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Interview with: W. Scott Christopher
Interviewed by: Mayor Dick Greco
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G=Mayor Dick Greco
C=W. Scott Christopher

G: Hi, today we find ourselves in the studio of USF, Channel 16, as part of the USF Library Oral History program. And I'm privileged to be here with a great friend of mine, Scott Christopher, who headed up the Tampa Chamber of Commerce. Starting back, I think Scott in 1952...

C: Yeah, um hum.

G: ...and you stayed for 24 years...

C: Twenty-seven.

G: ...and certainly, not that you're that much older than I am, but you remember a little more history probably than I do back then, and--a lot of things have changed since then. I noticed that when you sat down, you said when you first did radio and television programming, the little microphones we have today were this big (gestures).

C: That's right. Heh heh heh.

G: And I think everything has changed, in that same proportion over those years. Scott, where did you come from, when you came to Tampa? I've known you forever.

C: Yeah. Well, I'm a native of Enid, Oklahoma. A Sooner. And they got the name "Sooner" from those semi-outlaws who were waiting to make the run for the Cherokee strip free land. And instead of waiting at the line and coming when the gun was fired, they went ahead of time, and they became Sooners. So they got a head start for some of the best land that was available for settlement in Oklahoma in those early, 1885...

G: There were some semi-outlaws in Tampa when you came here too, back in the fifties.

C: Now what?

G: Heh. There were some semi-outlaws here when you came...

C: That's right.

G: ...so you might have felt right at home.

C: Heh heh I did. Heh heh.

G: Why did you choose Tampa in those days?

C: Well, Tampa actually chose me. I was in the Chamber of Commerce in Miami, and was assistant, general, general manager. And the position of executive vice-president at the Tampa Chamber became open. I did not apply for it. Because I was very happy in Miami. And my wife who was a professional in radio had an excellent position with the large ABC station in Miami. So she wasn't too eager. But in due time, a committee from the Tampa Chamber gave me a telephone call; said they had heard that I might be interested in moving--what about it? So I said well let's talk about it. So the committee came to see me in Miami. And we went then to Tampa. Took a look at the Chamber of Commerce building. Which was a terrible thing...

G: Heh heh.

C: ...it was a, they said if the mice ever quit holding hands, heh the building would fall down. And I think that's pretty well true. But we did come. And one of the first things we did was start a campaign to get a new Chamber of Commerce building. Which in time we did. And dedicated it in Tampa's Centennial Year. Which was 1953. So that's how it started.

G: Scott, you certainly have seen so many changes. And one of them that's very obvious is this university, where we are today. You were here at, since it's inception when people started talking about it. I think the first class started in like 1960, and they graduated their first class in '63.

C: Um hum.

G: Since then, similar to everything else in Florida and certainly in the Tampa Bay Area, this particular university has 165,000 alumni. Which to me is amazing. Thirty-six thousand students...

C: Hard to believe.

G: ...out here today--it really is. Because I remember when they first built it. I remember when property here...

C: Right.

G: ...cost about \$1,000 an acre and it was in the woods. You thought you could build yourself a country place before this occurred. And look at it now. Imagine 165,000 alumni--another interesting fact is that just the people who have stayed, that have gone to school here, would fill Raymond James Stadium.

C: Heh, hard to believe.

G: Which is a wonderful thing, because that means we're educating our kids and we're creating jobs here for them to stay. Do you remember when all this, this started, and...?

C: I do. And John Allen was the first president. And he set some standards for excellence which thankfully the university has maintained. And it has grown in size and in prestige. Today a graduate of USF is well respected, for what he knows and what he can do.

G: You know that the university has a 1.8 billion dollar economic impact? That's the equivalent of eight Super Bowls a year. You know we talk so much about sports and this type of thing. Imagine that.

C: Can't.

G: They just do a wonderful job, and it's very meaningful to this area.

C: That's right.

G: Let me tell you that when I call on people today, and you did this for 20-some years--when we go to New York to visit people that are thinking about moving corporate headquarters--the first thing, the first thing that they have always asked

about, is schools. And the type of school system you have. Today they want to know that there's a college system that turns out the type of people that they need to work in their plants and in their various businesses. And this has weighed heavily on many of the decisions to come to Tampa.

