

NOTICE

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

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

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

Digital Object Identifier: U23-00029
Interviewee: Ray Cooper
Interview by: Andrew T. Huse
Interview date: June 24th, 2004
Interview location: USF Tampa Library
Transcribed by: Renee Perez
Transcription date: April 3rd, 2017 to April 6th, 2017
Audit Edit by: Renee Perez
Audit Edit date: April 7th, 2017
Final Edit by: Carla Butel
Final Edit date: May 30th, 2018 to June 1st, 2018

Andrew Huse (AH): All right, today is June 24th, 2004. My name is Andrew Huse, program assistant for the Florida Studies Center. Today we continue a series of interviews here in our studio in the Tampa campus library with USF faculty, students, staff, and alumni, in order to commemorate 50 years of university history. Today we will be interviewing Ray Cooper, who came to USF in 1964 as an undergraduate student. And today, he works for university relations. What is your title?

Ray Cooper (RC): Basically graphic designer.

AH: As a graduate designer. Well, good afternoon. Thanks for being with us, Ray.

RC: That's quite all right.

AH: Well, I guess we'll just get started. When did you first come to USF? When did you first hear about it, et cetera?

RC: Well, I came to USF in '64 after getting through St. Pete JC¹. They've now decided they're St. Pete College or whatever. Got an AA there. Came over here in order to finish up and get my BA. It was more convenient and economical to stay around town, so I commuted back and forth quite a bit. I lived in St. Pete and came to classes over here.

¹St. Petersburg College was formerly known as St. Petersburg Junior College. It was founded in 1927 as a private, non-profit two-year junior college and has grown to become a four-year state college in Pinellas County with 11 campuses and centers.

Worked as a student assistant. Back then, mom and dad didn't pick up all the tariffs. One wound up working through the school year, fall and spring, as student assistant or something, taking off the summer and working wherever you could get a job to keep all the ends meeting. At least, date money, beer money, and gas money. Of course, gas was a heck of a lot cheaper, well under a dollar.

AH: Where did you work as student assistant?

RC: Well, at the time I was here as an undergraduate, there was a division of the university called the division of educational resources. It comprised a graphics department, a photography department, a cinematography department, an audiovisual department, [and] a special collections unit that was initially housed over in the education building. We were housed in the basement of what was the original library, now the student services building. And as I said, we were down in the basement, which made for fun over the years.

The radio station, which was part of the division, was also housed there. We put the television station on the air in '66, just as I was leaving to answer the call, in spite of my comments to the recruiting sergeant that much of this was against my religion as a devout coward. (AH laughs) Having beaten the draft that far, the irony of the situation was, in the middle of basic training in Fort Dix, New Jersey, I was able to burn my draft notice, which was fun for all those witnessing the event. Fortunately, there were no senior NCOs or officers. I went away to, basically, basic training, AIT², OCS³ at Fort Gordon, Georgia. They had asked me, when I was signing up, because I went on a college-op program.

At the time, ROTC was not something enjoyed at USF. I went over something like friendly army recruiter, after desperately trying to get in the Navy. My dad had been in the Navy. He said it was a lot more hygienic than the army, for the most part. And since I knew the army recruiter over in St. Pete, he took me out to breakfast, took me back to the office; this all happened on a Saturday morning. He said, "Well, we can put you through the college-op program since you have a degree. That guarantees you as an OCS state. What branch of the army would you like?"

I said, "Well, the Signal Corps would be good. I understand the army pictorial center is out on Long Island, and, gee, I think that that would be my niche." He said, "Well, what's your second choice?" I said, "Well, Intelligence Corps sounds good." "Well, what's your third choice?" "Well, transportation." "No, it has to be a combat arms." I said, "Well, what do you mean a combat arms?" He said, "Well, it has to be infantry, artillery, or armor." Well, I said, "Good lord, I can't be infantry. Armor is just like riding around in

²Advanced individual training

³Officer candidate school

your own coffin. Artillery! They're behind the lines, right? Everything is going over?"
"Yeah." "That's it. Artillery."

Anyway, I wound up going through Fort Gordon, getting commissioned as a brand new second lieutenant in the Signal Corps. Going out to Fort Sill, being in the second class of signal officers that were trained as communication officers going down to battalion level in combat arms, I wound up as a signal lieutenant in an artillery battalion in 'Nam [Vietnam]. And I arrived for Tet⁴ [in] '68, wonderful experience.

AH: A lot of combat behind the lines, so to speak.

RC: Well, yeah, you could say that, if there were any lines. The lines tended to be 360 degrees around wherever you sat. But I will say the artillery was a wee easier than infantry; they were always out in the muck and the mire. We only occasionally went out, and usually by helicopter, and we came back by helicopter. And we were just there for a short duration in between rides. Anyway, I came back in early January of '69.

AH: Well, before we continue, let's back up to your first jaunt here at USF. You ended up going to Vietnam in '68. What was the political scene like on campus? I mean, I know that it seemed to be fairly conservative in the early to mid '60s, and it really started to shift—

RC: There was a lot—

AH: —about the time that you left.

RC: There wasn't a lot of protests against the war in the early '60s. You know, as they rehashed film of casualties in 'Nam, people get disenchanted [with] what they thought was a reasonable response to "treaty obligations" with another nation, a friendly nation. I think we're basically a continuation of French Indochina. And French Indochina, after World War II, was a result of probably Roosevelt's acquiescence to [Charles] de Gaulle's ego. And Eisenhower proceeded to support de Gaulle's efforts to reinstate himself in the colonies in Southeast Asia. Obviously, it all came down to the buck. They had a lot of plantations over there producing rubber, copper and whatnot.

