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Sandy Freedman Oral History Project  
University of South Florida

Interview with: Tom Gonzalez  
Interviewed by: Robert Kerstein  
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[Tape 1, Side A]

RK: This is an interview with Mr. Tom Gonzalez, 501 East Kennedy Boulevard. Thanks a lot for speaking with me, sir.

TG: Sure.

RK: Can I ask a little about your background? Are you from Tampa?

TG: I am. I graduated from Plant High School in 1968, having grown up in Hyde Park, which is basically where my daddy grew up, which is just a couple of miles from where my granddaddy grew up. So I've been around for a long time.

RK: And where did you go to school?

TG: I went to Tulane undergraduate, and then came back to Florida State for law school.

RK: And when did you start working for government? Or as legal counsel for government?

TG: Probably in 1975, which is the year that I got out of law school. And I started doing some labor relations work, and other work for the Hillsborough County School Board. And then not too long after that I went with a firm that did some work for the City of Tampa, and started doing work there, and have basically been doing that kind of work ever since.

RK: And what was your position during the Freedman administration?

TG: Really no official position for most of the time. I was the outside labor counsel for the City of Tampa during the entirety of Mayor Freedman's administration. And then, toward the end of her administration, when she suffered the loss of Pam Aiken, who was her City Attorney, who, who because Mayor Freedman's term was coming to an end was

looking around for new opportunities, and she took a job being the City Attorney in Clearwater, where she still is. And the mayor needed a City Attorney, because you have to have one by Charter. And so I, I was sort of the fill-in City Attorney for about nine months at the end of the Freedman administration.

RK: Can you tell me what was involved as far as being labor counsel for the administration?

TG: Basically advising the city in terms of collective bargaining and personnel matters, labor relations and defending the city in those same areas.

RK: To what extent is the city labor force organized into unions?

TG: Almost entirely. It's—it has three unions, it has the Amalgamated Transit Union, which basically represents all of the blue collar, white collar workers of the city. It has the Police Benevolent Association which represents the police officers. And it has the International Association of Firefighters which represents the firefighters.

RK: Is that typical in Florida for municipal workers to be organized?

TG: Yeah, I think so. I think that's what makes Florida a little different is that collective bargaining didn't come to Florida until 1974, and before that—as a statewide law. Before that, several jurisdiction had their own kind of setups, and I think Hillsborough County in general, and the City of Tampa in particular have older histories of collective bargaining than some of the other places in Florida.

RK: Is that because of Tampa's history of unionization going back to cigars, or is that incidental?

TG: I don't know, because you know, I—my family grew up in cigar factories, so my impression of these cigar unions were they were very weak and sort of ineffectual. So I don't know if you'd get that. I think that really the—in terms of the people that first did some of things meaningful with organization, I think in the City of Tampa was the, were basically the Teacher's Union. I think [they] did the best job. And I think that's the history that goes back. The Longshoremen were organized forever around the Port, and there were some kinds of things like that. And there were some construction companies, but I don't think it was as a particularly union heavy town. Just, just had a history of dealing with the public sector unions a little bit more than other places did.

RK: So your negotiations, sir, were independent with each union?

TG: Yep.

RK: And should we go one by one, does that make sense?

TG: [Sounds in agreement]

RK: Can we look at the blue collar union?

TG: Yep.

RK: That was the—what was the name again?

TG: Amalgamated Transit Union.

RK: OK. How often did you have to negotiate contracts?

TG: Usually every three years. The city—now I didn't negotiate them personally, I was the labor, I mean the legal talent for the folks that did in house. That was basically done during Mayor Freedman's administration by two people, Cindy Sontag, who was her Director of Administration, and Sarah Lang, who was in charge of HR and labor relations. Sarah's still there by the way, Sarah's still working for the city. Cindy's retired. But they were basically the two that did it, and they would always try for three year contracts.

RK: OK. Are you aware of some of the issues that would arise?

TG: Yeah.

RK: What were some of the major ones?

TG: You know, through most of the time in, during the Freedman administration, it was about money. And, and one of the things I think that—one of the most daunting challenges I thought to the mayor was, the mayor during her time on City Council, I think that any—anybody in a labor union would tell you that she was fair with them as a City Council member—sometimes fairer than they perceived administrations to be. And Mayor Freedman came to office in a time where you know, the city wasn't flushed with money, and there were difficult decisions to be made. And I think one of the most, one of the most impressive things that Mayor Freedman did during the time that I worked with her was, was basically doing what she thought she had to do in the context of labor relations, and taking a great deal of heat for it. From people that, that I think previously had considered her sort of being on quote, "her side," end quote. Although she wasn't, you know, I think they perceived her as being more fair than some of the other folks on [the] council. And, and with the ATU it was almost always about money.

