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**Andrew Huse (AH):** Okay, today is May 6th, 2004. My name is Andrew Huse, program assistant for the Florida Studies Center. Today we continue a series of interviews in our studio here in the Tampa campus library with USF faculty, student, staff and alumni in order to commemorate 50 years of university history. Today, we'll be interviewing Joseph Gui—

**Joe Guidry (JG):** Guidry.

AH: —Guidry. Who came to USF in 1969 as a student, and currently he works for *The Tampa Tribune*<sup>1</sup> as the editorial page editor.

JG: Deputy editor.

AH: Deputy. Well good morning Joe.

JG: Well, good morning to you.

AH: Thanks a lot for joining us today.

JG: Glad to be here.

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<sup>1</sup>*The Tampa Tribune*, which won a Pulitzer Prize in 1966, was the daily newspaper for the Tampa Bay Area. In 2016, the *Tribune*'s publication was ceased when it was sold to the *Tampa Bay Times* marking the end of its 121st year as a newspaper.

AH: I guess we'll just get started with—how did you find your way to the University of South Florida?

JG: Well, I lived in Tampa all my life, a Tampa native and my sister had gone here. I had originally planned to go either to the University of Florida or Florida State. Probably University of Florida because I was interested in journalism school and my parents said, “Well if you go to USF your first two years, we’ll help you with Florida after that.” You know, financially, really that was the major incentive to come here.

And then, once I got out here I really liked it, and I went to work for *The Oracle*<sup>2</sup>. I also got a part-time job at *The Tampa Times*<sup>3</sup>, which is the afternoon paper there. And I thought, you know, When I go into journalism here, I’ll already have a job that could lead into a—it was virtually a full-time job. And so, I just stayed here and I had a great, great experience.

Here they just had started the basketball program. It really—I mean, it didn’t have a lot of the trappings of other universities: the football, and all. But for me, the—working at *The Oracle* kind of formed that. You know, we had our own social crowd and a lot of good memories of that. And then, I came back later when I was, you know, working at a journalism career to get my master’s degree in English. I just kind of liked the idea of getting an advanced degree—thought maybe sometime in my life I might go into academics, which [I] decided against that. But, I was always glad I came back here and got that degree.

AH: So, tell us a little bit about the mass communications program. You started in 1969, what was it like? What were some of your professors like?

JG: Well, most of the professors were journalist—former journalist. Leo Stalnaker<sup>4</sup> was the *Oracle* advisor, Arthur Sanderson<sup>5</sup> was head of the department. He had worked at newspapers during his career too. I think mostly he had been in academics, but Leo had worked at the *Tampa Tribune*. We had a number of teachers who were like—worked at *The Tribune*. Al Hutchinson, Duval Hardell—who is my boss at *The Tampa Times*—he’s a managing editor. He taught classes. It felt like you were getting a lot of real life knowledge. Don Bishop was the photo—one of the

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<sup>2</sup>*The Oracle*, the University of South Florida’s independent, student-run newspaper. The first issue was made September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1966, and the next year it was awarded several of the Associated Collegiate Press’ National Pacemaker Awards.

<sup>3</sup>The *Tampa Bay Times*, called the *St. Petersburg Times* until 2012, is an American newspaper published in St. Petersburg, Florida. It has gained multiple awards for its investigative work, including 12 Pulitzer prizes.

<sup>4</sup>Leo Stalnaker Jr. was born in 1923; Stalnaker was a U.S. Army veteran of World War II and was awarded the purple heart. He graduated from USF in 1963. In 1973, he received his master’s degree in Education from USF. He worked at the *Tampa Tribune* and *The Tampa Daily Times* before being appointed general manager of USF’s *The Oracle*.

<sup>5</sup>Dr. Arthur Sanderson, director of student publications and English professor at USF. In the summer of 1996, Dr. Anderson entered an agreement to print an entire stand-alone newspaper which would be named *The Oracle*.

photo's instructor, who was a terrific guy and done a lot of work. Steve Yates had done a lot—he taught magazine writing and other classes. He had been—done a lot of real world experience.

In fact, started the—*The Tribune's* weekly magazine, which was called *Florida Accent*<sup>6</sup>. I believe Steve is the one that started that. So they had, what I felt was, a good staff for the most part. You know, we moved at that time. While I was out here they opened up—I believe is Cooper Hall, the new—well it was in a new building, that was the mass com [communications] building. Well, now they've got a, you know, much nicer building than that. But we thought that was something.