⁴The Tet Offensive marked the turning point in the war. The North Vietnamese, in an attempt to encourage rebellion among the South Vietnamese and to force the US to scale back involvement, coordinated attacks on more than 100 cities and outposts in South Vietnam. Although they had lost militarily, the North Vietnamese won a strategic victory. New coverage of the offensive eroded the American public's support of the war effort and the slow withdraw from Vietnam began.

And of course, as it turned out later, there were sources of oil in the South China Sea off the Vietnamese coasts. So, yeah, a lot of things go back to the buck. There wasn't a protest, by and large, on campus at that point. Male students lived in fear of the draft. The chief clerk of local draft board 30, which is over in St. Pete where I lived, was a gal by the name of Kennedy. And the rumor was about, and I don't know for certain, that she had had her own son drafted after he dropped rather low in his grade point at St. Pete JC. Whether that was true or not I don't know.

I actually had a friend that sat on the draft board whose sons I had grown up with. They literally lived across the street where I grew up in St. Pete. Gary Ickles, who was the director of the division of educational resources when I signed on as a student assistant, was a lieutenant commander or commander in the navy. He flew P-3 Orions⁵, and between him and Art McQuillen, who sat on local board 30, they did their best to get me in the navy. But the navy bureaucracy managed to lose all my background check and were very apologetic and said, "Well, you know, it'll take us another six months to reconstitute this stuff."

And I said, "Well, draft board isn't going to wait." And Gary Ickles suggested, well you can enlist in the navy. They have a four-year obligation. And I said, "Yeah, I can enlist in the army, and it's a two-year obligation. There's a guarantee here that they will send me to OCS, barring any terrible screw-ups on my part. And that means, wow, two-year obligation after a commission, ten months to get to basic training AIT and OCS, that's under a three-year hit, four, I think I'll go that way."

That's how I wound up in the army. But no, there was no protesting in the '60s. The protests, I think, began to materialize after the Tet Offensive in early '68. And the Tet Offensive was impressive, lots of John Wayne. Beat the hell out of VC⁶. The VC no longer constituted any kind of a real military presence for the duration of my stay, which was, by and large, '68. And the folks we were essentially going against were North Vietnamese regulars.

AH: Sure. What about your academic experience at USF as, you know, a bachelor student? Anything stand out in your mind? Any professors stand out in your mind? What were your impressions of your classes?

RC: Well, I took basically a fine arts curriculum, so I was over in the College of Fine Arts with such guys as Bob Gelinas teaching painting, Ernie Cox doing sculpture. Oh my god, the guy who did—ah—ceramics.

⁵Lockheed P-3 Orion is a maritime patrol aircraft introduced in the 1960s.

⁶Viet Cong, which was a military, communist insurgency active in Vietnam from 1950 to 1976.

AH: Oh, I wouldn't know that one.

RC: It'll come to me. The whole bunch of them here retired in the last several months, had a big wingding over at the gallery. Uh, Jeff Kronsoble, Don Saff, some real good guys, Harrison Covington. It was a very neat environment.

AH: Yeah, describe it for us. Why was it so striking?

RC: Well, you know, at that age, you're out to save the world and do meaningful things and make your mark and interpret for the rest of mankind or—yeah. Actually, I always had a commercial bent, and this was the route to take. It was a lot of fun.

AH: So you've always been interested in visual media, then?

RC: Yeah, pretty much from early on.

AH: So upon your return, then, you came back to USE, was it in '69, right?

RC: Correct. Cam Stanton, who had been the only guy in the graphics department when I first met him in '64, hired me on. I initially started working over there in '64 as a student assistant. A guy by the name of Ron Bouverat, who was a fellow student in fine arts, had been working over there as a student assistant. He knew that I was looking for a job. He knew that Cam was looking for somebody else come in and share some of the load. We weren't working on computers in that time; we were sitting there, ordering types, sticking it down, drawing the pictures. There weren't stat cameras. Everything was done by hand. And I fit right into that environment because basically, I was primarily involved in printmaking in fine arts and fell into place that way.

AH: So how did the atmosphere on the campus change? Did it change much? Obviously, your perspective probably changed, having gone through the experiences you did. What were your impressions upon your return?

RC: Well, we heard a lot of change in '68. You had assassinations going on; you had political conventions going on. I remember one of my NCOs⁷, who was involved with Deltona or his father was involved with Deltona, was saying if Democrats got in, he just

⁷Non-commissioned officer, a military officer who has not yet earned a commission.

wasn't coming back to the States. Okay, uh, right. That seems like a little bit of an overreaction, but whatever floats your boat.

AH: Well, he wouldn't be disappointed, after all.

RC: Anyway, I got back here, and it had started to hit the fan in terms of student unrest. And there were gatherings out there in what's now MLK Plaza but was, basically, a large cooktop at the time, particularly in the middle of summer. There were all kinds of concerns that the new science building, which housed the computer mainframes at the time, would be stormed and trashed by the students in some kind of a state of political unrest. This caused them to do many strange things, in terms of building some kind of a maze within the building. I don't think it kept out any student unrest; I don't think there was sufficient unrest to keep out.

But I remember getting stuck with a photographer—I was working in the graphics department at the time—up on the tower, actually, the east tower. There used to be an east and a west tower at the UC. And we were basically shooting pictures of the students all raising hell in front of the UC. Why we were bothering to do this, I'm not sure. But the director of the division, being a military type, thought it would be appropriate to do that because you didn't know what was going to transpire, and at least you'd have some record if it was there. So of course, we were looked upon by the rioting students with some degree of displeasure and distrust.

AH: Yeah, students often would, you know, make a big fuss about their pictures being taken. I know that it happened several times in the late '60s, I think. Maybe even once or twice before you came back. What were some of your other duties? You were in the division for about 20 years. So you worked with the television station?

RC: As I said, we put the television station on the air in the summer of '66, as I was going off. I came back primarily with duties toward television, although not solely television. We did, in the '70s, a lot of open university courses where we actually went into the studio, produced course material that was then aired on open university for the university.