RK: And she had to keep a lid on increases because the fiscal situation of the city?

TG: Yeah. And doubly so, I think with the ATU. The ATU just for stuff you don't need, but just by way of background, the ATU is an interesting deal. The City of Tampa used to be served by a private bus company. And when the private bus company was unable to do it, I think sometime in the '60s or so, the City of Tampa purchased, or took over that operation. And it became city function. The bus drivers had been represented by the

Amalgamated Transit Union, which is a transit union, and always has been. And they were a unionized work force, and when they came to the city they wanted to be a unionized workforce again. And the ATU only wanted the bus drivers. Well the law in Florida is, is that you can't, you can't overly proliferate bargain units, you have to keep the smallest number of bargaining units, in other words, you have to keep to a minimum the number of different entities that a city will have to negotiate with. So they said, *well, you can't do that, you can't just have a bus driver's, that's too small a union. You got to take everybody.* And so the ATU commenced a campaign of, of representing everybody, which took several years just because nobody knew who the heck the ATU was, and the ATU didn't know who they were. And frankly I think that, that one of the things that made it difficult to have relationships with the ATU was the fact that they were really out of their element. They were transit union that didn't really want you know, to have these folks—and this is just my observation, my observation is, is they were a union essentially made of white people who were dominating transportation at the time. They really weren't used you know, to dealing with a multicultural kind of work force. And it took a, it took a long time for all [of] those things to fit together. And they were very, very hard to deal with because they often did not speak with one voice on the thing.

But, with the ATU, it's always about money. And the reason it was always about money was because in the scheme of things, when you're dealing with, with the public sector, I think labor relations, you have constituent groups. And constituent groups, time in and time out, are going to be basically more willing to give money to uniform services, meaning police and fire, than they do the people like the ATU who sometimes get left behind. And I think, as a baby boomer, I have seen the deal where, where you started out to where the main constituents in the 70's were the firefighters, were the elderly, were sort of that World War II generation that were starting to age up. And, and then as time progressed, you've seen the baby boomers sort of take up that cause, but that's been overtaken by the fact that everybody's most concerned about crime and security. So in terms of, in terms of a public purse, I think that the man is always going to be higher for the police and fire than it is for the ATU, but of course you've got to treat the ATU fairly too. So you've got to take care of the market for the police and fire, and then you've got to take care of the ATU. And the ATU, I think the predominant issues with them were always, first of all about organizing, and then beyond that about money.

RK: And would money be specifically wages, or would that include pension and so on?

TG: Yeah, the whole gamut. It was an interesting deal, because the ATU is in a different pension fund than the police and fire. And the police and fire pension fund is this incredibly old, really individualized, individually styled kind of thing. And so pension was very much an issue because they're in the state pension fund—I mean in the city pension fund, but not the police and fire, and that was always an issue with them. As was the classification of work and how you, and how you compensated them for the fact that their jobs changed. I mean I might have gone in to be a you know—to just take an example out of the air—I might have gone in to be a sewer tech, which meant in the old days I dug ditches and put stuff in. As you went along, it meant that I worked with

computers, you know and TV probes and stuff like that. And there was always a discussion on how you would compensate for that change and...

RK: Different skill level?

TG: ...different skill level, and change the bundle.

RK: I'm interested in the bus system, although this might be taking this a little bit away from the main focus. You had [a] city bus system, and then Hartline which was county wide....

TG: That's even later, yeah.

RK: And when did that begin? Was that during your time as legal counsel?

TG: I don't know if it was or not, that's a good question. I'd like to find that out. But that's, that was, that was the latest—that was the thing after that, was then it went there.

RK: And when that was the case, is it true they no longer bargained with the city when it was Hartline?

TG: Well, they no longer had the bus drivers, but the ATU still continued to represent those other people. So it's even more, it's even more of a bizarre twist. I have a feeling that Hartline was already around by the time that Mayor Freedman was there. I don't remember them being there. And I remember the—I remember the folks that controlled that union in the first stage were basically the old folks from the city—from the Tampa Transit...Tampa Transit Lines or something like that, that they called it.

RK: What about situations, sir, such as with the waste management? I believe during Martinez, Mayor Martinez's time in office that was contracted out to a private company? I believe that they had been city workers. Did you deal with them as well?

TG: No I didn't. And they weren't completely—they weren't completely farmed out during that time, there was just some. And my recollection was that that began, that began as a reaction to the strike they had. They had a strike down there where they, they you know, were threatening to go on strike and did go on strike for a little bit—minor work stoppage during the Martinez days and they did bring in some outside contractors. As much to, to see if they could do it, as for any other reason. And I think after that they always kept some of them around in terms of what they were doing.

RK: So their negotiations were between that company and their workers?