C: It truly has. And the standard of this university is one of the things that they look at very quickly and early in their decision. And as we talked in the Chamber of Commerce to prospects, people that we like to bring to Tampa, and encourage to come and be a part of us, they want to know about the university. What does it do? Does it have a scientific background, does it have Engineering? It did not have, originally. And then the College of Engineering got started and became a very important factor in the profile of what this university could offer.

G: Scott what was the, for those that weren't around--I'm not asking for myself because I was here--but what was...

C: You can check me then. Heh.

G: ...what was the city like in--of course I was in college and probably not paying as much attention to the things as I have to today, but what was the city like? I remember the waterfront on Ashley Street where our library is, and uh...

C: The waterfront of course was a sore spot. With the first citizens of Tampa. Because it was a line of old warehouses. And heh I remember one occasion after a severe storm, the warehouses there, which had been grain elevators, developed some major leaks and so on. The effect of this of course was a preliminary to cleaning up the waterfront. But at the time, it attracted the rats. Heh and there were thousands of rats that, heh, that got out of there. But they had been there eating the grain. And uh, you look now at the oh, the Riverfront, and you see the wonderful development down there; Hixon Hall and the other things. You say well, things can change for the better, and they certainly have in Tampa.

G: There was a meat packing plant approximately where the art museum is now, as I remember.

C: That's right.

G: And I do remember the grain spill. There were pigeons all over the street, and all kinds of birds, including the rats.

C: That's right, heh heh heh.

G: It's hard to believe--urban renewal came along after that.

C: That's right.

G: And removed most of that. And went on into Ybor City and removed most of the older structures there.

G: Right.

C: You know actually we are, we're talking about all the redevelopment you see has taken 30 years, Scott.

C: Um hum.

G: Ybor City, we're just embarking on a bunch of new things.

C: That's right.

G: One of the things we probably have not done, because the waterfront in Tampa was all commercial and had the buildings we're talking about--we rebuilt it, and probably did not leave enough green space and open space. We're working on that now.

C: Right.

G: I was in Tallahassee this week, trying to get some dollars to leave a park of 2.2 acres next to the new Marriott Hotel that's being built. And hopefully buy the other three or four parcels along the river just for green space. Someday we will wish we did that...

C: That's right.

G: ...and we're trying our very best to make that happen, and shortly we'll know whether or not we'll be able to do that.

C: Well, we hope that that effort is effective. Because as you say, a lot of those steps should have been taken 25-30 years ago. But we had our mind on other things, and we overlooked that. But now we're picking up one after another of the must-do community improvements, that in those days we just plain forgot about.

G: Well 25-30 years ago--this taught us a big lesson.

C: Um hum.

G: Of the things that perhaps we should have done and that are important. I don't think anybody could have dreamed, even though you looked at the numbers, of how this place was going to grow.

C: Couldn't.

G: It's like the university, like we mentioned earlier; if someone had said to you or to me, back when this started, we're gonna have 165,000 alumni. And we're sitting here today...

C: They wouldn't have believed it. Heh heh.

G: No, I mean even if you'd have said it, it wouldn't have sunk in like it really has.

C: Right.

G: There have been a lot of changes and there are gonna be a lot more.

C: That's right.

G: They get...

C: Well the coming of the university was a major landmark in Tampa's development. I remember when it was first conceived, and the Chamber of Commerce, with which I was associated in those days, it became very important that we make a case in Tallahassee that there was a need for this extra new four year degree granting institution.

G: You know they get \$135,000,000 in research grants? Here now? That ranks among the top 50 universities.

C: That's right.

G: About 60+ million in research grants for, for the med school. Which is something that of course came about afterwards. Which we longed for, for a long time. You know, I was out here the other day Scott, and I--most of us, even, myself as mayor should know more about the school than we do, but--came out and went through their research on Alzheimer's out here. And I got so fascinated--my wife's a doctor; she was with me, she understood what they were talking about. But to see

all these people so committed to one cause--for years. And they can, through taking a culture inside your mouth and so forth, almost predict whether or not you're going to get that disease. I didn't want them to try it on me--because I don't wanna know.

C: Heh heh heh.

G: I forget things already. But to think that that's going on in our community, and that we could cure something like that here, or predict it or do something to better it. The cancer research that's going on at Moffitt is phenomenal. Some of the professors and doctors and teachers that we have here are among the best...

C: In the world.

G: ...in the entire United States.