*The Oracle* was in the University Center when I first started working, then went and moved over there. And that was, you know, we thought that was quite a feat. It was all typewriters and stuff, and none of that computer thing. But it was, you know, close-knit program, most everybody knew each other. A lot of us were working in newspapers. At that time, you could kind of go down there and get a job as a copy boy or sports stringer. It was much easier to get into the business, and so we all had that kind of bond. And, you know?

AH: So, were you a little surprised by the program? I mean, it sounds like originally you had your sight set on UF and suddenly you're immersed in this—was it a little better than your though it was?

JG: It was better than I thought it would be. You know, UF had a good reputation then. I did feel like I got a very good education. You know, I have to say the other part of it was—you know, working at a paper, seeing what better experience can I get there. So, that was the two things together [that] really made my decision not to go on to UF. But, I felt it was a very, very strong program then. I got out and went to work full time at *The Tampa Times*, never missed a beat. And like I said, my last—my junior and senior year I was virtually working at the *Times*, full time. And I, you know, eventually left *The Oracle* for that. But I don't know. I don't think any of my professors from those days are here. Manny Lucoff<sup>7</sup> was here with—for many years and I think—did he finally retire? (JG laughs)

AH: Yeah, he did.

JG: But—

AH: He's still around but—

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<sup>6</sup>The *Florida Accent* was distributed by *The Tribune* as a Sunday magazine during the 1960s and 1970s.

<sup>7</sup>Manny Lucoff, a retired USF professor in mass communications who served as general manager of WUSF from 1973 to 1974.

JG: Yeah?

AH: Yeah.

JG: He was one. Don Bishop, I was close to—was very good. Leo Stalnaker died last year, and he was a really good man. And—there's a young professor named Leonard Granado, who'd worked for UPI<sup>8</sup>, and I think he ended up going to the University of Arkansas and teaching there. But, he was a very good instructor. So, we just had, you know, it was a good program. You know, we had a lot of fun too, at *The Oracle*. It was a weekly then. It transitioned to a daily right after I left here. But, it you know—we were a very aggressive staff, with a very—I felt like we had a good staff. Most—a lot of those people went on to journalism careers and did very well.

You know, we—the administration didn't like us—that was right at the time (AH laughs), you know, when you're "Watergating"<sup>9</sup> everything. We were really pushing hard and sometimes a little—you know, I look back at some of the things we'd do, which was pretty immature. But, it was—you know you're learning, that's what it is. And they were pretty—I think back about it. These guys were pretty patient with us, too. They understood that they were just a bunch of know it all kids, and that sort of thing.

AH: Well you—let's try to put this in context a little more because, you know—you arrived in 1969. Really, the "Us versus Them" mentality was really coming to fruition, and the years after were especially—

JG: Yeah.

AH: Seventy through '73. I've looked through a lot of those *Oracle*'s myself, in the course of research, and there's a definite confrontational attitude. So, let's put that in context. I mean, what was the mindset of the student body as a whole? And then, how did that kind of coalesce in *The Oracle*?

JG: Well, I think we were in a transition period. That was right—the anti-war sentiment was very much becoming—people talk about the '60s, but it was really the early '70s when it really came to fruition. And so, that was arising. There was this, you know, be suspicious of the establishment

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<sup>8</sup>United Press International is an international news agency that was created in 1907. Today, UPI is owned by News World Communications and offices in Washington D.C., Hong Kong, Seoul, et cetera.

<sup>9</sup>Watergate was a major political scandal that occurred during the presidency of Richard Nixon; it ultimately led to an impeachment process against the president and his resignation. The scandal exposed abuses of power by people within the Nixon administration. Using the name "Watergate" or affixing the suffix "-gate" to a word are now used universally to imply scandal.

and the administration. So there was an element of that in there, in both the student body and in *The Oracle*. Yet, this was still—it was a commuter school, it was pretty traditional. You couldn't say the whole student body was that. It was probably maybe—I don't—wild guess—but maybe 25 percent were anti-war. And, you know, most everybody else was pretty ambivalent. Not for the war, but not necessarily, you know, dead set against it.