TG: Well there weren't negotiations, the waste management was a non-union company, so they didn't have them.

RK: OK, great. Can we go to the firefighters?

TG: [Sounds in agreement]

RK: Now that, I get the impression from what you said already sir, was a different type of negotiation because...

TG: Yes.

RK: ...of who they represented?

TG: Yes.

RK: Were the issues similar?

TG: They were similar in that they focused more on money. I mean they focused on money. They were I think much more intense and much more, much more acrimonious in terms of basically just being unwilling to, to take any kind of slow down on their increase or their pay. So they were a lot more emotional.

RK: And is part of it that they had support from the public or at least much of the public?

TG: No, here's what I think. Here's what I think part of it was. I think part of it was is that if you go back to the old days of politics when, and about the time when the firefighters had between a 300 and 600 member bargaining unit, when you think back to City Council races and those kinds of things, you—you have to consider that you got 300 employees, and you take a spouse and a significant other and some kids, and everything, and you get upwards of 1000 pretty fast. Which in those days was certainly enough before you even started doing the work, was enough to help sway elections for City Council and that kind of stuff. And for a long time, the firefighters had been very, very adept at politics.

In fact, one of the things, when the mayor was on the City Council, there was one time when the firefighters got more than the mayor had proposed—I think that was Mayor Poe, and he was overridden by the City Council, and the Tampa Times—I think it was the Tampa Times, at that time wrote an editorial referring to several of the City Council members, including Mayor Freedman as the “Firehouse Five,” for being kow-tow—because of the political emphasis they had on the thing. And one of the things that I think made it emotional was that I think Sandy Freedman completely was able to rise above whatever the perception was in terms of her feeling for organized labor or anything else. And she called it like she had to call it. Which is I think, a hallmark of her administration, was that she did that a lot. I think Sandy Freedman was all about truth and reality. And I think she paid a price for that, but she doggone sure you know, she was not captive to the fact that just because she had tried being fair to the firefighters before she was not above saying, *I can't do that this year, I'm not going to.*

RK: Were there any work stoppages or slow downs?

TG: No. No, firefighters have always been too smart for that. Because I—you know you can lose your pension and everything else. There was never, never anything close to that. They just, they just get mean. You know, they'll just do pickets on you and those kinds of things and that sort of stuff.

RK: I might be wrong about this, I vaguely recollect that at the time the Performing Arts Center was opening during Mayor Freedman's administration, the firefighters were upset over...

TG: Totally.

RK: ...certain negotiations, and was there some issue about it not being able to open...

TG: Yes.

RK: ...because they said it wasn't safe?

TG: Oh yeah, because they, they did a fire inspection and said it wasn't safe, and they were going to, they were going to stop it that way. Yes, they were very, they were very angry and obstreperous about that. Which is, which is the sort of stuff that firefighters are very, very good at doing.

RK: Did they influence City Council races during the Freedman administration?

TG: I don't think so. I think that the—the mayor, I don't remember a time when the mayor had to—I think we went to Special Master a couple of times, but usually we did OK on things. Sometimes the City Council went above what the mayor wanted to do, but that wasn't the norm.

RK: What's Special Masters, sir?

TG: Special Master is when—when you can't legally strike as a public employee. When you can't come to an agreement at the table, you call on a Special Master. The Special Master sits down, he or she listens to both sides and writes up a recommendation that the City Council then votes on.

RK: I see, so it's not binding but...

TG: Right.

RK: ...it's a kind of mediation?

TG: No, it's a little bit—it's kind of, I think fact finding.

RK: OK. Was there one person in charge of the firefighters union during that period?

TG: Sam Sinardi?

RK: Sam Sinardi?

TG: Sam Sinardi.

RK: And he had been negotiated for a long time, is that true?

TG: For a long, long time.

RK: And he was a firefighter himself?

TG: Oh yeah, Captain. Yep.

RK: And did as well, did they have legal counsel?

TG: Yes. During that time, I think...[pauses]...it might have been Jim Loper. Jim Loper is who I think would have done it. And if not Jim Loper, then I think Bob Sugarman's firm, down in Miami. Which was Kaplan Sugarman.

RK: Why would they go to Miami?

TG: Because, because I think that Miami was where the—sort of the center of unionized activity, and the big labor law firms were down there. And Kaplan is just a, just a, he's a giant. He taught me a great deal about—drilling me around several court rooms, but he became a good friend, but he's a good, good guy. He's retired now. Yeah, he's so mean, his own office organized. And he got an unfair labor practice for being mean to the [laughs]...they unionized on him...[laughs] but I think...

RK: That's ironic.