C: Right. In the world, in some cases.

G: No question.

C: Yeah.

G: And one of the reasons is, of course, is that the climate and everything here is wonderful. Every time we advertise a position at this university, they get hundreds of applicants. From everywhere.

C: Right. It is a good place to live, heh heh.

G: It's wonderful, no question. Do you miss being at the Chamber and all the--I know that when you retired, the first thing you did was write a book. Maybe you want to talk about that.

C: Heh heh heh. Well, the book was kind of forced upon me. But it was a 100 year history of Tampa that started way back 100 years ago. And I got a lot of information from writing it. And luckily, the book sold out. So a lot of other people wanted those facts also. But it's hard to keep track of Tampa's growth, and of Hillsborough County's growth. For a long time we were just kind of on the edge of the circle. And a lot of Hillsborough County was agriculture. And then gradually the industrialization of the county began to push and push back, to where now we are a major industrial center. With lots of jobs, and a lot of new innovative things coming out--of which this university has played a major role. Some of the research that's going on now will be felt, not only very soon, but over the years as that

development, of what they have developed in their research, becomes common knowledge. Other industries will come in to take advantage of it. So it's an exciting place to live. And thank goodness for the sunshine and all the other advantages we have.

G: Scott, much of what you started has been accelerating, continues today. For instance the Committee of 100, and a number of things that were started at the Chamber to pursue bringing people in, and bringing industry and business. Started way back when you became head of the Chamber.

C: Right.

G: And I think that most of it goes on today--what was the Chamber in those days? You might want to explain.

C: Well, it was not too active in the seeking and securing of new industries. It was primarily agriculturally oriented. Because Hillsborough County was an agricultural area. But as industry came, and found that all of the ingredients for success were here, they attracted others until now of course we're a major industrial center. Which spills off in new jobs available, new industries being established, and so on.

G: You know you mentioned Hillsborough County, and we recently annexed some land into the city. Back when you first started, at the Chamber, the city was slightly larger than the county in population.

C: That's right, heh.

G: In all these years, if it weren't for the annexation of New Tampa, the city would not have grown at all. All the growth began to be outside of the city and what was once agricultural became more urban in nature i.e., Carrollwood and Brandon and so forth and so on. There's been basically no growth in the city for some 30 years, people wise. And some of the buildings were deteriorating and that type of thing. And actually for a period of several years, we lost population.

C: Um hum.

G: We were, we had less population. Today, it's going like crazy. The last couple of years we've created over 11,000 new jobs through the Chamber that we can document. It's just unprecedented what's going on, and it's gonna continue whether we like it or not. I realize that many people say gee enough's enough, I don't want any more people--that's not gonna happen. Whether we like it or not. So we'd best

try to pick and choose those things that are good for us.

C: That's right, that's right.

G: And that's what we're able to do today that, back when you and I first knew each other and started, we...

C: Heh heh.

G: ...we were trying to get everything we could...

C: That's right, heh heh.

G: ...that looked halfway decent, right? C: Heh heh, that's right.

G: It's really changed today though, Scott.

C: It really has. And with the change has, I think, been general improvement. The quality of life in Tampa is much better than it was 25 years ago. Not only because of the technological improvements. But, you think of medicine. Back in those days, those early days, Tampa General Hospital did have a, a program to train doctors. But it was small. Now today with the University of South Florida College of Medicine and all of the new developments coming out of that institution, plus the influx of new technically trained people, we've become a metropolitan center. That I didn't visualize totally. And probably you didn't either. We knew it was gonna grow, but we didn't know how well.

G: I don't think we could have. I don't think you could possibly visualize 30 years ago what we're looking at today.

C: No.

G: And perhaps it's probably difficult to do 30 years from now. This school is ever-changing.

C: That's right.

G: I mean every time you come out here, there's a new building.

C: That's right, heh heh.

G: You know. A lot of people from the city have never come out here and taken a

look. We've got an excellent, excellent art museum up here that's noted all over the world. USF produces more teachers than any university in Florida.

C: Hard to believe.

G: You know there are 200 school principals the State of Florida that were educated at USF already.

C: I didn't realize that.

G: I didn't either--I just looked at that number the other day. There's all kinds of figures that are coming out of this place.