AH: That's fairly progressive for its time, right?

RC: Really, yeah. A guy by the name of Tom Wilson, retired several years ago, was probably primarily instrumental in bringing that concept to fruition here on campus. He had a number of connections with open university in Britain, which was much more of a big deal over there, I think. Well, big fish in a small pool. It was not just television there; it was television; it was radio; it was correspondence courses. It was any number of

mediated methods whereby you could provide coursework and training to somebody looking to get it.

We basically provided television output of courses and had the opportunity of working with folks on geography, a guy by the name of Hans Neuberger, who had actually been on the meteorology staff for the D-Day invasion, in spite of the fact that he was German. He had, I think, gotten out of Germany before the great unpleasantness spilled over. Charming guy, absolutely charming guy. Fun to work with. His wife, who was absolutely stone deaf [was a] beautiful woman, beautiful woman. Just lovely people. I worked for the guy that was doing math. That was a lot of fun Almost managed to blot him totally out of memory. We did some strange things at his behest. He really—he felt like you had to fill the PT Barnum school of advertising. You know, if there's white space on the poster, well, fill it with something. It didn't seem to occur to him that you couldn't put that many lines of copy on a television screen and expect anybody to be able to read it, much less see it clearly. It's another good reason not to mention his name, not that I can remember it at this point.

Um, met a lot of interesting folks who drifted through while the dinner theater craze was going. The one that really stands out in my mind was John Carradine, absolute gracious gentleman. And you'd swear he'd vibrate the walls with that voice of his. Really in the throws of arthritic problems at that time, I mean, his hands were just—but yet, put the hand out, make you welcome, make you his friend, just a charming guy. The show was a weekly event. It was done by a woman by the name of Sheila Stewart, who passed away a number of years ago, who had the distinction—she was a, you know, I don't know whether she was an American citizen or not.

She was British, and she had been the first woman announcer for the BBC and had literally been doing broadcasting on the BBC during the Blitz⁸. In fact, [she] would not go anywhere below ground because, evidently, their studios were rather deep below the subways—or the tubes, as they refer to them, just a charming lady. When I married my wife in '84, we went to England for our honeymoon, and she set up a meeting with one of her nieces, and that was just wonderful, told us all the British expressions that one could use with impunity in this country but would mark you as being crude, vulgar and rude over there.

And in spite of that, we were eating in a quaint little restaurant in the middle of York, the second week of our stay. And this was lunchtime; this was in the middle of the week. And so, if there were empty chairs at the table, they'd plunk right down, just like any old large city. And we had two charming ladies sitting across from us, and my wife announced that

⁸During 1940 and 1941, Germany conducted a bombing offensive against Britain in an effort to create disorganization and to demoralize the British people.

she was just stuffed, (RC whispering) which is not an expression to use over there. But those things slip out. Anyway, lots of neat people.

AH: Let's talk a little bit more. One thing I want to ask you about is, what are some of the projects that you are most proud of during your time working with the television station or whatever work you did? Obviously, there's a lot of projects, but—

RC: The next one.

AH: The next one was always the best?

RC: Of course. Absolutely. I think one of the things that I was most proud of, and I'm not sure it was very successful, is we had the opportunity to bring in computer aided design. And I spent the better part of a year doing research on what was available out there. Unfortunately, what was available out there was rather high-end for its time. We wound up spending in the neighborhood of 100 grand on what wound up being IBM PCs, old 286s.

AH: Well, by what time was this? What year?

RC: This was towards the end of the '70s into the early '80s.

AH: Okay.

RC: And some of it worked, some of it didn't. They weren't Macs. They weren't supposed to be IBM either; they were supposed to be Sperrys. But the university had a contract with IBM, so they were IBMs. Interesting set of software. It afforded you the ability to do vector graphics, paint-type graphics, raster imaging, three-dimensional graphics, you could actually create something in three-dimensional space, digitally, because every point had an X, Y, Z axis reference. You could then take something rasterized in what amounted to a paint program—think of it in terms of Photoshop today—and graph that onto the three-dimensional image and rotate it in space because we had the capacity to take and animate and give movement through another facet of the software. And it was called ArtWorks, PaintWorks—I don't know, a series of works. The one that sticks to mind is PageWorks because it didn't—uh, you could set type more easily on a typewriter than trying to get anything done on that. That was pre-PageMaker and certainly pre-Quark.

AH: So working with the new systems, at least with the ones that worked, was that an exciting change?

RC: Yeah, that was really neat. That was really neat. I mean, we were still working on drawing boards; we were still doing cut and paste, but we were gradually moving into this stuff. We had the ability to go out to what amounted to a box with a 35-millimeter camera at the top of it, and we would scan our GB on a cathode-ray tube that the lens and the focal length was fixed to in this box. And then the film would go back and forth on a computer-driven basis, and we'd paint a slide. Obviously, it took a long time to do that. We did animations, and the way we did that, we set up the movement with the vector graphics, with the rasterized images. They would build one screen at a time and transfer, cell for cell, to a Sony BVU-800. Nobody uses those anymore. I mean, it's the three-quarter U-matic⁹ stuff. To do ten seconds of actual motion on the screen, you'd set it up about 5:00 o'clock, lock everything down, have it start, and hope to god you had something in the morning. And literally, that's the way we did it. Some were more successful than others, but we couldn't produce using that stuff at a rate that made it really anything that was terribly usable. That whole aspect of computer aided design has just grown exponentially.

AH: Oh, yeah.

RC: Over the last 20 years, it's just beyond belief. You know, things that I can do in five minutes today would have taken all day 20 years ago.

AH: So, now, the accoutrements, all the different hardware in your profession have changed a lot, and obviously, the university was changing a lot all around you. What were some of the things you were noticing? I mean, when you came in '64 originally. It was a much different place than it is now.

RC: Oh, yeah.