TG: Yeah, very. He didn't think so, and I mean, I think probably he would now, but, but yeah, I think, you know—Jim Loper I think would be, I know it was Frank Hamilton was in there, and Jim Loper, they were the locals. And I know that Frank Hamilton had that union for a long time before that. Of course he's passed away now.

RK: Did any issues other than, kind of bread and butter issues arise with the firefighters, other than salary and pensions?

TG: I don't think so. I think that, I think that with the firefighters, it was just, it was the standard fare during the Freedman administration.

RK: And if one looked at the collective bargain outcomes during the Freedman administration, would they, in terms of wage increases, etcetera, would they have been aligned with earlier ones do you think or did they have to?

TG: Oh I think they were, I think they were, certainly there was never a pay cut. But I think that, I think that the firefighters would tell you that they got less during that time than they had. I mean, and—let me tell you something, I mean basically, they came in on the heels—Mayor Freedman came in on the heels of, of Mayor Poe and, Mayor Martinez, both of whom were awfully, awfully conservative folks in terms of what they got paid, and were roundly vilified by the union. And I think the firefighters, especially, and the police officers especially, they just thought that you know, *our time has come, you know, Freedman's here and Freedman's been fair to us, and she's listened*. And that was I think the big source of the disappointment, was Mayor Freedman was like, you know, *if I had it I would, but I don't have it*. In terms of what's going on.

You know it was just a change. One of the things that I always find remarkable is that you know, when, when Mayor Greco was mayor the first time, there was an office, a federal office called the Office of Revenue Sharing. Which was an office devoted to no purpose other than the spending of money. Because there was so much. And, and there was, there was no way you can compare the atmosphere in terms of running a municipal government during that era and running it during the era when Mayor Freedman was there. Because it was just a, it was just a different deal in terms of you know, the times and the changes and all that kind of stuff in terms of what she did. Just a remarkable, remarkable time to try to be a Mayor. And I think that Mayor Freedman had to do a lot. You know, you'd gone through this high growth period, and everybody's feeling a little good, so every time, every time Mayor Freedman did something that she had to do to be fiscally responsible, I think you had some businessmen, but not all of them—although some times it seemed that way—but she had several businessmen that said, *well she's anti-business, or, she's this or she's that*. And you know, it just wasn't true, it was just what she had to do.

RK: So she was sometimes criticized by business interests in Tampa and sometimes by union interests?

TG: Absolutely, oh absolutely. No she got it on all the things. To the point where I was, you know I was like the only, probably the only person who—the only reason I'm not a fascist is they won't let you register that way at the [inaudible]—and even I, even my perception was, is that sometimes you have to wonder whether that has to do with the fact that she's a short woman, you know, frankly. But, but I mean I thought it was remarkable how she could, she could be criticized from both sides in terms—but again, I think that it was, it was not criticized from both sides because she was taking different positions, it was criticized from both sides based on the same issues all the time in terms of what she was doing. So I mean she could settle a union contract and have the business people say she paid too much, while the same time the union was saying *we got shafted, you know this is an awful thing*. It was a very, very difficult time. And I thought that that's why she was just so magnificent during that time in terms of doing that, in terms of not having

universal support from the business people the way that Poe and Martinez had had. And, and not having universal hatred on the union side! I mean so she really, there was no place, there was no place to go. She was trying to take care of both things.

RK: I'd like to ask another question about the firefighters, and this might be outside your field of expertise. Tampa has a civil service system, a merit system that I think covers pretty much across the board in terms of employment. Does that in reality cover the firefighters as well, because firefighters have had a reputation, maybe incorrectly, that is in part family—in other words, if your dad was a firefighter, you had an inside track. Was that your perception?

TG: Yep. I think so. I think so. You know, there, there are kind of—one of my favorite books, I try to read as many esoteric books as possible—one of my favorite books is a book by Hackett called Four Pathways in America<sup>1</sup>, which basically traces the history of the English people—English speaking people coming to, to America, and how important it was that you distinguish between the Scots and the different people in terms of different...and, and I've always thought that you could do sort of that kind of stuff with public service in Tampa, because of how things changed. And when I was growing up in the '50s, for instance, you should take your sanitation workers—sanitation workers went from being almost exclusively black during my childhood to, to being Cuban American, as that kind of influx came in, to turning white and then turning black again. In terms of—you could do the bus drivers. The bus drivers were essentially Tampa Latins for, you know in the private bus company, and carried that on until there was sort of a change over as they went, as it became African American. And, and firefighters were very much familial in that, it basically started out very, very early with an infusion of, of some of the Tampa Latin community. It really did control it for a long time when you looked at the chiefs and the kind of people that did the stuff. And so it was just amalgam, I think of, of the Tampa Latins and what, I think, I hope you can still charitably call the “Tampa cracker” you know deal, where they were basically just, they were basically hometown boys at that time—[and] they were all boys—that went there. And it was very much a closed kind of system, there's no question about it.