C: That's right. Well, and the growth comes along with the modernization of city government. Which you were very much a part of. But we had kind of a pedestrian government that when a problem arose, they sat down and said what do we do about it? But now the planning, advanced planning--which is so important to a growing city--is now well under way. This university--University of South Florida--the one, we campaigned so hard with the Board of Control, as it was called, to get a university here as soon as the legislature passed an enabling act which permitted it, we had no idea of the resources which the university would provide this community. Which we now have of course. I think of the old Tampa-Henderson Airport, which was just full of weeds and so on. Some of the movers and shakers of Tampa said, we need an industrial park. I think the old Henderson Airport would make a good one, to start. So it is; it's grown and developed.

G: That's across the street.

C: Heh heh that's right--hard to believe.

G: Right across Fowler Avenue.

C: That's right.

G: That's what this was, right? Before Busch came in, and...

C: That's right.

G: The Industrial Park that you all started at the Chamber.

C: Yep. Well you mentioned Busch, of course. Tampa was never much of a tourist

town. We were an industrial town. We were a town of assemblers, and business of that type. And then Anheuser-Busch took a look at it. And said I think we ought to build a brewery there. And what turned out to be an industrial complex, became one of our main tourist attractions. Now Busch is still right up at the top of all the South of people wanting to see what goes on. And, in favor of Busch and the Industrial Park, there's a lot going on out there, and it's now organized so that the public can go take a look.

G: You know, I'm glad you mentioned the fact that at one time tourism was not something that we particularly felt we needed. Something that has changed is that very factor. Over a 30 year period, we have accumulated practically every venue that a city like New York has. Maybe not as many--we have every major professional sport there is, we have an aquarium, we have MOSI which is down the street here, and tourism now is necessary to help us fund all of the things that we have built.

C: That's right.

G: And we are concentrating on--that's why we are trying to rebuild Ybor City. And when I say rebuild it, most of it was gone with the historic buildings--and we've got to preserve those, and preserve the history--and I know some resent the fact that we're doing something that brings tourism, but it's the only way you can make it fly. Busch Gardens is our biggest draw, with over 3,000,000 people a year--about three-and-a-half million that it draws. Ybor City, this year, we're embarking on spending between city and private enterprise over a hundred and ten million (\$110,000,000). One attraction alone, which will be a huge shopping complex, draws about 3,000,000 people--in Coconut Grove--so tourism is important. We have cruise ships coming in here now that, right after the first of the year, will be over 400,000 people. The significant difference there, and you know this, that a few years ago all of these trips were one week trips. People came in here, got on the ships and left. These new trips are gonna be five days. Which many people will stay an extra day or two if we have a reason for them to. That's why we're gonna put the Trolley from downtown through the waterfront to Ybor City. And continue to do things that tourists would like to see. The Aquarium, Lowry Park Zoo. You know one of the things we haven't mentioned, and I think we should, is HCC, a community college.

C: That's right.

G: It prepares many students the first two years to come here. Not everyone can come here, at first. And that's a huge school that's also doing a great deal of good for

our community. They have thousands and thousands of students. They're almost the equivalent of this place.

C: That's right.

G: When you take the part-time in--and that's very helpful. We have a lot to boast about, education wise.

C: That's right, heh heh.

G: In this place that 30 years ago did not exist. What would you like to see change in the future? What do you see that maybe we haven't done? If you were head of the Chamber now, maybe what would you be doing?

C: Heh heh.

G: That's a hard question, I know.

C: It is. Well, to begin with, you have to continue to grow. There's still a segment of Tampa that thinks we're big enough, shouldn't grow any more. But if you're not growing, you're stagnant, and you're dying. So, continued growth of the kind that we can handle and manage, I think is, has got to be one of our priorities. Some of that's going on, but I think we need to put additional effort into it.

G: People all have to get the idea, in my view, I've come back to a job that I did 21 years ago...

C: Oh.

G: ...and I try never to constantly look back-because that is behind us. And life is ahead of us. But you can't help but compare a lot of things. It was a sleepy little town when you and I first knew each other, when we didn't have to have a key to our house...

C: Heh, that's right.

G: ...you could walk anywhere at night without any fear. And our city is better than most, but things have changed. And all of it is not good. We're living in a city of two hundred and approximately ninety thousand people (290,000). This year we'll get 700,000 police calls. However, we are more comfortable. All of us have more than we ever dreamed we would have...

C: Right.

