Beach in particular—I was pretty much familiar with the state and this part of it. I played a lot of high school ball up here in Tampa and St. Pete and football and baseball, so I was pretty familiar with the area. I had not been on the campus; the university was not in existence but for a few years by the time I was ready to go to college, and I went to Auburn as an undergraduate at that time. Now, I came back here—I'll tell you an interesting story. My first day of work was about three days before I actually started employment.

I was in Student Affairs, and that was a time of a lot of student protests over the Vietnam War. That weekend, there was a state convention here in the student center of the Students for a Democratic Society, SDS, which was a greatly feared student organization across the country at that time, by the administration. And since nobody knew who I was, the main guy at Student Affairs asked me if I'd go to the convention and sit in, find out what's going on, which I did. And there wasn't anything much going on. Everybody was having a good time. It may have been 17 or 18 students from around the state, and the conversation was certainly political, but it wasn't belligerent, and it wasn't militant, as was expected. So that was my first day on the job, albeit unofficial.

AH: Interesting. Yes, so there was a lot of turbulence on campus in the early '70s.

JB: Yeah, we had significant demonstrations here in those years. A lot of people got arrested. There was a number of afternoon and evening demonstrations to, quote, take over the administration building or the student center, and they would be a pretty good number. Several hundred students a couple of times, actually, had attempted to take over the intersection of 30th Street and Fowler [Avenue], and the police were waiting for them. A number of people got hurt, and some of the protesters started with rocks, and the police started with their deal, nightsticks. It was pretty ugly and very scary at the time.

AH: What were some of the things you did in that first position, working with the student organizations?

JB: Well, I advised international students and veterans again and fraternities in particular. That was my main portfolio, a lot of work with international students because all the immigration issues came into that area. And we were, at that time, just getting hundreds and hundreds of veterans out of Vietnam who were on leave in the military and coming back to school. So the institution wasn't fully prepared for that, like other institutions weren't either. So that was a big deal in those days. And I did that for a couple of years and then became assistant to the president when Cecil Mackey was president.

AH: Before we go there, what were some of the challenges, working with returning veterans? Obviously, they're usually a little older. What are some of the other issues?

JB: Well, as an urban institution, we had older students. But there were a lot of mental health issues, decompressing after Vietnam. There were issues of employment and housing. Vietnam veterans didn't enjoy the GI Bill because it wasn't a declared war, so

they didn't have the benefits early on. There were some changes made later that extended more benefits to former military students. So those issues, finding housing—at that time there wasn't much housing out in this area, a few apartment complexes, a few dormitories. And for most veterans coming back, the idea of living in a dorm wasn't—after where they had lived and what they had done with their lives, this wasn't the thing to do. So it was those kinds of adjustment issues. By and large, excellent students. Very motivated, very driven.

AH: And there was a lot of new student groups starting up. Of course, you mentioned the Students for a Democratic Society, which were not allowed as part of the regular student—but there was a whole host of other organizations, some with kind of outlandish names [like] Church of the Apocalypse, environmental movements, women's liberation. There were more black student groups starting then, sororities, et cetera. Do you remember anything specifically about that?

JB: Well, the process there was an issue, because to be a recognized student organization, one had to go through a process, probably not unlike we do now. But up until that point, you really didn't have to do anything. And then when there started being issues across American college campuses, then universities started creating rules. So just the fact—rules were started, and then there was the, “Ah, that rule is just to keep us off.” And so that became—the process became more contentious than the actual issue of the student organization, whichever one it might've been. But there were a number, and it was a lot of politically oriented groups, and it was hard for everybody.

It was not unlike the rest of what was going on in our society across the country, and no one really knew where we were going. And so everyone was trying to figure that out, whether you were a student or faculty members or administrators. And people chose sides. Faculty chose sides. Administrators chose sides. So you had to deal with all the sociological issues that went with that and not knowing what the solutions were, or where it would end up. And Kent State occurred, and then there were other massive demonstrations around the Kent State shootings and those kinds of things. High-charged speakers were invited to campus, and those became issues, and “Who is going to pay for them? Why can't we pay for them with this money or that money?” So it was an interesting time.

AH: Well, and drug enforcement became a big issue too. There was a lot of recreational drugs on campus, from what I understand.

JB: Well, I don't recall that that was much of an issue on campus, more off campus. But a lot of people were smoking dope at the time, and it wasn't that difficult to get. So there were issues of grass in dorms and then some LSD issues. There was a lot of drug education that went on, in hopes of preventing significant health problems and issues.