And, you know, and I was like—one of the problems in doing labor relations with firefighters is 24 hours is a very, very long time for adults to not have things to do. You know, and you know, and that's why they can make the political signs and that's why they could have the strategy, because they were there and they were very much, you know, very, very tight in terms of what they do. So it was, the discipline was always very, very emotional in terms of those arbitrations. It was very, very tough to get, people written up and very, very tough to do the things. So yeah, there was, there was absolutely that in terms of what it is. And they almost always spoke with one voice, I mean they were not—you didn't have splinter groups who said, *I think the mayor's right*. If, if the ruling group was saying, *that the mayor's wrong*, then you weren't going to hear much dissent in that context.

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<sup>1</sup> This book could not be located. However, one entitled, Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America by David Hackett Fischer matches Gonzalez's description.

RK: And then we had the police officers and...

TG: Which I think, which I think was the biggest—the biggest issues came up with the police officers during the Freedman administration. The most important one being the—that she took away the take home police cars. Which was just a huge event. I mean that was, that was the apocalypse, and the, and everything that you can think of becoming a Vishnu again, I mean anything you can, anything you can do that's apocalyptic, you've rolled into, that's how they perceived that to be. That was the ultimate treachery by their former friend, Sandy Freedman.

RK: Was this early in her administration?

TG: Yes it was. Yes it was. And in fact, that was one of the, one of the first things that Mayor Greco did when he came back, was to put them back. Mayor Greco was the one that put them in the first place. You know, during his first administration. They carried through the, the Poe and Martinez administration, and Mayor Freedman said, *hey, no we're not, we're not going to do this.*

RK: Why?

TG: Money. Money. I mean there was, you know, the—there was a time when they tried to portray the take home program as benefiting the neighborhood because you had a quote, "police presence." And, and I thought that theory was severely undercut by the fact that you know, on several occasions, take home police cars had been burglarized in their neighborhoods [laughs]. Which, which tends to show that people aren't particularly scared of them, if they're stealing things from them out of people's driveways.

And, and at the end of the day what it came down to was, it came down to the fact that these were benefits to these folks. It basically, it basically freed you from having to buy a car to get yourself to work, and although you couldn't use it to joyride, or give it to your kids, you certainly could use it for the basics of grocery shopping and those kinds of things. And it was just expensive. It was just too expensive to have those cars, and one of the things that particularly bothered Mayor Freedman, I think, you know, trying to get into her, inside her head—was the fact that a large number of these, these cars, were leaving the city and the county. So you really weren't even getting the benefit of that in terms of any argument as to whether the people would be more available and that kind of stuff. So, so that's why she did it.

And she did it, and the Public Employees Relations Commission said that we committed an unfair labor practice initially by doing it. We went to the, we went to the full Public Employees Relations Commission, and they overturned that decision, and upheld Mayor Freedman, and then it was upheld in the courts. And that was, that was all the work of Mayor Freedman and Cindy Sontag in terms of getting that thing done. And it was, like I say, it was a very, very, very, very nasty reaction from the police department.

RK: Sir, what is the Public Employees Relations Commission?

TG: That's the state equivalent of the National Labor Relations Board. That's the state agency having jurisdiction over public sector labor relations.

RK: Do you recall on what basis initially they ruled against the city?

TG: Yeah, they said we had to bargain it. There are concepts called "managerial prerogatives" which you do not have to bargain. You know, a managerial prerogative is how many days I have my office open, what my office hours are going to be. A bargaining issue is, is how much I'm going to pay you to be there for those hours, how many of those hours you have to work, and those kinds of things. And the mayor took the position that control over her cars—because they were her cars—control over her cars was a managerial decision that she did not have to bargain. And so that was the basis for the action. The procuring officer at first said that that was not the case, that that was a benefit, which gets you back to this theory that, you know, forget all this stuff about managerial prerogative, what it is is a benefit, and you're taking the benefit away and you have to bargain. And frankly, I think there was some concern on the mayors part, that if she did bargain it, she wasn't going to get agreement of the table, which means it would go to impasse, which then brings it to the City Council, which may or may not have the political will to back her up on that kind of stuff.

RK: Was there any thought at any point to allowing police officers living in the city to take home the cars, but not the others?

TG: Yes, there was, there was. And the Mayor didn't think that was fair. The mayor wanted to do that and talk about it, but the police officers sort of a nonstarter because they didn't want to talk about it. But, but the mayor, you know, the mayor certainly was willing to let people do it if there was, if there was in the thing, but she, she thought it ought to be [an] across the board policy in terms of doing it.

RK: Where does the police chief fit in terms of negotiations?