AH: So describe some of the trends, some of the changes that you saw happening. Obviously, there's a lot of construction. What are some of the things that stand out in your mind?

RC: Well, needless to say, there's a lot of construction. There weren't a lot of trees, either. You know, some of the old scrub oak were here, and some of them are still left, surprisingly. Nobody worried about parking. I mean, if you were staff or you were a

⁹Analogue recording videocassette

student; students only got one parking tag; staff got two. Nobody paid for them. You know, if you were lucky enough to buddy up with a staff member, you could get one of their spares, and parking was even better. It was closer to the building. Registering for classes was a lot of fun. You wound up over there in the gym, going from table to table, picking up IBM cards, praying to god it all meshed together. Finding something has thrown a monkey wrench into the works and realizing, oh, my god. I've got to go back and start all over again. That was fun. Today, they do it on the computer.

AH: Talk about time-saver, right?

RC: Yeah, well, I don't know. In many cases, I've seen mommy and daddy do it for them. I've actually been stopped in the administration building and asked how to make out a check. You kind of wonder what they teach them before they get here, and I'm not sure whose fault that is. We won't go into the politics of education. Yeah, a lot of changes. I remember still working as a student assistant, I guess it was in the fall of '65; I was the only one in the office. It was about lunchtime. I guess it was September or October, and in comes John Allen. And he pulls up a stool next to mine and tells me about how he wants his Christmas card done. And what he wants is pictures of the three new buildings, which are over there. You know, the one with the nifty staircase that houses ROTC at the moment, mostly, and HMS and, I think, one of the early engineering buildings. So basically, we had to illustrate them with pen and ink, and we used something called Zip-A-Tone, which was a self-adhesive dot pattern or line pattern. And this is how you imported some kind of tonal quality to an illustration for mechanical purposes. We tried to drop them in as reflections on glass-looking ornaments hanging from a Christmas tree-like affair.

AH: I see.

RC: Yeah.

AH: So these were, like, the university's Christmas cards.

RC: Yes! At least it was John and his wife's, representing the university. Yeah, that was fascinating. That came out all right. I would be embarrassed to admit it today. I am embarrassed to admit it today, but what the hell? It was back in the day.

AH: Well, at least we don't have any images of that, do we?

RC: Not that I recall. Not that I'll surrender.

AH: We'll see what we can do about that.

RC: Good god. Who knows what's in Special Collections? I imagine there might be a lot of that stuff. You know, at the time, we were required by the guy who was in publications, Frank Spear, who was a wonderful gentleman, unfortunately passed away too early in life. But I had the privilege of knowing him and being able to work with him. And he was always very supportive, very kind. He was very much into type; that was his hobby. He collected type. He collected nifty print pieces. He had little presses he had in his garage that he set the type and did all kinds of really wonderful things. And unfortunately, he passed away early, succumbing to cancer. I was very sorry to see him go. He was an absolutely delightful gentleman. Of course the '70s were the Cecil Mackey era.

AH: Yeah, tell us a little bit about that.

RC: Well, of course, he was basically operating under the direction, I guess, of the board of regents, which came into existence to keep politics out of higher education in the State of Florida. Should I admit we've moved 180 degrees? No, I can't say that. That would—no, certainly not. Anyway, he expanded the operation. He took what was, I guess, to some people's point of view, a quaint little liberal arts college and turned it into a university—or at least laid all the groundwork. During that period, he required a number of things of us. We created the first collateral material for the president's council, which was basically a donation club. We were put on a project to create a logo for the university.

AH: Oh, yes, I remember these logos.

RC: Up to that point, the basic symbol of the university had been its seal, which is not a logo. It is a seal. There are differences. We came up with a design. He, in fact, approved it. He put it in writing. And then he left. And between the deans, the VPs, and Reece Smith, that didn't happen.

AH: Yeah, now, this was the logo, the kind of S [and] F, kind of twisting together, right?

RC: Yes.

AH: Yes. Yeah, I know they actually—you know, it was used in a few political cartoons in the *Oracle*, et cetera. One, there was a proposition that was going to strip USF of graduate schools or something, and it was defeated. The proposition is this dragon, and

there's a knight on top, and this big badge is the SF logo thing. So that was short-lived, then, huh? I always wondered what happened to that.

RC: Uh, those of us who worked on the design end wanted to implement it as a package. Frank Spear, who was considerably wiser than the whole kit and caboodle of the rest of us, said, "No, let's phase it in. We'll start with letterheads and envelopes and gradually work it in." I mean, we did a decent design job. I don't know what happened to all the material. I suppose it's someplace.

AH: Well, it's considerably more imaginative than the one we have now. I mean, it has—there's an innovative look about it.

RC: It had some flair.

AH: I mean, it might seem dated today if we were still using it.

RC: I suspect so.

AH: But for the time, it was fit.

RC: We thought it worked well. And we had gone to some great lengths. We had created the thing, and literally built plastic models of vans and cars and used custom transfer types that we literally made in the office and transferred the size. We pretty much had a standards manual for its use, including not just collateral material, but vehicular signage, building signage, ways to identify the campus with it, any number of things. But as I say, that got killed with a lot of bickering and fighting. And the fact that rather easing it into use—which would've probably got a good portion of it functioning prior to Cecil's departure. Win 50 percent of the game, I guess you did good.

AH: What were the objections? Do you know?

RC: Well, you know about design by committee? Put the committee together to design a racehorse and then come up with a camel. Well, that's because, in a committee, you have everybody going to great lengths to compromise. Well, okay, they're going to compromise and they're going to compromise, and before you're done, everybody's personal opinion has been grafted onto the product to the point where the product is no longer a viable product.

AH: Well, and also the assumption that everyone on the committee is an expert and that, by having an opinion, it makes them one.

RC: Yeah, that goes to that basic syndrome of “I’ll know it when I see it.”