AH: Okay, then let's move to your being adviser to the president. Cecil Mackey came in after a long tenure by John Allen and, of course, Harris Dean being the interim president. First of all, when you first met Mackey, what were your impressions?

JB: Well, I actually knew a fellow who worked for him who was the director of University Relations and had been an assistant. We both went to the same university, and he was a couple of years ahead of me. Jim Vickrey was the fellow's name, and he's now at Troy State University, the head of the communications department, speech and communications. And so he was moving into another position that created an opening, and I really hadn't met the president, other than more ceremonially, at the time. He was here for probably a year before I came, and then I had an interview with him. And Cecil Mackey was an outstanding administrator. He was a fellow who, in some ways, you either loved him or you didn't love him so much.

But [he was] probably the most visionary of the presidents that I knew, and I worked under four. And I think a lot of what is at South Florida now began with the kind of vision that he had at that time. And, boy, sometimes I disagreed with him terribly. But he had that ability for you to disagree terribly and still be on the team and work as a team person. He didn't—it didn't bother him to have negative comments or criticism, as it does bother some people. Their egos get in the way. But I think that the key thing that he started and filled out a great deal was the issue of regional campuses. And we were in St. Pete at the time, but then adding the Sarasota New College one, which he brokered that deal for; the start of the movement in Fort Myers; and then later, after he was gone, that becoming a reality; and then Lakeland.

We at South Florida had to fight [the University of] Florida and Florida State [University] for everything, every nickel in the legislature. The Board of Regents was controlled by graduates of those two schools. We didn't have any in power. We didn't have any legislator, so to speak of, who were alumni. One or two, maybe the first one or two. So everything we had to do was to fight to get something. And the concept of creating a regional network, which then caused one-fourth of the legislature for us to be their representative. They were our representatives. In other words, as constituents, they had to pay attention to us. And that was the way we were able, really, to get political power.

And if we're in the districts that those folks have to run in, then they had to pay attention—whether they went to Florida, Florida State, or Florida A&M, they had to pay attention to us. So that was the leverage that allowed us to make great gains in funding, to get us closer to equal footing. But it took a long time to get on equal footing, which the institution enjoys today. And so it was that kind of a vision. I think also his standards—he raised the standards for tenure and for recruitment of faculty and deans, and that changed things. We have more of an emphasis on research, which wasn't much of an emphasis up to that point.

AH: Yeah, that's interesting. I've never heard it brought up before, the leverage issue with the regional campuses, but it makes complete sense.

JB: And it also, then, rolled out—later, proved to equal in terms of leverage in beginning fundraising programs here, which required then corporate leaders in all those communities and throughout the multicounty region of southwest Florida to say, you

know, That's our university. That's where we're going to recruit people. That's where the sons and daughters of our employees are going, and we've got to give something to them and not just to Florida and Florida State.

AH: So you mentioned some of the new directions Mackey took the university in. By the time you came, the honeymoon period was over for Mackey. There definitely was one—

JB: About a week.

AH: Yeah. Not very long. It wasn't long, because afterwards, he encountered a lot of resistance. You talked about people, and even you at times, opposed some of the things. What were some of the things that upset people, whether it was a right decision or a wrong decision?

JB: Well, I think it was a change in the comfort zone. The institution was comfortable with where it was, and it was essentially an undergraduate teaching institution. The emphasis was on teaching. And the institution that he saw was one that could achieve more than that. And so when the push was for more research and for raising the standards for tenure, that obviously got every faculty member's attention, whether they had tenure or not. And then the issues of organization and selection of new programs to bring on, he had a lot of hand in that. So it was changing the lifestyle. One of the first tasks I did for him was to create the university's first policy and procedures manual and the first counsel and committee organization that had to do with university governance.

And in the past, it would be a policy here and a policy there, and nobody knew where any of them, or all of them, were. There were committees here, and they weren't quite sure what their mission was, and it overlapped here. So he brought a rigorous policy. He is very process-oriented, probably of all the presidents, the most process-oriented in his managerial style. And because that whole process changed the way we did business, that was cause for everybody to have some discomfort with it. It was the right thing to do. It needed to be done. But there was a transition for everyone to accept it and buy into it.

AH: Well, you know, 30 years after Mackey's tenure, it's unthinkable not to have research. We would be a community college. And with so many dollars tied into research these days, we needed to get started as early as we could, so it was probably in the nick of time, if anything, right?