TG: Very, very generally. He's, he's really, you know, in a strong mayor form of government, it's the mayor's contract, and it's the mayor's call. So, so certainly the mayor wouldn't have appointed that person chief if she didn't want to listen to him, and she does listen to him. But, but the fact of the matter is is that it's the mayor calling the shots in terms of what's going on, certainly on the finances, on those kinds of the things. And the chief providing input in terms of the terms and conditions that he needs to have.

RK: At one point during the Freedman administration, Mr. Bennie Holder was appointed Chief, did this union play any role in that whatsoever?

TG: [Laughs]. No, [laughs], you mean in terms of supporting it?

RK: Yes.

TG: Not that I recall no, they did not. What they—but I mean, you have to go—because that’s another thing I think is just huge for Mayor Freedman, I mean because she did two things that I think were striking. Is that number one—three things I guess, in the police department. Number one, she promoted a lot of people, sort of out of order. I mean not out of order in the sense that she had the perfect right to do it, but out of order in terms of this, this old style lockstep kind of promotion. And she opened it up to a lot of women and a lot of other groups that, that sort of felt they weren’t there at the time. And before Bennie Holder, she had brought in Chief Gonzalez from Miami, which was to me, sort of a precursor to, to Chief Holder, and almost as big a change. Because they had never had an outside person come in before. And when Chief Gonzalez came in, there was a great deal of anxiety on the part of the police department, because here comes this guy from outside.

And it would have been interesting to see how it played out, because I think he was, he was going to bring a lot of change to that department, but then of course he got named, when Clinton got elected, he got named as the Chief Marshall to the thing. But the mayor, the mayor was always I think searching for the, for the perfect police chief and she really, really did. She went through Chief McClain, she went through Chief Gonzalez and everything. And she was the one that then made Chief Holder chief, having you know, having brought him up sort of out of order to begin with. He was over there in Internal Affairs, and she brought him up to major, and sort of set the stage for him to do it.

But no, that wasn’t, that wasn’t anything that wasn’t anything that the police union was interested in helping with that I recall. There was a great deal of resistance to it. And a great deal of infighting in terms of the, the deal. Because like everything else in Tampa, you have this, you have these proprietary deals, so you have these different groups in terms of what they’re doing. You have this Latin group, you have this regular group of non-ethnic, I guess to an extent you can call it non-ethnic, non-minority-ethnic—and then you have the African Americans. So there was a great deal of back and forth and those kinds of things. I think that the union did not do a particularly good job of representing black officers, at least in the opinion of black officers, in terms of, in terms of if you ask them whether they thought they were getting representation. So everybody was working through the racial issue. And, and I think with respect to the Chief Holder, I think it was a, it was a daring thing for the mayor to do, and a gutsy thing for the Chief to take—Chief Holder to take.

[End Tape 1, Side A]

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[Tape 1, Side B]

RK: I want to ask that question again, we might have missed it on the tape. At some point did the police union support the new chief, Mr. Holder?

TG: I don't think so. I think that the, I think the best evidence of that is I think that when, when Mayor Greco, who started running early and was basically you know, designated the presumptive winner very early, you know, certainly before the end of the Freedman administration. I think that one of the, one of the commonly held articles of faith, if you will, was that he was going to replace Holder. That's what the union wanted was that Holder be replaced. And I think some people were kind of shocked that that didn't happen. So no, I don't think the union ever, ever came around to supporting him.

I mean, it, you know, it's an interesting, I think an interesting dynamic with a police department. If you and I were rookies together, and you make Chief, I'm going to expect to be remembered, OK? I'm going to expect to have you remember that we're good guys and that we support each other. And I think that just because [of] the nature, and I'm not talking about overt racism or anything like that, I think just the nature of race relations in this country—I think when you're an African American, I think you come up with a smaller group of confidants that you have. And therefore, not the patronage, but just the knowledge of the administration isn't broadcast as broadly across the spectrum of these different people. And I think that, I think that Chief Holder had people in all those groups, but I think that he didn't have the same contacts with the old school people, with some people. And he also came from Internal Affairs, which is kind of a tough place to come from, because you sort of you know, were not, not very well thought of by some of the folks who they have contact with. So no, I don't think the union ever came around to supporting Chief Holder.

RK: You had mentioned that the firefighters pretty much looked at things as a block...

TG: [Sounds in agreement]

RK: ...they didn't have splinter groups. Did the police department have a sort of splinter group with African American officers?

TG: Never a splinter group. I don't want it to say like they did a walk out or anything like that, or didn't join. They were always there, I just think that there was a perception that, that they didn't get the same kind of representation, that they weren't being thought of as this other group. I think they were getting representation as cops, you know because I think in the minds of the police union, you don't have gender or, or ethnicity, you're just blue—you know, everybody's blue and that's it. So I think they got, I think they got represented as blues, I just don't think that they got you know, any kind of, any kind of deference or any kind of awareness in terms of individual issues they might have had.