AH: Yeah. So was the next logo the one we just phased out? The kind of italicized—

RC: Yes

AH: Okay. And when did that come about?

RC: In several iterations, basically. It came about courtesy of athletics, which has wagged a lot of dog around here. To be perfectly blunt, I am not a great fan of intercollegiate athletics. I think it has a tendency to drain more than fill. Besides, as I said “quippingly” in terms of the military, I was a devout coward and really didn’t want to get shot at. Athletics is the training for war, historically. Why we want to make it something else, I don’t know. Let’s be upfront about it. You want to go out and beat the hell out of somebody? Okay, call it boxing, call it wrestling, call it whatever you want, it’s basically training for war. [Patrick] Tillman, my God, he came across looking like Sergeant Rock.

AH: Who is Tillman?

RC: The guy that got wasted in Afghanistan.

AH: Ah.

RC: The NFL football player who went off for God and country. You know, it’s a shame he died. More of a shame that he got hit with friendly fire. Not to demean him, I guess he had some degree of personal honor. He had to stay in the force, and I guess he did.

AH: So we were talking about the logo, wagging the dog.

RC: The logo! Sorry, I digressed.

AH: No, no, that's okay.

RC: Basically, I got a kick out of it. I had, prior to it coming into being, of course, done some bicentennial stuff for the TV station. We put out, at the time, a little publication that went to the membership each month and decided, as something to do during that particular year, feature each of the states as they came in. Basically, the thirteen original colonies as they became states. And the typeface I chose to use, because I thought it had that colonial-look appeal, was something called Bookman Italic Swash, which is what the logo was. It was Bookman Italic Swash, with the drop S-curve that was one of the several other versions of the S that got incorporated into that. And basically, it came out of athletics and originally came out of athletics as a solid "USF" with a fine hairline around it.

It just didn't work because it would fall out; you couldn't see it over distance; it was a devil to reproduce. So basically, we put it on stat camera, reversed the thing, filled in the space between the solid and the curve and dealt with it as just a solid center and then a bold outline around the thing. An outside operation did the standards manual, which had more about proof marks and literary styles than it did about actual graphic application. And somebody in publications I guess, at the time, or whatever they were calling it during that era decided that, because they could get public affairs, and the little band that flanked the drop S-curve, that would suffice for everyone.

Well, you know, this is a university. If you can say it in one word, it's gotta to be sentence. If you can say it in two words, make it a paragraph. If it actually requires a couple of sentences, a chapter or a book will suffice. I guess, early on, they must have been paid by the word or the letter; I'm not sure which, but it's hell. Concise is not our middle name. Anyway, there were any number of problems with it. That and the fact [that] it was on a slant. Well, slant is very difficult, in many instances, to fit in with the rest of something and have it not look like the proverbial sore thumb. But again, it came out of an athletics impetus.

AH: Interesting. I never knew that part of the story there. So you brought some notes along. Have we covered all the people involved?

RC: Gee, I don't know. I have to put my glasses on to read them. Oh, well, yeah, I got some names I'd really like to mention.

AH: Shoot.

RC: Dean Kopp you know. We've got a building named after him, awfully nice guy. And there was a guy who worked for him early on. A gentleman I knew as Dr. Helvey, don't ask me what his first name is. I don't remember. Dr. Helvey was a European of World War II vintage, who claimed to have all these degrees from god knows what universities, which, of course, during the unpleasantness, many of which were bombed. He couldn't actually produce a lot of the paperwork substantiating his academic claims. Anyway, they trotted him around because he had some claim to know about rocket science. And of course, we had just put someone on the moon. So anyway, he went out to various ladies' and garden's clubs and blah, blah, blah, blah.

And we did some printed material for him, one of which required me to recreate a rocket taking off and flying. And I had the smoke billowing out, the things riding off its gantry, and he was real happy with it. We were ready to send it out to the printer. All of a sudden, he comes in all aflutter, "No! We cannot do this! Someone has pointed out it looks like a phallic symbol." "Yeah, well, okay, it's perpendicular. There's a billow of smoke under. You could say that. Certainly wasn't intentional, but we wouldn't want to offend any ladies in the garden club." That was funny. Dean Kopp, I don't remember exactly what we were doing for him, but it was after 5:00. The place was locked up. And did he know the configuration of the back of the basement where the windows are in the SVC building?

There is a rather large concrete mass, which you can walk along. And Dean Kopp was rather portly at that point. It was before he got on his health kick, and he was still chomping cigars. And he came scraping along that, knocking on the window to be let in because the place was all locked up; it was after 5:00. I don't know what he came over for, but he wanted to stop something from going somewhere, and he took it upon himself to do it. In many instances, you had very one-on-one contact with a lot of people. There wasn't a lot of delegation and sending minions. The people that actually made the final decision had absolutely no problem coming, seeing you, and making the final decision.

Elliot Hardaway was our boss in the '70s, and we did a capabilities brochure for the division, which encompassed our department and everybody else's department. And it was a fancy thing. It was all kind of colored paper done together, and there were die cuts, and he really got off on that. Anyway, everybody and their brother proofed it. Because, at that point, you sent type out to a type-setter, and they set it and you get galleys back, and that's what you pasted up. Well, we got it printed. And we've got several thousand copies of this thing. And lo and behold, there's Elliot's name right in the middle of the darn thing. Fortunately, it was right in the middle of the thing because we wound up having to send it back to the printer and having it taken apart and having a new center page inserted because, instead of being spelled H-a-r-d-a-w-a-y, it was spelled H-a-r-d-w-a-y, leaving out that center A, which rendered a different meaning. Now, this wouldn't have been so bad, except that Elliot had proofed it himself, and he blew it. But he was in good humor about it.

AH: Something, actually, something from about that same time, there was all this talk about getting a giant Picasso on campus.

RC: Yes, there was.