JB: Mm-hm. It was just the right time to do that, because to wait later would've lost the edge and the growth of the institution and the state and to really propel it to where it is, which is way far ahead of other urban institutions of the same age around the country.

AH: Let's see. Let's talk about some of the other colorful aspects of the Mackey presidency. You mentioned a pie incident.

JB: Yeah, that was there, the great pie incident. One of my tasks as assistant to the president was to arrange open forums, is what we called them. The president would have lunch at a particular part of the university, and it was open for any student or faculty member who wanted to come and talk about whatever it is they wanted to talk about. He was way open to that, and he wasn't thin-skinned. I mean, he'd take it if it was a hard question or a softball question. But, again, this was a turbulent time, and there had been some issues—I don't even recall what may have been some of the student issues at that moment.

But I was sitting to one side of him and around a concrete table out on the other side of the College of Education building, on the east side of it in the courtyard. And a student came up behind me, I never saw him, and all of a sudden, I looked up and a pie was thrown into the president's face. And by the time I looked over my shoulder, the guy was taking off across the courtyard. I gave a short chase, but he had too much of a lead at that time. So I said, "I'm going to go see if the guy's okay." So I turned around and came back. Of course, the student newspaper was there, *The Oracle*, and it was all caught on film and became known as "the great pie incident."

AH: And then later presidents willingly took pies in the face at fairs and things like that.

JB: They did, yeah. And Cecil did, too. He took it in good humor. It obviously was embarrassing to see your face in the student newspaper with a pie on it, but he understood what it was all about.

AH: Well, and one of the student issues that probably fueled it the most was programming at WUSF radio. I know that President Mackey had a lot to do with the changing of the format from the *Underground Railroad* rock/folk format to classical. Can you provide any insight into that decision?

JB: Well, I think—my personal opinion is most of management wanted to do that but didn't really want to take the heat to make that change. And I think most faculty wanted it. And because of the times, you know, the issues of the times and students and self-governance, you know, there was a lot of tension across American colleges between students and administrators over all kinds of things. And no one really wanted to bite that bullet, and he was not afraid. He was a tough guy. He was strong. And I think he believed in it, certainly. But I think he knew that the others wouldn't do what they really wanted to do, so he got out front on that issue, but it did cause a lot of issues for a while.

AH: Sure. Well, one of the longstanding complaints by administrators is that there's not enough school spirit, people don't identify enough with the university, and it seems like the radio was a good tool for that—that people could identify with the university, hear music they wouldn't hear elsewhere. And so, if anything, that seems like it could've been an obstacle rather than something positive for student relations.

JB: Yeah, probably. I think at some of the listener studies they had, they never could segment out that, in fact, our students were listening in great quantities to the station.

They tended not to because, you know, in an urban area, there was lots to pick from. But there were a couple of programs that were more attractive than others, and the *Underground Railroad* was a good program. I listened to it, and I listened to the classical as well.

AH: So what were some of the other burning issues of the day, here in the mid '70s, as you worked with Mackey? You know, a huge change of direction for the university—we talked about the radio. Were there any others?

JB: Growth. The school was growing so fast. It was very difficult to keep up, in terms of resources. We were formula-driven for money from the legislature at that time, and so you get money based upon how many students you had last year. Well, if you had another 1,000 or 2,000 that showed up on your doorstep the following September, you didn't have money for them. So you were always scrambling to find ways to cover the bases, to have enough faculty, to have enough class space and be able to juggle assignments so the class sizes were reasonable and not out of hand. And there are always higher-demand areas and lower-demand areas.

But just the resources and then the ability—you know, higher education was growing rapidly. The competition, because of that growth, for faculty, was key. And folks moved around a lot because universities would buy them away from this university, and then the next one would come buy away to the next one. And so you were kind of fighting an inflationary curve of rapid rise in salaries, while having not only a fixed budget, but one that was based on last year's size. So hiring people was an issue. It was hard. And the availability was small because there weren't enough people coming through PhD programs in the country to supply American universities with the quantity of people they needed because of the Baby Boom generation going to college.

AH: Well, if anything, it's almost the opposite. Now we have such a deluge of teachers and people with high degrees.

JB: Yeah, people can be more selective now. Universities can target a little bit more.

AH: So the formula system, do you think that provoked universities to take on more students because the next year your budget allocation would be higher?