Which came up in the—you know, Mayor Freedman, Mayor Freedman was also real big on civil rights, and Mayor Freedman came up with an absolutely zero tolerance slur rule, that if you uttered a slur you were going to be fired. And that was just another thing that the police department thought was awful in terms of what was going on you know, and so the union fought that a great deal. And of course the first couple of cases that came out were the "n-word." And so there was a tension between the union who's saying, *look we need to do this for the concept of unionization, you can't have people fired for one word.*

And some of the black officers were saying, *well you can for that word*. You know, you know, *what's the problem with being fired for that word?*

So it was a—I don't think they ever came around in terms of race relations. And I don't want to, I don't want to cast dispersions on the PB, I don't know if the country has. So you know so I'm not saying they're particularly worse, but I don't know that we, that we have ever gotten past that issue of race in terms of what's going on.

RK: Was there a formal affirmative action plan adopted by the Freedman administration that impacted the police officers in terms of hiring, and for that matter, the other employees?

TG: Well, not by Mayor Freedman, but let me tell you what Mayor Freedman did. Not by Mayor Freedman—the affirmative action plan had come as a result of a consent decree, which I believe went back to Greco one in terms of the administration where there had been a finding that blacks had been systematically excluded from the police department. And again, not that, no that the—maybe it's provincialism from my home town, but I don't, I don't want to suggest that the City of Tampa Police Department is any different than any other police department in the world, you know, including the northern ones. But yeah, there was systematic exclusion, there was a consent decree and there were numerical goals put in there.

And the numerical goals were, were, basically based on the population—general population, and then as you went up the ranks, they were based on the population occurring in the population in the rank below. So that you did patrol officers based on the general population, you did corporal's based on the population of patrol officers, sergeants based on the population of patrol officers, lieutenants based on sergeants, and on up the, on up the ladder. And Mayor Freedman kept that going despite the changes and laws that happened in the Supreme Court, despite the challenges and those kinds of stuff. We ultimately lost that case. We ultimately lost it during the Freedman administration. And she continued to fight for it, but we lost that in federal court here. Judge Kovakovich ruled that, that you know, since we have a black police chief, and since our numbers were certainly in accord with, with what you would expect, that we couldn't have an affirmative action plan, so it was ruled unconstitutional.

RK: I wasn't aware of that. Could the city then adopt a different type of affirmative action plan?

TG: Not really. I, you know, it just—any, any type of affirmative action plan that's based on quotas or goals for a local government as opposed to a federal government—federal governments have a lot more, have a lot more leeway because they have money. So they can say, *we're not doing this as a matter of law, we're doing it as you don't have to take our money, but if you take our money, you got to have one of these plans*. The states don't have that, so it's, it's almost impossible. And I think that, that, I think one of the things that Mayor Freedman did is she, I think she put in a history and a commitment to the civil rights thing that's carried on even past that. You know, past the losing the affirmative

action, to where we still maintain those numbers, we've still done pretty good.

But I mean though, Chief Holder, he didn't have any choice, Chief Holder was out of the question—the price of keeping an affirmative action plan going once you've corrected the imbalance is—is the discrimination still, still you know, occurring? And when you ask Chief Holder, *do people get discriminated against in the City of Tampa Police Department?* The answer [from] Chief Holder is, *hell no they do not*. Which is a great answer, but it doesn't save you the affirmative action plan. So we lost that in terms of what it is.

And we lost some of those cases on the slur case. You know, there were arbitrators who said, *yeah, I think it's serious, but I'm not going to fire a long term police officer for saying that word or this word or those words*.

RK: Did however these policies in any way change the culture of the police or the firefighters?

TG: Oh I think so, oh, I think so. Absolutely, I—I absolutely think they did. You know the firefighters had their problem with gender. Sex was a big problem over there. And I mean, sex in the sense of physical sex, I'm talking about gender. And their big problem was the introduction of women. And they had a—people who live together, sleep together and those kinds of stuff, and party together tend to get lax in their language. And there was a, there were a great deal of off-color things happening there, and there were some people who paid a pretty heavy price for it. And, and that occurred during Mayor Freedman's administration and I think there was a change in culture.