G: ...if somebody would have asked us as kids, are you gonna have the type of home you have--you're on a beautiful lake, I'm building it--we're so gifted, so blessed...

C: Right.

G: ...to have what we've got. And many people take that as a signal to relax...

C: Heh heh.

G: ...that I don't have to give anything back to the community. You could have quit, and not done another thing. You're still involved. You go to Civic Club meetings; I've seen you. You're a part of this community. Many people do not give back. One of the other things we should mention about this university is that they give--the faculty, the students, everyone affiliated with this university--gives about 600,000 hours to the community every year.

C: That's right.

G: An equivalent in money of 6.1 million dollars a year. If you would equate that in dollars. If everyone felt an obligation--number one, to vote, to be a part of what they see, to criticize what they don't like, to become a part of the things they want to happen--it would be a better place, and a better world. And one of the things that I really see, Scott: that less people are doing that than used to.

C: I think that's right. They're so busy with I don't know what.

G: Enjoying what we've got.

C: I guess, heh heh.

G: And we get very angry if the remote control breaks on the television.

C: That's right, heh heh.

G: All of us. Because you have to get up.

C: That's right, heh.

G: And that's the one thing that I have noticed. In looking back, more people are--do you know more people voted everywhere in this country--including Tampa--30 years ago than they do today.

C: That's a sad commentary.

G: It's sad, but it's true. And one of the things that, maybe I hate to mention, but during my election I was doing some research on who votes and who doesn't. Realized that when I first ran for mayor, 60,000 people voted in the mayor's race. When Sandy Freedman ran, 35,000 voted.

C: My goodness.

G: In this last race of mine, about 40,000. Still 20,000 less than approximately 25 years ago. Which, at the University of South Florida--and I hope some of the students listen to this--had about 12,000 registered voters. I think 12 voted in the last governor's race, and 14 in the mayor's race.

C: Is that right?

G: Yes, that's right.

C: I wouldn't have believed that.

G: I thought it was wrong, but I rechecked it. And that's a sad commentary. And I think it has to do with the fact that the farther we get from the sacrifices that it took to, to have what we enjoy? The more we feel we can relax and it's gonna continue without our input.

C: That's right. Which it won't.

G: No, it can't, it's a you must sustain thing. And work on it. But when you were first at the Chamber, there wasn't anybody that you could ask that didn't say yes to what we needed, was there?

C: That's right.

G: Everybody was a participant.

C: That's right.

G: And we knew them all, didn't we?

C: And we knew them all by their first name, heh heh.

G: That will never be again. It can't be.

C: It's already changed, you know, today.

G: No question. You know I moved out to New Tampa, as everybody calls it--which, I don't know whether that's a good name or not--but we don't know each other from one side of town to the other. I mentioned earlier there are people that have not driven on this campus. They don't know what's out here. They should. This is one city, one county, one metropolitan area, if you please.

C: That's right.

G: We've got to be interested in what happens in Pinellas, and other places. When we started, you and I, back all those years ago, we really didn't think much beyond where we were. We couldn't.

C: That's right.

G: There was too much to do right here under our noses, right?

C: That's right, that's right. Well...

G: Are you gonna write another book?

C: I don't know. Heh heh, probably not. Heh. Somebody better qualified will, I'm sure. But you take University of South Florida, nobody--me included--had any idea of the influence of this university in attracting other intelligentsia to be on the faculty, extremely capable people who would come and go to school here. Our high schools now are turning out a high percentage of kids that want to come here. And that's a credit to this university. And I think to their judgment. I think back a little bit, and the old Tampa Industrial Park which we had was originally the Henderson Airport. And you look at what we have now in the way of an airport, and you think well the old Henderson was awfully good, but it's 35-40 years old. Now with our air travel, we've caught up, I think. And, but we've got to keep at it.

G: Boy you talk about something that made a big difference was our airport.

C: Oh yeah.

G: Remember Scott, of course, you were president when we built that, and I happened to be mayor when it was completed. It cost \$83,000,000 I think. The first air side that they added, after the airport was built exceeded that price tag.

C: That's right, I remember that.

G: People thought we were crazy when we built that airport. But then after it was completed, I remember a lot of people told me when I was mayor, if you want to impress people with the city, meet with them at the airport and don't let them come to town.

C: Heh heh heh I remember that.