JB: Well, it was a little bit of a catch-22. There was that, yeah, like, if we can find a way to do it, then we'll get paid for it next time, but knowing that, you know, we'll be right back in the same place next year. But you had to do it. How could you turn away people who needed the services and the programs? And so, all in all, it was good. It just was difficult and challenging. And then, also, at that time, a little bit later on, toward the end of Cecil's turn when Reece Smith came in as an interim, and Reece will always be known as an interim president, but the impact he had on the institution was as significant as many presidents. He was a guy who was president of the Florida Bar, president of the American Bar, and about to be president of the International Bar Association.

And so he—although a local boy in a local firm, he brought national and international credibility to the office of the president that we'd never had before. And so, symbolically, that was a shift in perception of the university. And Reece was, and still is, a great man. He had an ability as a negotiator and a person to pull factions together and had—when he got in there, we were getting a run by [the University of] Florida and Florida State to adjust the formulas such that the research institutions got more money than the non[-research] ones, and we were going to be the non ones. We didn't like that, and we were starting to grow the research program, had the College of Medicine going, and so Reece did a marvelous job of fighting the process and winning in the short time that he was there—about a year and a half, I think.

AH: Well, it seemed like over the '70s, there were a lot of attempts by people in the legislature, to say, Oh, FSU and UF, they'll have the PhD programs, or they'll have the graduate programs; let's not give anything more to USF. So that was just another kind of permutation of the same idea of trying to—through legislation, et cetera—to keep USF in its place.

JB: Yeah. And by having that block of counties in those regional networks, we had a chance with—I think that represented 45 legislators at that time, which was one fourth or slightly one fourth of the House and Senate. And then the local business community, harnessing them and rallying them to our cause, we were able to—we didn't win them all. But we had a chance to do that.

AH: Well, you know, it seems like some people had the impression that USF was trying to grab up these regional campuses. But in fact, wasn't it more—closer to that the legislator would say, "Here, do what you can with this"? How did that work—

JB: Well, really, the approach was meeting with community leaders. And then, when they realized the benefit of having a four-year degree—actually, when we started the campuses, the second two years only, and picking up from the community, the junior college, and doing the bachelor's, they realized then how many people needed local access. They realized the economic implications of having a university, in terms of business recruitment to their area and thus positive business implications for their having the university there.

And that became the goal. In fact, there was a point in time when we had too many communities wanting us to build campuses there. And so you had to be able to say no without getting those legislators and those business leaders upset. And through a judicious process, those campuses were poised in high growth areas and proved to be a wonderful plan. And one of them now is a separate university in [Florida] Gulf Coast University in Fort Myers.

AH: Well, and, of course, New College is independent now too. Did you want to talk about New College at all? What were your impressions when they came under our wing?

JB: It was good. And Arland Christ-Janer was the head of New College at the time, and Cecil was the head of the University of South Florida. And they worked out a wonderful articulation agreement among them and their board and the Board of Regents. Well, none of the faculty on both sides were that keen on it. New College wanted a great deal of independence. They felt threatened by the big place up in Tampa coming in and telling them what to do.

I think that the one unfortunate thing that occurred was both Mackey and Christ-Janer left pretty soon, and then there wasn't anybody on either side that really was carrying the torch to keep what was started moving and evolving and maturing. And that just kind of sat there for a while. And as it sat, sides started pulling apart a little bit and probably didn't achieve all that it could have and probably led them to the—and then it got political, I believe, over the last couple of years, with legislators in that area wanting to spin that off into a freestanding something. And I'm not close enough to it anymore to know whether it's working or not.

AH: Sure. Let me see. So after your being assistant to the president, University Relations for two years. Tell us about that.

JB: That position was vice president for university—director of University Relations, later became vice president for University Relations. That was the first attempt to organize what we now call in our profession “advancement,” which would be public relations, publications, alumni development, governmental relations. And so we put them all together. We didn't even have a governmental relations office at the time. And I did some of the lobbying for a while, and then an unusual point—I wound up, as I was starting to organize our first campaign, and we needed a full-time, real governmental relations person, I wound up hiring Betty Castor, who later became president of the university, several years later after she left us and went to the [state] Senate and lieutenant governor and all that stuff.

Which is kind of neat, and a wonderful, wonderful person. But probably the thing that I was involved in most in that two-year period was the president, who was John Lott Brown at the time, loaned me to the Board of Regents to head up a program called “Path to Excellence.” And at that time, we wound up passing the most comprehensive higher-education reform bill in history at that point. And what it did was it gave the universities in the state university system some freedom to be their own institutions. I mean, we had crazy things where we would have to mail everybody's personnel record monthly or biweekly to Tallahassee just to get a paycheck. It was all so centralized, and there was so much bureaucracy. It cut through a lot of that.