We did have some protest on campus—a lot of protests. In fact, there was one major one where they blocked traffic, and they arrested a bunch of people. I remember having a date and driving her back to—trying to get back to the dorm and couldn't. And there were all these people, so I went to *The Oracle* office to tell them what was going—and of course, they already knew but it was—and *The Oracle* had that too. It was—we did not want to be co-opted by the administration, and there was a lot of pressures. I think there had always been—not so much co-opted but not this—you know, we always had these, you know, worst case scenarios about what they were up to and what they were doing. You know, we always thought—and we would call them at, Well we hear you did this. And no, that's crazy. (AH laughs) And probably most, you know, probably all of it was. But, you know we—there was an element of that too.

But then when we wrote the, you know, the traditional stuff. The student body—I mean the student government, excuse me—at that time too, was also transitioning. It had been a pretty much pro administration, working very closely. Well, during the time I was there, they elected somebody, an anti-war candidate who was very, counter culture type of thing. So, it was an interesting time. We didn't have—I don't think the protest and rebellion that took place on some of the other campuses, but we certainly had some. We had a number of members of the Chicago Seven<sup>10</sup> came and spoke here: Abbie Hoffman<sup>11</sup> and I can't remember the other one's names. But you know, there was always people, you know, having anti-war meetings on the knoll out there.

So, it was a volatile time—interesting time, too. But it never broke down into where, you know, it was an outright, “Tear this campus down!” or “We hate the campus!” It was more, you know, it was different than that. I mean, maybe we weren't—didn't take it as seriously as other people did. But I just think it was more—a little bit more common sense, you know? That people just didn't go berserk over things.

AH: Yeah. And out of all the campuses in Florida, it should probably be pointed out that USF was probably the most peaceful—

JG: Yeah.

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<sup>10</sup>The Chicago Seven were seven defendants charged by the federal government with conspiracy, inciting to riot, and other charges related to anti-Vietnam War that took place in Chicago, Illinois, on the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

<sup>11</sup>Abbie Howard Hoffman was an American political and social activist who co-founded the Youth International Program. Hoffman was arrested as part of the Chicago Seven for conspiracy and inciting a riot, their verdicts were later overturned on appeal.

AH: —as far as these protests go, at least of the major universities.

JG: Yeah, we definitely—I mean, because I—no, we went up and interviewed—I forgot what his name is. He was an FSU activist, they called him “red” something because he was such, you know, such a firebrand. We interviewed him for *The Oracle*—. We never had, you know, we had our firebrands but they were nothing like that. And, nothing about “bring the university down!”—anything like that.

Did not have as much, probably, black liberation movement on campus as we probably should have. You know, I mean that was something—it was still predominantly white. And there was some of that, but it was not—I mean, that was an area where [it] probably that was more justified than anything. We did have, I think, at that time one member while I was here at the administration. A Black man—Troy Collier<sup>12</sup> was hired. But, I believe he was the first in—you know, and now all of that’s changed for the better, it’s much more diverse—

AH: Sure.

JG: —university now. And I see most of them are, too. But, it was a—you think back, it was a different world and not necessarily for the better in all respects, you know?

AH: Yeah, well I’d like to maybe go over a few of the stories. First, we’ll talk about *The Oracle* and we’ll talk about some of your time with the *Tampa Times* as well and what was going on. But, you know, there’s just a slew of stories I think. Was it 1969 that the Afro American club ended up marching on the administration building demanding an Afro Studies program? Were you around for that?

JG: I don’t—I don’t recall. I may have been.

AH: Okay.

JG: I do remember the issue. And, that came up, but I believe that might have been before I was here.

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<sup>12</sup>Troy Collier was an assistant vice president for student affairs at USF and a former member of the Harlem Globetrotters basketball team. While at USF, he helped implement the university’s first affirmative action policy

AH: Okay.

JG: I believe we already had African-American Studies. I do remember, you know, there was a vocal a segment, but it just didn't get the kind—not like the anti-war.

AH: Well, Kent State<sup>13</sup> was a big—

JG: Kent State was a big thing. I can remember going to class that day. Human Behavior, something like that. And, there was an anti-war activist there, and I can remember him, you know, getting up and saying, “I can't believe we're in a class on a day like today! I'm leaving!” And you know, walked out and slammed the door. And the professor who—she was always very calm. You could tell she was trying to do—and said, “Well, if anybody feels like they should leave, you know, you can.” And, I don't recall a great mass exodus. But, people were confused, really, about how to react to things like that. You know, there were some organized anti-war groups. There was a Veteran's Against War here. But most people weren't part of that. Those were sort of little—

AH: Sure.

JG: They stay away from that.