AH: What do you remember about that?

RC: There were evidently a number of *maquettes* shown to the university from which they could select the one they wanted. Naturally, they went for the one that was going to be the tallest, which was not necessarily—in my opinion, because I did see photographs and *maquettes*—the nicest one they could have picked. But hey, you know, taste is a very peculiar and personal animal. There was a gentleman by the name of Jim Vickery, who was one of Cecil's flunkies. He's probably the president of a university now. In fact, I'm sure he is.

At any rate, Jim made some strange decisions and stuck with them, I will say that. Right, wrong, or indifferent, he would stick with whatever he decided, and that can sometimes be good and sometimes be bad. But he also made the unfortunate mistake of saying to a reporter for the *Tribune* that they were really, in the fundraising drive, looking for the big money. And the reporter, I think, came back with, "You know, what about small donations?" "Oh, well, certainly, we won't turn those away, but we'll probably use those for architectural lighting and the like."

That turned off a lot of people who were the movers and shakers in the City of Tampa, and that's probably one of the main reasons why the thing never came to pass. That and the fact that it was certainly a majority that thought the thing was a hideous piece of god-knows-what anyway. But I know there was a *maquette* of it for the longest while on the fifth floor of the SVC building, and last time I saw it was in a pile with a bunch of other stuff, just treated like trash and actually broken, which was kind of a shame. And it's certainly a shame that it never came to pass. It would've certainly been a tourist attraction, and there would've been no missing the university because I believe it was in excess of 100 feet high.

AH: Yeah.

RC: It was of a height that it would've required a beacon on the top for flying aircraft. There was a neat guy in the photography department named Rudi Schwab. He flew for

the *Luftwaffe*¹⁰ in World War I. Older gentleman. If you recall a picture, I think *The Blue Max*¹¹, on the flight roster, his name appeared. And it was legit. It was an actual flight roster of the period. He was a neat guy, (imitating German accent) but there was a right way, the wrong way, and there was Rudy's way, and by god we are going to do it Rudy's way.

We did a lot of slides because television of that area used film chains and slide chains. You know, there were no chyrons¹²; there was nothing of that electronic stuff. My god, there wasn't video tape in many instances. Certainly, the videotape we did use was not terribly easily edited. And you certainly didn't do it digitally and then re-lay it. Rudy had his (imitating accent) copy camera angle fixed at a specific height, which required you to do the illustration within a specific area on 11 x 14 cardstock. Now, that's not terribly necessary. (imitating accent) But Rudy would not move the camera. He was very insistent on that. (imitating accent) No, you will make the art conform. I don't know whether he was just pulling our chain to be difficult or if he really believed that, but he was a neat guy.

Bob Grasso. I had a medical problem in the early '80s, and Bob was a microbiologist who worked over in the College of Medicine. When I had a problem with a neurologist over in St. Pete who had prescribed something that he probably shouldn't ought to prescribe, he put me in contact with Leon Prokav(??) over in neurology. And, I mean, he didn't like that. Bob was a neat guy. He would come blistering into the place because we did a lot of diagrams and stuff for him.

We did a lot of academic support: graphs, charts, things to go and do for publications. And a lot of that was India ink in rapidograph pens¹³, and the blobs would visit you, and you'd be scraping and whiting out and lots of fun. Anyway, Bob unfortunately passed away in the mid '80s. He had developed brain cancer. But he was [an] awfully, awfully nice guy. I mean, there were some great guys dying with their boots on around here. Leon Prokav I think is still here. He was chair of neurology, and I think he's since quit that and probably on a reduced schedule. But I believe he's still over in medicine.

Start me again! Where am I? Where do you want me to go?

¹⁰The *Luftwaffe* was the air force of the combined German Wehrmacht military forces during World War II. The comparable body during World War I was the *Luftstreitkräfte*, but this was disbanded by the Treaty of Versailles, which forbade Germany from having an aerial warfare body.

¹¹*The Blue Max* (1966) is a World War I aviation drama told from the perspective of a German fighter pilot.

¹²Chyrons are the predominantly text-based video graphics that typically occupy the lower area of a television screen; they are often featured in news broadcasts to display headlines and other textual information.

¹³A rapidograph pen is a type of high-precision technical pen often used by artists, engineers, and architects.

AH: Well, let me see. I think we should switch tapes before we finish. We've only got about two minutes left.

RC: Okay.

AH: Just a minute

Track 1 ends; track 2 begins

AH: Well, we're continuing here with Ray Cooper today. We just finished with a series of campus characters, and we're going to continue on that trend now by hearing the story of the first provost and his Rolls Royce.

RC: Yeah, Gregory St. Lawrence O'Brien. I think, when he left here, he went on to be a president of some college or university over in Louisiana. But he had a Rolls Royce, and at one point in time, I guess he thought that would be nifty to drive on to campus. I've always maintained if you have to drive your own Rolls Royce, you really hadn't ought to own it. (AH laughs) But he proceeded to drive his own, and I think people noticed it and said, No, really, that's out of place. You know, this is Chevy land, or something, or Volkswagen land. But, you know, Rolls Royce, not here.

Anyway, he was a big buddy with a gentleman by the name of Jim Heck, James Baker Heck. And he worked over in Greg's office, and when Greg left—they actually used to be neighbors over on Davis Island, literally neighbors, across-the-fence neighbors. Greg wanted to take care of his good buddy Jim, and he made him the dean of the school of—good god. The dean of the School of, uh, Extended Studies, Learning and Broadcast Technologies.

AH: Oh, boy.

RC: Yeah, well, as I said earlier, if you can say it in two words, by god feel free to expand it to a paragraph at least. You know, it all used to be just educational resources: simple, to the point, concise. So anyway, in order to make him a dean, he pulled continuing education and educational resources together and created this thing, and left. And of course there's, as always, political infighting. And he who has the strongest will and the most backing will tear off anything he pleases to tear off, so broadcasting got torn off, and other things got torn off.