It gave institutions more time, more control, and probably most importantly, it created the first matching challenge program, which was the Eminent Scholars Act for 400,000 [dollars] from the state for a \$600,000 gift to emphasize and try to promote charitable giving to Florida's public universities. That program, we expanded it and added a new donor's challenge and an equipment challenge and then a facilities challenge. If there's one thing in Florida that's allowed all universities, including this one, to really shine over

the last decade, it has been that matching challenge. The ability to use legislatively appropriated dollars to leverage charitable gifts has created so many chairs and so many professorships and so much equipment and buildings throughout the state, that it has really allowed Florida to be extremely progressive as a state in the world of higher education.

AH: Yeah, just in the last 15 or 20 years, the amount of endowed chairs and everything here has just exploded.

JB: We then, with John Lott Brown transitioning to Frank Borkowski—Frank was probably the best presidential fundraiser that we'd ever had to that point. And he was good at it, and we organized the first university campaign. It was—Campaign USF was the short title for it—Opportunities to Shape Florida's Future. And that was a \$111 million campaign. And a couple of, I think, interesting little things that occurred there. One, we worked really hard to do the quiet fundraising in advance of a public announcement. And we organized our public announcement, invited the chancellor of the state university system to come down for it.

His office, unbeknownst to us, leaked the fact that we were going to announce on a certain day. We didn't know that [University of] Florida was organizing their campaign. They didn't know that we were. But when they found out that we were, they announced their campaign like a day or two before ours to try to keep us from being the first and getting the publicity. So that tells you anything about those kinds of rivalries. I think, probably, the part that I enjoyed the most, I was involved in helping start the Fort Myers campus and some in the Sarasota area, but that campaign was a highlight of my time here, and I think it was important for the institution.

The first endowed chair that we got through the Eminent Scholars Act was from Chester Ferguson and the Lykes family. And that was incredibly important for this reason: Here was a guy who had just been chairman of the Board of Regents. He was a University of Florida graduate. He was probably among the three or four most influential business leaders in the state. And having him agree, with his family, to create this chair—the Lykes Chair in Business, Banking, and Finance in the College of Business—really sent a shot across the state that, “My, my, that school over there is more than that little old school.” It had statewide implications.

Here's one of Florida's best-known leaders and strongest players putting his money, not in his alma mater, but at the University of South Florida. And so that was—and that helped that campaign tremendously. And that helped, with his doing that, helped us then get the two key leaders to chair that campaign: Rudy Michaud, who was the head of the Metropolitan Insurance Company here in the regional office, and then Hugh Culverhouse, who had just started the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, and having Chester's influence and the Lykes family influence—Stella Thayer in particular, who was on our foundation board and was Chester's daughter—allowed us to get those kind of players and many others who were on that campaign who gave us great credibility.

The Culverhouse gift, at that time, okay, was 4.2 million [dollars] in total—was the biggest gift in the campaign and the biggest, by far, of any that we had. And an interesting little side note on that: I've been working with him for quite some time and trying to figure out what it is he wanted to do and how much and all that. And I had my first cell phone. And I was coming back from Fort Myers, and I may have had that cellphone for a week, that big old clunky thing that was wired into the floor of your car and all that stuff. And I got on the interstate between Fort Myers and Sarasota, out in the middle of nowhere.

And Hugh Culverhouse called me up, said, "Joe, I've got to talk to you now. I know what I want to do, but we have to work out some details. I need you to do some things." I said, "Oh, yes sir." And I was all ears and eager. And I could tell I was losing the signal. There weren't that many stations. You lost power all the time, and signal. So I pull over to the side of the interstate, about three o'clock in the afternoon in the middle of summer, about a thousand degrees outside. And I couldn't roll the windows down, because the trucks were going by, and I wouldn't be able to hear. And I'm sitting in this car with the windows rolled up and the temperature gauge going like this on the car, trying to negotiate that gift. And so the biggest gift to the campaign and to the university was negotiated on a cellphone in the middle of Interstate 75, which I thought was just pretty funny.

AH: Yeah, yeah. Well, such a big endowment, too. That is a great story. So, you know, we were talking about Cecil Mackey changing the direction of the university and how, really, that was probably just in time. It was a very timely decision. Think the creation of University Relations was kind of the same thing? I mean, wasn't that a long time coming?