AH: Well, another story I recall that kind of brought the Kent State thing home, maybe a little bit, was this character named “Sunshine Mike.” Roy Redick, he was—he wasn't a USF student, but he was in the Collage bar and ended up being shot by police. You remember this?

AH: Yes. He was running across the street and shot in the back. It was a, you know, fairly big deal. Trying to remember—that might—do you remember what year? Seems like I—might have been right before I was here or right after.

AH: It was—I believe it was '70. Yeah.

JG: Yeah.

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<sup>13</sup>In May 1970, students protesting US military forces during the Vietnam War, clashed with Ohio National Guardsmen on the Kent State University campus and the guardsmen shot and killed four students. The Kent State Shooting became a focal point of the nation's division by the Vietnam War.



AH: Late in 1970.

JG: For us—is involved with a—the reporting stuff. But, yeah (both talk) it was a very big deal. And the idea that he was shot in the back by a deputy was—there was a lot of protest and that kind of went along. You know, there'd been several years prior to that—or maybe only less than that—a Tampa police man had shot a fleeing Black man in the back that caused some racial tensions there. And it caused the city to kind of look at their policies and do something. Not that they didn't—you know, suddenly turn everything around but it did create some self-scrutiny that was needed.

But there were several things like that that happened around the same time. So, police were definitely not, you know, well regarded. However, at that time the head of police on campus was a fella named Jack Parnell, and he was universally respected by even the anti-war people. He had some way of kind of, you know, like—I mean, he wasn't easy, you know. He laid down the law, but he was fair. And I can remember even them saying, Well you know, he's straight with us. And, I think he was here for many years after that.

AH: He actually left the same year you originally left, '73.

JG: Oh, really?

AH: Yeah.

JG: Yeah, yeah.

AH: Another story, shortly after the Sunshine Mike being shot was the Celebration of Life concert<sup>14</sup>. You remember this on campus? [It] was, I believe, Halloween of 1970. But, once again, it's probably right before your time of reporting. (both talk)

JG: Yeah, yeah. That would be—well, I would have been here but I don't—that doesn't ring a bell.

AH: Okay.

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<sup>14</sup>The Celebration of Life was a sort of “mini-Woodstock” rock festival which was first started in 1971 in McCrea, Louisiana. It was later continued in other parts of the country.

JG: Was that a—what happened? (JG laughs)

AH: Oh, it was just a misunderstanding. Basically, students had a concert and USF—the administration—asked for an injunction against the concert, which was supposed to go all night. And, you know, something like midnight Parnell and his forces came. (both talk)

JG: They shut it down?

AH: Yeah.

JG: Yeah.

AH: And kind of rounded people up and 50 some-odd people got arrested.

JG: Yeah. You know arrests like that really weren't that big. (JG laughs) You know, it was sort of like one of those things that just happened and then we—we'd get upset at the time being. But yeah, I vaguely remember that. I wasn't there. I wasn't into that kind of all-night stuff, but—

AH: Yeah. Well, it seems like compared to today, back then—although some of it might have been immature and over the top. There was a definite desire to do some investigative reporting, whether it's digging up dirt on the administration or you know, even food service, things like this. Everything was scrutinized and—

JG: Yeah, we did have that. Well, one thing we had on *The Oracle* is we had some older students, some veterans who had come back to school, and some of them had journalistic experience. Grant Donaldson, who was the *Oracle* editor, became *Oracle* editor when I was there—who remains a good friend to this day. He was, you know, he had worked for the *St. Pete Independent*<sup>15</sup>. He knew, you know—really would push us to—Bob Fiallo<sup>16</sup> worked there, then later became the *Oracle* editor and works at USF now. And he had a lot of experience, [such as] *The Tribune* and *St. Pete Times*.

So, we had people who knew what good journalism was and would be push us to go, “Don't take things at face value.” We were young and didn't always know the right questions to ask, but we

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<sup>15</sup>The *St. Petersburg Evening Independent* was St. Petersburg, Florida's first daily newspaper. In 1986, The *Evening Independent* gave its final edition and merged into the *Times* [*St. Pete Times*].

<sup>16</sup>Robert Fiallo was the editor at the *Oracle* during a confrontational 1970's, which was brought on by the Vietnam Era. He later worked as part of USF's Office of Community Relations.

were—you know, we would try to get at things. And, it was at a time when the universities were used to doing things in a much different way. It was not nearly as transparent as things are now. You could kind of do things—these decisions with a small group and not particularly care about what students think, or what the public thinks, or you know, how much scrutiny there is.