Now, I'm not sure what's left over there. I bailed in the late '90s myself and went from what was left of that to publications, over in what was then, under Harry Batson, public affairs. In this administration, we're calling it university relations. Carlin(??) could, I'm sure, do a heck of a number on this place. I can hear him doing it, but I'm not going there. So Greg was an interesting guy; Jim Heck was an interesting guy. Jim Heck fancied himself (long pause) somewhat qualified in the area of broadcast and deeply involved himself in that area. He's still alive. I'm not going any further. (RC and AH laugh)
Something else?

AH: Yeah, we were talking about the kind of changing of the guards between Allen and Mackey, and then John Lott Brown was the next president.

RC: Jack Brown was just a genuinely nice guy. For the most part, you could trust pretty much everything he said. He was, for my money, easygoing, congenial. I had occasion to do an illustration for the cover of *USF Magazine*. And Frank Spear, when he had to put out the college bulletin—and, of course back then, we actually mailed it out—and in order to get a very reasonable rate, it had to be a bulletin, and you had to put out four a year. So in order to accomplish that, *USF Magazine* was born as the other three copies. Obviously, it was never over about 32 pages at the time, and it was barely above a two-color process. At the time Chester Ferguson, I believe, had just come off the board of regents.

And the feature article of this particular magazine was on Chester Ferguson. And I did, basically, an illustration for the cover. That was a portrait of Chester. And consummate Southern gentleman. Naturally, we used it for reproduction purposes and actually put it on the cover. There's copies of it around, I'm sure, but they took the original and matted it, framed it. I got drug along for the presentation, and Jack Brown and I think Jim Russ, who was over in public affairs at the time. We three went down with framed portrait in hand, and he had us in his office and graciously received the portrait and da-da-da-da. I will never forget coming back to the campus from this.

Jack was driving. We came around 30th [Street] there at Fowler [Avenue], more or less on two wheels, going over the curb. And as I said, Jack was driving. That's the last time I drove with him. (both laugh) But genuinely a nice guy, except for his driving. And Chester Ferguson was, as I said, the consummate Southern gentleman. This was a Friday afternoon, and he was getting ready to go for an extended weekend up to some fishing lodge in Canada to go after musky¹⁴. And he proceeded to go into great discourse about this fishing lodge and the wonderful fishing up there, and da-da-da-da. And I kept

¹⁴Musky is a common abbreviation for "muskellunge," a relatively rare species of fish native to North America.

thinking, That's great, must be nice. I don't particularly like to eat fish, so it didn't really bother me that much.

AH: So those are your recollections from the John Lott Brown era. And he's notable, I guess, because besides John Allen, he's the one to stay on the longest.

RC: Yeah. Was it ten years?

AH: Almost ten years, yeah. Right around there. And then someone who wanted to stay on for well over ten years but ended up being considerably less was Frank Borkowski¹⁵.

RC: Frank Borkowski was a very nice guy, from my dealings with him. Of course, he was involved in music as well as his wife. He, I think, was caught up in a case of athletics wagging the dog again.

AH: A certain basketball player in this case, right?¹⁶

RC: Uh, yeah.

AH: Yeah.

RC: And unfortunately, I guess he took some advice from folks that were more concerned with the Final Four, and the notoriety, and financial value to the university than, uh—well I'm going to say at this (inaudible), doing the right thing. And I think in many ways he was scapegoated for it and that shortened his tenure. But during his tenure there was a number of things that emphasized music, School of Music. And we were involved with doing a lot of the stuff for the ISME program, which is an international music education deal. Yeah, unfortunately, they had the conference down in the convention center in Tampa at the worst possible time.

¹⁵An interview of Francis Borkowski is available as part of the USF 50th Anniversary Oral History Project collection.

¹⁶In 1989, Martin Taylor was accused of sexual battery and suspended for a few weeks. Taylor and his girlfriend began harassing the alleged victim, and although the harassment was reported to USF authorities, no action was taken. To end the harassment, the woman withdrew her complaint and Taylor resumed playing basketball. An inquiry by the Florida Board of Regents found that USF did not follow rules and manipulated policies to keep Taylor playing in spite of allegations that he harassed, battered or raped six female students. Taylor helped lead the USF Bulls to its first NCCA tournament berth.

If you recall, we had Lawton Chiles putting on a flak jacket¹⁷ to go into Miami on the interstate being caught by the national media doing so because a number of European tourists had been mugged and what not around Miami. That didn't do any good for the intendants at ISME that summer. Part of the build-up for the conference here was pushing the fact [that] it was coming here, two years previous, in Seoul, Korea. John Richmond—fantastic musician, just genuinely decent guy—was working with Heller, who was I guess, chair of the department at the time. They were co-chairs on the committee doing it here. And we rushed a number of things, including a display for him; he hauled it off to Korea. And on one occasion, shortly after he had come back, Borkowski came in with him. And we were fooling around with some other stuff (inaudible), and he said he really would have lived to have gone except they would have just torn him apart. So, you know, he could let his hair down. He was a genuinely decent guy. It's a shame he didn't stay on longer than he did.

AH: Yeah, we were lucky enough to get him for an interview not too long ago; he was in town.

RC: Really? Great, great. Of course, I think his wife caused change orders to the Lifsey house¹⁸, at least seven occasions that I was told about.

AH: Change orders? What do you mean?

RC: Rearranging it.

AH: Oh, the house itself.

RC: Yeah, its interior design, which some people have had problems with.

AH: Well, some people have had problems with just about everything about that house.

RC: Yeah, yeah. Well, the president doesn't live there, so, whatever.

AH: Yeah, not a popular subject.

¹⁷This is a form body armor, made of heavy fabric and reinforced with either metal or Kevlar.