I think over time, there's been a change in culture in the police. You know, some—some from society as a whole, I'd like to think you know, from the positive side. But I think absolutely that slur policy—which I thought was the worst idea in the world. I thought that, I thought that it would be virtually impossible to enforce that deal, because I'm not going to, I'm not going to tell somebody you said that, if it means you're going to get fired, OK? It's not going to happen, I didn't think you could get witnesses, I didn't think you'd get supervisors to—I think supervisors would say, *oh, I didn't hear that, Bob you must have said something else, don't do that anymore, OK?* And I thought that it wouldn't work, and I think a lot of people told Mayor Freedman that it wouldn't work, that it shouldn't be the draconian, *hey you're going to get fired no matter what*. But I think it did work. I think people—I think it made people think in terms of, *this could happen to me*. To the point where, where I think in the closing days of her administration, what we got down to was we would get down to the bases, to whether “bitch” was covered, you know, those kinds of things. There were, there were a number of things the city—that Latins would refer to themselves as, there were questions about that, whether that would be covered by the thing. And so you had a general awareness that, *hey, that kind of stuff doesn't go anymore*. In terms of what's going on.

And I think that's a continuing thing. I do work for the sheriff's office too, and the Sherriff is very concerned right now about this—these message boards, that this legal

affairs—they let police, and these police get on there with anonymity, sheriffs' deputies get on their with anonymity, or people purporting to be sheriffs' deputies, and they say these incredibly racist things, and you know I think the Sherriff is concerned rightfully, that if that's out there in the community, that somebody thinks that's the case, then how can you have an effective law enforcement if somebody doesn't believe that you're going to be on their side when you're coming out. I mean then you get back to this whole South kind of mentality of saying, *why should I call the cops? You know they're not going to be on my side anyway*. And so I think that thing is important, and I think, I think clearly having it being that mean and nasty and that hard, you know, it was difficult—and I'm not, I don't want you to think we won too many cases. I mean, we'd have—we fired—she fired a black officer for using that word. You know? And of course then, then there was a number of black witnesses who testified that it shouldn't be held to them, and the mayor said, *that's not, that's not how she intended it, everybody's going to be subject to it*. So it was, it was touch and go, but I think it had, I think it had a different—I think it had an impact on it. I really do.

RK: You mentioned the county and that takes us a little way—little bit away from our focus on the Freedman administration. But I am curious, the Sherriff's, are they organized as the police officers are in the City of Tampa?

TG: Just recently.

RK: Just recently?

TG: For years they weren't allowed to because they were constitutional appointees, but, but the Supreme Court decided about two or three years ago that they could be organized too, so they just now, I think they're working on their first contract.

RK: And what about firefighters?

TG: For the county? Yes. They've been organized for a long time.

RK: And was there a relationship between the collective bargaining going on for the city's firefighters and the county? Or are they completely separate?

TG: Completely separate. I mean sometimes they would use each other's comparators, say, *we ought to get more money*, and that kind of stuff. But they were based in completely separate—Different constituents, different ethnic make up, I mean, just the whole thing, I mean just really, really a profoundly different kind of pool of people in terms of those things.

RK: So you've worked with many administrations beginning with Mayor Billy Poe, and you continued working with Mayor Greco after Mayor Freedman, and now with Mayor Iorio. How would you place Mayor Freedman in terms of the succession of the administrations?

TG: Well I think Mayor Freedman, I think that, that through the history that I've been aware of there have been different kinds of mayors, there have been like growth mayors and, and other—business mayors and those kinds of things, and I think there's been clean up mayors. And I think that Mayor Freedman had the good or bad fortune, depending on how you look at it to be a clean up mayor. I think she had to do a lot extraordinary things in terms of fiscal responsibility, in terms of race relations, when there was a riot you know on her watch that, that took place and there was a lot of things going on that she had to do that did not make her popular that I always thought that she was really courageous in terms of meeting. And, and not having an agenda, and not being one who could be pegged as conservative or liberal, but just trying to do the things for her city. I mean she was born—it was her city too. You know, she lived here her whole life and she felt that a great deal, and I thought she did a great job. And it would get tiresome for me having grown up in this city too, to have friends of mine who were in business who would say she's anti-business, or she hates this or she hates that, when it wasn't true.

And I think the legacy of Mayor Freedman was that she got that place in a fiscally responsible kind of way, that I think is, was shown by the things that took off afterwards. She got a lot of things done, she, she made a lot of, lot of progress in terms of reigning in the union cost, in terms of race relations, in terms of any number of things—in terms of the arts. And I think that's what her legacy's going to be. I think that's one of those legacies though, when you're a clean up mayor, I think it takes longer to focus because nobody likes to want to talk about medicine. You know, they want to talk about the candy bar. And, and she was definitely a medicine type mayor.

RK: But, some lasting changes resulting from her administration?

TG: Oh absolutely. Oh absolutely. I mean, from you know, starting with the first black police chief and working through any number of things that got done and got changed and, and really are still in effect today. In terms of some of the departments and some of the ways she set things up and, and the tone she set for all these kinds of things.

RK: Thank you very much sir.

TG: You bet, my pleasure.