And I mean, USF wasn't unique at that. That's just the way things were in kind of [the] world in general. And, that's at the time those things were changing so, you know, we pushed. We had some—you know, we got the occasional good story out of that. Probably not as many as we should have but we'd try to get it. You know, and looked into food service, looked into who was being hired and all that sort of thing, looked in the background of people.

It was an interesting, fun time. And then, there was, you know, the—there was a tension between, you know, our advisors Leo and the department and what we wanted to do. There was—not that we were censored but they, you know, they didn't want to upset the administration any more than they had to. And you know, so they tried to walk that fine line. And, I think for the most part did. You know, supporting us—never doing anything that really undermined—but never, you know—I'm sure we created a lot of heartburn for them. (AH laughs) So—

AH: Yeah. Well, you know one of the things that came up in 1970, prior, right before you got involved was some of the *Oracle* staff would just—walked off the job because there was a certain cartoon that they didn't want to have run—that the advisors didn't want to run. And then of course, later on it got to the press and, you know, all the major newspapers ran this cartoon. Was there ever any incidents, you know, after you got on where people wanted to walk off or people felt like they were being censored? I know that you said they kind of walked a fine line. And, maybe that was a result of the original walk off but—

JG: Yeah, that happened before. I remember hearing about that. That was right before I started with—you know, I don't ever recall—people liked Leo, even when they didn't agree with him.

AH: Sure.

JG: And he tried—you know, we understood the position he was being put in. And, he never did—you know, that I recall—you know, you'd have to ask Grant and Bob, who worked with him more closely than I did, but I never recall him—he obviously—there were things they didn't want to do.

AH: Sure.

JG: But—and the ads they didn't want to run and things like that. But, you know, [it] usually all got worked out, and I think part of that too was having these older people on the staff, who even though they had the experience, and they wanted us to be aggressive—also handled things more maturely than, you know, a 20 year old does. And so, they could kind of help in that. I mean, they could relate very well to Leo and then handle us and kind of find that middle ground, so— But, paper was—I mean when, it transitioned to a weekly it won a national award.

I mean it was—I felt like we had a good foundation there. It was a good paper. And, you know, I was proud to be associated with it. It gave me some good training for when I went into—then plus, it was just a fun—I mean, people would go between classes. That's where you went to hang out or go work on something.

AH: Yeah, tell me about the atmosphere in the offices. I mean, what was it like? Did people just pop in just to— (both talk)

JG: Just popped in whenever, in between class. It was kind of like where you hung out and socialized. You worked on your stories, but then you also just shot the breeze, you know? It was a social crowd. There's a lot of dating between people and stuff, a lot of parties. And you didn't have to be a member of the *Oracle* to come in there but that was mainly it. So, yeah it was just, you know, a lot of fun. Very loose, you know, kid's stuff. But, it was a fun place, you know? And of course, it was—you know, different. Not quite the professional atmosphere you'd find at a regular work place, you know?

AH: Sure, yeah.

JG: That's for sure, but—

AH: Well, before we kind of start moving on, I do want to mention [that] USF got a new president about the time you were getting involved with the paper.

JG: Cecil Mackey<sup>17</sup>?

AH: Yeah. Tell us about—seemed like the *Oracle* gave him an awfully hard time. I suppose no matter who would have been in office at the time, would have gotten a hard time. But, what were your personal impressions? What were the impressions of *The Oracle* office?

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17M. Cecil Mackey served as president of the University of South Florida from 1971 to 1976.

AH: The impression in the *Oracle* office was that he was very secretive and not open. I don't know if that was fair, but you know, that was our perspective. I mean, he went on to a distinguished career at Michigan State. I believe is where he—and I think he did—he did well here in terms of, you know, our growth and positioning us for future growth. But, our feeling was he was not particularly pro-student, wasn't accessible to students—didn't kind of—wasn't as intermingling. And, maybe that's because a result of times.

Now, I worked closely with Joe Howell<sup>18</sup>, who was vice president for student affairs, and he was very open. And you know, I always got along good with him. And, he left to become a president of something—university or some college somewhere. Carl Riggs<sup>19</sup> came around that time and he was respected, but he was also, you know, somebody hard to reach. You know, you felt like you couldn't get past the secretary. So, any time that happened—any time—and just everybody thought, Well what's—. Carl is, you know, he was a terrific guy and did so much for this university and the community too. But at the time, you know, we were all like, Well, what's going on here? So—

But Mackey, you know, came as kind of this—supposed to be a very—breath of fresh air, young, fairly young. He was a hot air balloonist, you know, that—and then—yet he—I don't think he would be viewed real—very popular by students at times. My thing [was] that he was very aloof, remote, and whether that's fair or not I don't know. But that was the perception.