JB: Yeah, yeah. Because most schools had that already, and most schools had gotten into the fundraising and really building alumni associations. They did that primarily because of their athletic programs. We didn't really have that, so it wasn't such a big priority. And as you know, in John Allen's administration, we weren't going to get into intercollegiate sports originally and then started getting into it with basketball and then a few other sports. But then the athletic program got more support, really, in the Mackey, Smith, John Lott Brown administrations, and that's when the Sun Dome was built. That was a big thing for this campus.

AH: Definitely. Well, it seemed like a long and painful process, the actual construction. There were a lot of delays and questions about how sound the structure would be at the end and a crane accident.

JB: Yeah, it was so innovative in its design. And we were doing them together with the University of Florida. Both buildings are the same building. And to try to say—they were both costing each school more than they had. And so the idea was to go together and get them at the same time and try to get lower prices if both buildings would be built, which, in fact, happened. Some of it did and some of it wound up that way, but they both came in over budget and the schools had to find more money for it. In our case, we had to take

out—which is still not on that building anymore—where the covered entrances are, the whole building, all the way around, was supposed to be covered and not just the center dome. Florida's kept theirs; we had to cut ours out because we didn't have the money to complete it.

AH: Interesting. So then in the '80s—'79 to '85—we were talking about that you were executive director at the USF Foundation, in addition to the VP of University Relations. So '85 to '90, you became vice president for Development and Alumni Affairs.

JB: Yeah, we made a decision then that we wanted to have a campaign. I personally enjoyed the alumni and development part better than the governmental relations, PR part. And I had an assistant named Barbara Anne Blue—I had two assistants—and a fellow named Dan Holsenbeck. And so we decided, the institution, then, that we would split the division in two, and she would become vice president for University Relations, and I'd take a new vice president for Alumni and Development. And Dan went with me to help with the campaign, and I concentrated on it till I left. When I left, there was about a year left to go on the campaign.

AH: Okay. And you'd been on campus for almost 15 years when this change took place. Did a lot of your old connections with the fraternities, et cetera, help with the Alumni Affairs?

JB: Some. Actually, you know, when I went from Student Affairs into the president's office, I started moving away from student organizations a little bit. And, of course, the president's office was always involved in student organizations. But then going from there to University Relations brought it even a little bit further. But having Alumni Affairs and the Alumni Association the whole time was a great advantage because we got to know a lot of alumni all over the east coast and elsewhere around the state. We were really pushing on building an alumni association, creating different alumni clubs and chapters around the state, getting more people involved. We started with student government homecoming. The first couple of homecoming parades were on campus.

And if you go through the archives, you'll find some funky floats. They certainly wouldn't qualify for Gasparilla, but the folks had a good time and things happened. And the emphasis, of course, was on basketball at the time. And another thing that I kind of felt a little proud of was Dick Bowers had been athletic director and had gone into the College of Business, and there was this issue about football coming up. And the Board of Regents—you've probably heard this story—and Florida and Florida State were not keen on us starting football. And so the chancellor, Charlie Reed at the time, put up what everyone thought would be a bar that we couldn't reach, that we had to reach before they would entertain the idea of approving football at South Florida. And originally, it was to have a \$2 million endowment. And then I think that got adjusted upwards to five [million dollars].

AH: Yeah.

JB: But Dick Bowers and I called on Ed Rood together, who then agreed to put up the first million dollars. So I think I had a teeny little role in the start of football, even though that came well after I had left, and it took a while to get that 5 million, and then it took a while to get into the game. I did come down for the first football game several years ago, and that was cool.

AH: Well, and it never could've happened without that initial fundraising. I talked to [Lee Roy] Selmon and lots of other people, and they all say the same thing: If it wasn't for that, we wouldn't have been on a sound footing to begin with. And then, people that accused it of taking money or resources away from academics, they have nothing to say because so many of those resources were in place before it even started. What about the Lifsey House? Were you involved in that?

JB: I was. Our office had the responsibility of working with a community group to do a statewide competition. We wanted to have a facility, and we wanted it to be reflective of an institution and what it meant, and not just a house. But something that pushed the edges of—though not terribly radically, I don't believe—but that represented the thinking and what universities mean and the intellectual life of the mind and the fact that here is where new knowledge is created, and you can try different things, and it doesn't have to always be the same way. And we had some—gosh, I don't know if the drawings are still around here.