¹⁸The Lifsey house is located on the Tampa campus and was built as the president's residence. When President Genshaft became president, she elected to remain in her own residence and the Lifsey house has been used for hosting official events since that time.

RC: I guess not.

AH: Talking about music, another kind of luminary, long-term luminary, John Knocky Parker. Any recollections there? Did you work with him with the television station or anything?

RC: Yes, we did. He did an Open University course.

AH: Was that the Masters of Silent Film? Or what was that?

RC: Yeah, he was involved in that. He and a couple of others were involved in that. I think he did pieces and parts of it. Yeah, he was a character. I mean, you can't state it any more clearly: he was a character. A charming guy when he wanted to be. Sometimes he was just off in God knows where, but he was a neat guy. I think one of the best presidents this place has seen is Betty Castor, though.

AH: Yeah, you know, I was going to mention that. When Borkowski was taking heat, one of the regents who was dishing out the most heat was a woman by the name of Betty Castor, who became the next president, interestingly enough. Go ahead, give us an assessment.

RC: Well, of course, Betty was here well prior to Borkowski.

AH: Oh, yes.

RC: Because at some point she was legislative liaison. And then, of course, she went on to be the education commissioner for a number of years.

AH: And then on the board of county commissioners here in the county for a long time before that.

RC: That was, I think, her first run at politics.

AH: In the '70s, yeah.

RC: But she had a lot of political acumen, which has become—god, I think even more so today—a necessity. Of course, she was in the wrong party to continue as president, and I think she understood that, and that's why she left. And also, I think she understood the demise of the board of regents was well on its way with the change in administration in Tallahassee. And I've always thought that that was a terrible shame because, of course, I came here not that far after the Johns Committee¹⁹. I mean, you know, Charlie was just another McCarthy-ite down here, dragging kids out of classrooms, interrogating them in downtown hotel rooms and, you know, worrying about folks who were not politically or socially acceptable at that point in our history.

AH: Uh-huh. Commies and homos, respectively.

RC: Yeah, there you go. There was, and I don't know that it was true, but there were rumors, and I know there was physical opportunity to do it. There were rumors that they put cameras and two-way mirrors in bathrooms in the basement of the library. And I know that if you go in a certain room that has traditionally been a photo lab, you can take a hatch off the wall, and you can go in a space that's minimally shoulder-width that houses most of the piping between the men's room—

AH: (laughs) Interesting.

RC: I need say no more. Whether there was ever a camera set up in there, whether they ever had a two-way mirror, I don't know. I didn't see it. I can tell you, in the '70s, you could walk into that room and breathe deeply and (inhales deeply) enjoy a certain chemical release. Of course, I can also tell you that, when I was in Vietnam, we deployed one of our batteries to an area near Qui Nho'n, I'm not sure. Between Nha Trang and Pleiku. I can't think of—An Khe. It rings a bell. Anyway, it went into a relatively flat area that was a farmer's field, and it burned off what the farmer was growing, and the whole damn battery was stoned. Literally, I'm not exaggerating. It was funny to listen to the radio traffic. The battery commander, who was a good friend of mine, was stoned.

AH: So was this marijuana or opium?

¹⁹The Florida Legislative Investigation Committee (also known as the Johns Committee) was established in 1956. Similar to the investigative committees during the McCarthy period, the Johns Committee conducted wide-ranging investigations; they focused on academics, Civil Rights Movement groups, suspected communist organizations and homosexuals with an aim to expose what they believed to be subversive activities.

RC: Marijuana.

AH: Okay, interesting.

RC: Marijuana. And there was a period where you could just walk through, breathe deeply, and (inhales).

AH: Yeah, there was a whole lot of, you know—not late '60s, in the early '70s, narcotics enforcement here on campus. I guess, there was a lot of rumors of undercover police officers, et cetera, and confidential informants.

RC: I never met one, but I was never dumb enough to do anything on campus.

AH: Well, you weren't living in the dorms either—

RC: No, no, no, no.

AH: Students growing their own crops, et cetera.

RC: Really? Geez.

AH: So what have we missed here? We've covered, obviously, a lot of ground. Anything that we've neglected to talk about? Obviously, we could probably sit here all day, but anything else that you wanted to mention?

RC: Geez, not that I can think of. I'm glad to see there's more shade on campus, particularly this summer.

AH: Well, and a lot of people attribute that to Betty Castor. Of course, the MLK, the mall here and the MLK plaza, a lot of trees added, even since I arrived in '95.

RC: Betty had the benefit of having some hands-on experience, having some history under her belt, having worked here previously, having had the political acumen to walk back and forth between the political halls of Tallahassee and the academic halls here. Of

course there was, prior to her getting the job, an “ABC” movement, which stood for “Anybody But Castor,” which one of the deans, I believe, was pushing. But I think, as it turned out, she was maligned for being hands-off and protected and, to some extent, she might’ve been. But I remember, on one occasion, I did a number of presentations for her for the state of the university-type things.

And many occasions, it would come through minions. But there was at least two occasions where her office called over and I said, “Could I spare the time to come over and talk to President Castor about her presentation?” And I know, on one occasion, one afternoon, we were both down on our hands and knees rearranging things and her showing. Now, this is what I want to say. This is how I’d like to say it. Okay, well, you know, from horse’s mouth it’s much better. I had no special entrée with her other than I was doing the job, and she recognized it wasn’t working with the parlor game, where somebody whispers it in somebody’s ear and by the time you get to the other end of the line, god knows what it’s going to come out as. Basically, a nice person. And I wish her luck in her present political campaign.

AH: She may need it. She may need it. Well, I want to thank you for being with us today.

RC: Oh, you are most welcome.

AH: Taking out the time, you have a record of a lot of service here at USF, and—

RC: A couple of years.

AH: And I want to thank you for extending that service to the studio here today.

RC: My pleasure.

End of interview