AH: Oh sure. Yeah, just had to mention that because it seemed like he was really the—well you know, there was a kind of a push and pull there. At one point, he wanted *The Oracle* to be moved off campus.

JG: Yeah.

AH: Do you remember this?

JG: Yeah.

AH: So, what were—I mean, obviously that was probably received with hostility but what—?

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<sup>18</sup>Dr. Joe Howell was the vice president of Student Affairs at the University of South Florida, he left USF to become president of Central Methodist College [CMC]. He served as the president of CMC for eighteen years and retired in 1995. In 1998, he went to the United Arab Emirates, where he was part of the founding administration for Zayed University.

<sup>19</sup>Carl Riggs served as Provost under President Cecil Mackey. During his 31-year residence, he helped push USF toward a greater emphasis on research.

JG: Yeah, it was sort of like, well, is he going to control us or punish us? So, I mean he—there definitely was some authoritarian bent there. And again, this was the times. You know, it was going from where, you know, here's the administration, they run things [and] this is our university too. Well, it's different. This is the student's university too, and we have rights and—. So he was kind of caught. He [was] probably working under the assumptions that the old model—when the new model is—or the new rules aren't really in place yet, but the old rules don't apply. So, all those things were happening. But again, as I said, I don't think—compared to the other universities around the country, USF's was fairly mild. So, he should count his blessings too, you know? (JG laughs)

AH: Yeah. (AH laughs) What about the radio station? I know that became an issue. Were you around for that or was that after your tenure?

JG: I believe I was there—they changed it from a rock music format at night. I forget what the name of it was.

AH: “Underground Railroad<sup>20</sup>”.

JG: “Underground Railroad” to, you know, they—. And, that was a big issue. And that was seen as, here's the administration just taking something away. And I think, that was correct. I mean, why—it's a university, why wouldn't you have a format that appeals to students along with the other stuff, the classics and all. But that was one of those things that caused some bitterness and, you know, and suspicion when they do that. Well, why would they do that to students?

AH: Well, you say as an upperclassman you kind of started making this transition into the *Tampa Times*.

JG: Yeah.

AH: Tell us about that. How'd you get involved?

JG: Well, I got involved—a friend of mine, his father said—worked with a guy whose daughter had gone to work for the *Tampa Times*. And they said, there's a fella down there. The managing editor is Duval Hardell, and he's real good about hiring young people. You ought to go there.

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20A student album oriented rock program which was established at the University of South Florida radio station [WUSF] in 1971. It was popular, albeit controversial. The show lasted two years and ended with students cutting the power to the station during the final show, a sort of silent protest to the changing times.

Because he knew I was working for *The Oracle* and all. So, I called down there and said, “You know, I’m interested in a job” And I kind of convinced him to say, “Come on in.” And so, I got all dressed up and went down there, and they hired me as a copy boy (JG laughs) on the spot, Duval did. And of course, I thought that was the biggest thing in the world. You’re getting paid, you know, minimum wage, but they had the old teletype machines—this real loud room, and you would clip those and bring them into the news desk.

But I got such a big kick, you know, out of being—feeling like, I’m the first one in the City of Tampa to read this story (AH laughs) as it’s coming across. And, the Internet hadn’t even been dreamed of then. So, I started doing that. And I continued to work at *The Oracle*, and that was like real early in the mornings, like, four in the morning you’d go there and then—so I could get off in time to go to class and work. And then eventually, I started working—they’d let me work on the wire desk on Saturday mornings when it’s kind of a short crew. And I’d write headlines and edit stories.

And, eventually—and then, I did some sport stringing on high school football games. Just a little bit of everything. And then, there was a job opening for an outdoor writer, you know, sports writer. Do a little bit of everything, but mainly outdoors. And so, I applied for that and I got that. It wasn’t—it was like one of those 38 hour jobs a week so they don’t have to give you benefits. But, it paid my last two years through college so I did that. So, it was a very good experience to do that.