But there were some outstanding and really interesting—and some we obviously couldn't afford. They were way, way bigger and way, way out there. And we went through a process to screen down, and of course the Lifseys were involved in that process as well. And, you know, they were obviously the key in making that all happen. It happened with their financial support of it. And then, we had made the selection, hired the architect, and shortly thereafter, I left. So I never got to set foot in it until a few years back, after it was up. And I think Betty Castor was president at the time, and she gave me the tour one time when I was in Tampa. It's a neat place.

AH: I know there was—when the idea was first being thrown around, I think one of the first times I saw a reference to it, you were talking about it in the late '80s. And a lot of students reacted and poo-pooed the idea. I think, during the late '80s, there were a lot of budget cuts going on, too, and it seemed like things were tight and everyone was saying, Oh, we need to use money for other things. But, once again, the money was raised separately for that issue and not taken out of, like, a bigger pool or whatever.

JB: There was a little bit of that, but I don't recall a whole lot, especially when it was clearly articulated that it was private money. And there was—you know, inflation was going crazy, and there were budget cuts, and we were in a recession. And those were difficult times, and doing anything caused at least someone to say, "Don't do that." There are people in our society that don't want people to do anything ever. And yet I think, as an institution, you have to be strong enough and have the vision and the drive to never quit. Whether times are good or times are bad, if you never quit, then great things can come.

AH: Yeah, and if you're not going forward, you're going backward, as they say. Especially in the business of higher education, that's true. Let's see. What are some of the issues we might've missed? Is there anything else that stands out in your mind?

JB: No, I think that—lots of little things and important things that occurred early on when I was in Student Affairs that I think is important, not because—I really had no involvement in it, but it occurred. And I think the election of Les Miller as the first black student government president was terrific. And then, later on, in years after he finished that and was out of school, we were able to encourage him to run for president of the Alumni Association. He became the first black Alumni Association president.

That may not seem like such a big deal today, but it was at that time. Not that we had terrible issues of race on campus, but it showed the university—especially our alumni—that we're inclusive. We always had lots of women represented on our board. At a lot of schools, you know, there are white male boards and that's basically it. All the good old boys, but right from the beginning, there was great diversity in the Alumni Association. And we had women presidents real early on. And so I think it's a lot stronger because of that.

AH: Well, he was also one of the first students to sit on the Board of Regents, too.

JB: He was. That's correct. I had forgotten that.

AH: Yeah. And presently, the minority leader in the legislature.

JB: It's in the Senate.

AH: In the Senate, yeah.

JB: He went to the House for several years. In fact, I remember helping him with his first campaign, which I believe he lost. His first time out of the box, I helped try to raise a little bit of money for it. But he's gone on to do great things.

AH: Yeah, a really nice guy.

JB: Yeah, a terrific man.

AH: What about, as long as we're kind of running short on events, what about people? You've had the opportunity to work with a lot of people. Are there any personalities that stand out in your mind for whatever reason? We talked about Mackey. What about John Lott Brown?

JB: Jack Brown—it's interesting. Each president kind of has a different hand of cards dealt to him, so they have to figure out where their place is in that. And after—with the great growth and the changes that Mackey made, he was kind of the consolidator until

Borkowski came and started pushing more new stuff. And so it was a time then—and I think where Jack was really important was in trying to recruit, really, the best faculty and deans that we could. And we didn't have the clout as a young institution. We didn't have the program reputation across the country, where a lot of top faculty or chairs of departments or deans would want to come here.

But we were getting real close to that. And I think Jack's key thing is taking that and then starting to bring people and have us become a destination point in a career where you'd want to go. And that was also a time when the supply then was better. So you really had to compete harder to get folks that were really good in there. Even though supply wasn't great, there was a lot of entry-level folks where there was catching up with demand, but still, there were a few of the senior folks. For us, historically, we'd go out, we'd find someone, we'd offer them a salary. They'd come or they wouldn't come.

Well, if you wanted a good person then, you had to do more than that. And sometimes, you had to package together some graduate assistants to help them with their research, or they needed equipment for a lab or they weren't going to come. And that was a different way of doing business for this school. It's pretty routine now, but that was different. And Jack was a leader in that. And I think, from a people perspective, [he] started bringing in better-qualified faculty and academic administrators.

AH: Well, you know, it's funny. You do all kinds of favors to get an athlete to come on your team, so it only makes sense to do the same for faculty members. Well, you mentioned that Francis Borkowski was an excellent fundraiser. Why do you think so?