G: Unfortunately, that was kinda true back then, too.

C: That's right, that's right.

G: But look at that place now, it's beautiful.

C: Yeah. And it was state-of-the-art for those days, when it was built.

G: Really was.

C: But we've kept up with the needs of air travel. And I think we can be proud of that airport and what's happened to it.

G: I don't know whether you've been there recently, but the entire transfer level, where people come in?

C: Yeah.

G: Has been redone.

C: It has, huh.

G: They've built a mall. They're redoing the baggage claim area. Putting two aquariums to advertise the Florida Aquarium downstairs--which I think is a neat idea.

C: It is.

G: The place looks like it's brand new. They've done a great job with that airport, both George Bean and Lou Miller.

C: That's right.

G: Just a wonderful job.

C: And you can still brag on it. Look at our airport; it's state-of-the-art, and it still is. But we've got to keep alert to the fact that five years from now it won't be. If we don't do certain things to keep pace with the progress that's all around it. I think Port development should become more of a priority with the community. I remember several years ago, they said well what can you do to it? You know, we've got a place for ships to come in, and take on cargo, and deposit cargo for distribution. Well, one thing was to straighten the ships' channels. To get in here, you had to be a very, very experienced ship captain or a port employee that showed the ships how to get in. Because it was a maelstrom of little screwed up, short channels. Quick and severe changes in direction and so on. Well, a lot of that's been changed. But we need to be alert to the fact that what was good today--what is good today--probably won't be good tomorrow, because ocean transportation also is in a state of flux.

G: Well you all were instrumental in deepening the channels, along with Sam Gibbons and...

C: Yeah.

G: ...a number of others in those days, which really kept this port being a factor in this community. If you hadn't have done that, we couldn't have gotten the bigger ships in that are coming in today. The entire Port scene is changing; they own some of the finest property in Tampa now. Along that waterfront and Channelside Drive. The Port by the way is building, right now, a brand new building that will be at the foot of Kennedy and Channelside Drive. It's going to be a beautiful building. It's also going to house a world trade center.

C: Ah, that's right.

G: They're going to have a big shopping development next door. The cruise ships will be coming in there. The complexion of that entire area is going to change. So the Port is not only very viable in the tonnage that it brings in, but it's also taking

part of the tourist trade and a number of other things that we need along the waterfront.

C: You mentioned Sam Gibbons. Here was a quiet, unassuming native really, of Tampa. Who was so effective in the Legislature, and then in the Congress, to be alert to our needs and to see that we got them. And some of the things that we've been talking about--Sam was very implemental in getting the groundwork laid for us to go ahead--the Port being one.

G: Especially this university, too.

C: Well I was gonna say, the next thing is the university. It was Sam's work in the State Legislature that got the enabling legislation to build USF. And I think even Sam would admit that he had no idea of the fantastic growth and the excellence that this university has. People are coming from all over the country to attend our university. And originally it was kind of a junior college concept which has long since been outgrown.

G: Sam is still around of course, and I glanced at your book again the other day. It had been awhile since I've seen it. And saw all of the names of so many of the people who were in the forefront of doing everything here years ago. The Chester-Fergusons. Parke Wright, who is still around, George Gage, on and on and on. Those were great folks.

C: Yep.

G: And still are. Those that are here and those that are no longer here, but they had such a love.

C: That's right.

G: For this community. They really did, and you mentioned so many of them in your book.

C: Hm.

G: I was glad to see that, and it was kind of nostalgic for me to thumb through it again the other day, Scott.

C: Well, I'm glad you did, heh heh heh.

G: Well, you had such a close affiliation with most of those folks.

C: Right.

G: They all were willing to help, weren't they?

C: They were. All you had to do was ask. And immediately you got an affirmative reply. And not only that, but if you looked around the next day, they were already at work, doing what they'd promised to do. And I think Tampa was and still is unique, in the fact that our top leadership is willing to roll up their sleeves, get their hands a little dirty if necessary, and go to work on the problems that still face us. And there are plenty that do. And as we continue to grow, the problems will grow with us. It'll take uh, all the brains we have I think to meet those needs.

G: You know, the saying that as we grow the problems will grow with us, I think that's an absolute fact; that's one of the things that I, I see very vividly. If someone were to ask me today what's the most important thing that we could possibly do, I think unequivocally without any question, I would say education.