In some way, you know, it took away from the university; I couldn’t spend as much time here. You know, I was the typical commuter student, but I still stayed involved with my friends in *The Oracle* and that sort of thing. But, you know, that was a great way to learn about journalism. And then, to get out there and walk right into a job and—you know? I ended up doing a lot of different things with the *Tampa Times*, so it was this was a super experience. In one way, you know, you could see—I’d be doing this work and then you’d go to class and you could see if the professor was really on to what’s happening and the changes, or not. Because sometimes some of the one’s who’d been out of it a long time they would just—you could see there wasn’t much connection anymore. Most of them had stayed—a lot of them in fact, would work during the summer. So, they up on it.

But, that was right at the time the newspaper business was changing from the typewriters to computers. We had at first electric typewriters to have paper, bonded paper that would be scanned into a machine, which was an utter mess. I mean, it created more typos. And I don’t need any help creating typos, but they gave me all the help I could stand. And then, you know, eventually to computers. We went through a number of steps. And it was a time—I can remember discussions when I was out here about, well are newspapers going to die? Will cable television would be the end of it because you can have a channel that just scrolls and use all the time and—. The next thing, of course, was the Internet.

And everything, since I've been in the business, [has] always been that the newspapers are going to die. And eventually, someday, this form of newspaper surely will. I mean, you know? But the newspaper will survive in some form, computer form. Until they find a way to have the portability that would—we have. I don't know that that's going to happen. But when they do, then, you know it'll be in a new form but it'd still be a newspaper—still be an information gathering thing.

AH: So, tell us about what are some of the lessons you took away from your time in the mass com department and your time at *The Oracle*? What are some of the things you took away that kind of stuck with you over the years? Were there any lessons, blunders, anything that you're like, you know, you always keep in the back of your mind? Certain—maybe words of wisdom from a faculty member or—?

JG: Well, there's several things. One of the—I haven't mentioned, but one of the professors that affected me most or probably did affect me most was a writing professor out here named Kenneth Kay, a retired air force colonel who was a terrific writer and a terrific teacher. And his, emphasis was, rewrite, rewrite, rewrite. Make every work tell, don't be lazy, [and] don't assume the reader knows what you mean. He would take your paper and just rip it to shreds. He wouldn't say the name of whoever wrote the paper but everybody would know because you'd just be laying in a puddle, (AH laughs) in the bottom of the class.

But, yet he also found a way to give you a little bit of encouragement. And you know, as long as you improved you'd end up with a good grade. And, he remained—you know, I stayed in contact with him until his death. He was a tremendous influence. So, that was a great lesson. You know, call both sides—making that call on basically a shy person. I didn't like the idea of calling and asking things that were unpleasant and that's something I learned on *The Oracle* from, Leo and Grant, and those people. Just call, find out, ask them, that sort of thing. Write fast was another thing, and don't waste people's time. That's something I learned as a young reporter going there.

And you know, that was my beat, so I figured I had to stop and ask them something. I really wouldn't be prepared. Well, be prepared. Don't go in there and just waste people—you know, I grimace now when I think back about—. Those people were pretty patient with me because I didn't know what I was asking or what I was doing. I hadn't done—and—so those were some of the things that impressed me. Look, you know, at some of the reporting classes. Don't just ask that first superficial question or take what they say at face value. Ask that follow up question, you know? Because that first question—answer may sound like the right thing but it's really—if you think about it, it's not. So, keep asking.

And, I guess the main thing I've learned that I've used throughout my career is I don't care—don't be afraid of a stupid question. I don't care how stupid—I don't care what people—don't



worry about what people think of you. If it's a stupid question or not. Ask it, because it's better—and don't be afraid to call up and say, "You know, I forgot to ask this." You know, don't be embarrassed. You know, what's important is a story, not your feeling—, which is easy to say and harder to do. But, that's what you've got to do. And, all that started here. So, I guess—I mean, I don't know.

AH: Yeah. So, let's talk a little bit about, you know, you were out of the USF loop for a while. You were, you know, going into—you know, the newspaper business and everything. What drew you back?

JG: Well, I'd always liked English and literature—loved it. I thought maybe sometime I would get into academics. I was working at *The Tampa Times* [and] doing well there, but at that time you couldn't go from *The Times* to *The Tribune*. And, *The Times* was a small paper, didn't have—you know, I had a great run there but it was sort of like, I'm not going to get anywhere. You know, *St. Pete [Times]* was an option but I didn't want to move. My family was here, so I thought, You know, why don't I—I like to read anyways. Why don't I go back? Work on this and see if academics might be something. If nothing else, it should help my writing and enrich me. And I just liked the idea. I didn't have—I was married but I didn't have—my son hadn't been born yet.