JB: Well, two things. Both he and Kay were a great team. And they were so outgoing. Both were musicians by trade and training. And Frank also was a conductor. So they weren't afraid to be out. And it's interesting, some presidents—all presidents look good on the outside. But some of them are less comfortable with it than others. And Frank and Kay were quite comfortable and had the ability to lead and motivate people very well. And they—when the board, the foundation, and our campaign committee got to know them—because they were coming in, you know, we had really started with John Lott Brown, and then when he stepped down and they came in, we had a little transition to go through while we were still in that quiet part of the campaign.

That group had to get comfortable with him, but he won them over very quickly. And he was just good at it. He wasn't afraid to go out and meet people and talk to them about giving money, and some people aren't comfortable with doing that. And he was just, for a development officer guy like me, you couldn't ask for a better president to be your chief advocate. He knew what the importance was of the campaign and changing the future of the university, too. So he was not only good, but he was emotionally committed. And that's what it takes.

AH: Well, we have a few minutes left. Any other people or events we might've passed over? Any other people come to mind?

JB: I could probably go on three days about that. I guess, you know, I think probably one of the other areas when we really tried to move athletically, and I remember we went out and recruited Lee Rose, and Lee Rose had taken the University of North Carolina–Charlotte to the Final Four. And then Purdue [University] recruited him away, and he took Purdue to the Final Four. And so we decided, if we were going to go big time, we’re going to go get a big-time coach, and we put together money, and we went out there and recruited Lee Rose.

And it was a disaster. He never could do it here. I’m not sure he really cared much about doing it, quite frankly. He did very well, financially, for those times. Probably, in retrospect, when he got to both Charlotte and to Purdue, he had two all-star NBA players, one in each place. He really didn’t recruit either one but built that kind of competitive team there. And he never could really recruit that kind of a person here. It turned out to be a short and pretty unhappy marriage before we moved on.

AH: Well, another minor disaster seemed to be the, uh—I believe it was a basketball player who had rape allegations against him, and Borkowski was accused of kind of—¹

JB: That was after my time. I really don’t know anything about it. I remember reading vaguely something in the magazine or some publication, but I have no real knowledge about that. That came probably two or three years after I left.

AH: Yeah, it was while you were still here, but it didn’t really become a big, vocal issue until later.

JB: Maybe it wasn’t known, because I don’t remember even knowing about it when I was here.

AH: Yeah, it didn’t really break big until the early ’90s, I guess.

JB: Yeah, and I was gone in ’90. But all in all, I think there were always good people. People tended to get along. There were some issues. I remember there were some issues in our Graphicstudio, and we were putting money into that, which is a world-class program and facility now. But it was—that really hung by a thin thread for a while and came real close to being shut down until some money was found and a little fundraising was done to keep it alive for a while. And then it got better footing and, I suspect, is going well now. I’m not sure. But that was pretty important.

The issue of the Dali Museum in St. Petersburg was an interesting one. And I was doing some lobbying then where there was an appropriation to help provide seed money to

¹The Florida Board of Regents conducted an investigation of the 1989 sexual assault case being discussed by Huse and Busta, which involved a basketball player named Martin Taylor and an anonymous female USF student. The investigation, which culminated in 1992, revealed that top-level USF administrators deliberately covered up multiple charges filed against Taylor. Over the course of 18 months, Taylor was accused of battering and/or raping a total of six female students; no action was taken by the university in any of these instances. The investigation also found that Taylor had been allowed to participate in basketball games while he was supposed to be on suspension.

attract that and renovate an older building in the harbor close to the St. Pete campus. And that was fairly controversial and “Why do we want this?” and “He was a guy who was a socialist and a communist, and we don’t need him in our neighborhood” and all that stuff.

AH: Well, just like the Picasso statue seemed to attract some controversy, too. You know, “Why do we want a 120-foot slab of concrete?” And people saying it looked ugly or whatever.

JB: It was different. I still have a picture of that model.

AH: Yeah, we have the models here in the archive still.

JB: It would’ve been something.

AH: Yeah. Oh, definitely.

JB: It definitely would be—it’s in the eye of the beholder, as to her beauty.

AH: Sure. Well, especially when it’s just so darn big. But I really want to thank you for being with us today and sharing your time.

JB: Welcome.

AH: Just, on behalf of the university, I just want to thank you for your service and thank you for sharing with us today.

JB: Well, you can’t devote 18 years of your life and not forget, especially when they were as pleasant and rewarding as they were for me. I still miss the institution and try to keep up with it, and things are going great. You guys are doing a wonderful job.

AH: Well, as are you.

JB: Thanks for having me.

AH: Thank you.

End of interview.