C: Um hum.

G: And that's why I'm glad to see this college doing so much. But we've got to go beyond that. We've got to start when kids are very young. If we don't turn out a better product of person, and the police calls go from 700,000 to 7,000,000--what do you--you know you can't add enough cops.

C: That's right.

G: And you know sometimes we don't realize what's around us that needs to be changed when we're living well. Ten minutes from where we're sitting today we have schools that have 99% of their students they call "at risk." 51% of the grammar school kids in this county get subsidized lunch. I think Head Start is a marvelous program--I think every child should be afforded Head Start. It bothers me, it's troublesome to know that I can build a stadium that cost \$183,000,000 and not have every kid in Head Start where we--it's a distorted situation.

C: Right.

G: We must--must--concentrate on educating children; turning out a person who knows what's right and wrong. Who has some guidance when they're young.

Because some of what I see today is somewhat frightening. And again, our community is much better than most. USF here is building a grammar school. It's almost completed on Fowler Avenue. So that they can interact with the students and that--I think that is tremendous. I think it's great that we're...

C: We've needed that. For some time.

G: Oh, absolutely. And I think it's a wonderful thing that that's happening. But all of us ought to be interested and be willing to sacrifice a little of our money, time, whatever it takes. To make sure that education is a number one priority.

C: That's right.

G: And unfortunately to everybody it's not. I remember when we voted on the, on the sales tax. We had a vote for police, fire, and schoolchildren. And it failed. And when we added a football stadium, it passed. And, believe it or not, that bothers me. It does. Because that's wrong.

C: Yeah.

G: And 25 or 30 years ago, I don't believe that schoolchildren, police and fire would have failed.

C: That's an interesting thought.

G: Well I don't believe that, and it's the one thing that's kinda stuck in my craw since I've been back--and don't misunderstand, I enjoy what I do. You know that.

C: Yeah.

G: And I don't mean to be critical. But our priorities are out of whack. And I don't care what you pay people, but a basketball player makes in ten minutes the starting salary of a teacher in a year. And I don't care that they play the basketball player that; that's fine. So long as we are concerned about the other, and I wonder sometimes are we, as a group of people--I had people say to me, during that first vote, I have educated my children, I have done my job, I have no responsibility to anyone else's kids.

C: I've heard that too.

G: That's baloney.

C: Yeah, you're right.

G: And that simply will not fly. So hopefully the people that we turn out of this institution, that understand the value of education, the young people today, and all the people who are doing so well, would every once in awhile sit down and take inventory, say hey. We've got to help those that are not, and be a part of making this a better society.

C: That's right.

G: Scott is there anything you'd like to add? We've talked a little bit about the past, about this university. Anything at all you'd like to bring up, or...?

C: Well, thanks. I would like to see a more uniformly organized industrial force. I don't think we have enough high skilled, high paid skilled technicians. We're pretty, we're extremely well qualified with university graduates. But I think we have let some of our trade school education slip. Maybe the priorities haven't been there for it. But at one time you know, an industry could come to Tampa. And no matter what level of skill they needed, it was not difficult to supply them. I think, and I may be wrong, but I think some of that priority has shifted. And I'd like to see it reinstated. Because we all can't be college professors, you know. Some of us have to still work with our hands.

G: Scott, if you don't mind, I'm gonna get you involved in some of the things we're doing--maybe force you to come downtown from that beautiful lake place that you work on...

C: Heh heh.

G: ...I know that you are working; the other day when I called you, your wife told me you were emptying the garbage...

C: Heh heh heh.

G: ...and I think that's a wonderful thing...

C: Noble. That's a noble gesture.

G: ...at least you're doing something.

C: Heh heh heh.

G: I think we should mention because this is a library function that this library is one of the only ones in the state that you can learn long distance through the library. That people from all over use it as a reference, from all over the state and other colleges. They've done a wonderful job and maybe in a year or so, God willing, we'll come back and do another program here...

C: Who knows.

G: ...and see what the university has done since then.

C: That's right.

G: And I appreciate you being with me. It's always nice to be with a person that worked with me 20-30 years ago.

C: That's right. That's a mutual feeling.

G: And I'm so glad to see that you're still active and still love this community as you always have.

C: Good. Thank you sir.

G: Wonderful to be with you, Scott.

C: Same here.

G: Good to see you. [end of interview].