And I thought, Now's the time to do it. So, I did and I really enjoyed it, and I went with a little different attitude since I was working full time. It was very much kind of a consumer attitude and I didn't have as much patience for professors that weren't prepared or that just want to get up there and shoot the breeze. But fortunately, there weren't too many of those. There were very few. I had some really great professors. Dr. Figg, Jack Moore, who wrote book reviews for me when I was a book editor. He was a terrific professor. You know, guys who really just told you things that made you think and made you want to go read that book or you—god, I read that [but]I didn't get that. I mean, just—so, it was really—and it was different. I liked it in a way. I didn't want to go to mass com and deal with what I worked with all day. This way it was different, you know?

You know, Whitman, Emily Dickinson and getting something out of these works, and yet, it still had some relevance to what I—you know, writing and so I really enjoyed it. I did some teaching as an adjunct at University of Tampa, and Eckerd, and Saint Leo and didn't feel I was particularly gifted at it. Maybe, it was because I was working, trying to do—and then, in the interim, *The Times* folded, and I was moved to *The Tribune*. And, it really, actually gave me quite a boost to my career. I did well there and was promoted. And, suddenly I was working for a paper with, you know, 300 thousand readers instead of 30. And that was great.

And, went into [the] editorial side. And I thought, You know, I enjoy what I do. It's not like I gave academics a great chance but it just made—it was one of those things that [was] sort of like

God telling you, This is the way that you're going to go. And so, I didn't—I never pursued. I started to work on my PhD. I took one. I signed up for one class and went out there and—

AH: Where was that? Was it here?

JG: It was here. I would have been—which is not what you wanted to do: get all your degrees from the same institution. But, when you're working it's a—

AH: Oh sure.

JG: But I sat in there and the professor just kind of—the wrong professor for me at that time. He just kind of babbled on and said, “I'm not feeling well, so I won't keep y'all long.” But then, he went on for an hour and a half just talking about stuff, none of which was relevant in class. I said, “You know, I don't think I feel like sitting through this.” (JG laughs) So, I pulled out of the class and unfortunately, I never went back to work on that. It would have been nice to have got but that's life.

AH: Well let's back up just a little bit to your undergraduate days because there was a question I wanted to ask [you] about. Obviously, it's a more complicated business than some others, getting into newspaper and writing and stuff. Did you ever feel like you were in over your head? I mean, did you ever feel like, God, maybe I'm not cut out for this?

JG: You know, you always—shoot I feel like that sometimes today, you know? (both laugh). This is a kind of a job you can never quite do good enough. You can always, you know—. You read something the next day when it's in print, you know? And you always feel like, If I had just taken a little bit more time. You know? The reader doesn't know you didn't have that time. So, I did and I—but I really never thought— You know, I didn't—I don't know, I was never into the business thing. I didn't know what else I'd do—I'd like to write.

The thing that was hardest for me was being a shy person doing that. And, you know, I could never imagine—I would have never imagined, an eighteen year old or nineteen year old doing the things I do today. And I'm still—I still have to make myself do it but, you know, you could—

AH: Well, how do you do that?

JG: You just go ahead and make yourself call. Figure it's going to be over and not worry. As you get—always say, “I don't care what people think.” But also—I mean, I make an effort. You know, in this job you need a lot of context—especially editorial writing. You know I call, I have lunch with people, I try to develop—you know, set up a context where you're comfortable and

they're comfortable too. I mean, you can have discussions and it's easier to talk. But, it's always hard to make that cold call on the phone.

And I—you know, I'm not going to say I'm the best at it because there's—I've seen people that are a lot better at it. But I—you know, I do what's required by the job. But, you can make yourself, no matter how bashful you are. You just, you know, grit your teeth and do it because the alternative is you're not going to get the job done. And you also will find out [that] a lot of these are interesting people that aren't hard to talk to. Some of them are, some of them are jerks. Sometimes you're the jerk, and they're reacting like (JG laughs) a normal person would to you. But that's a—you know, you just have to go deal with it and go home. That's the thing.

AH: What about—there was a few alternative papers for a little while at USF. Do you remember any of these?

JG: I vaguely remember those. You know, some with the real X-rated cartoons in them and stuff like. Is that what you're talking—? I mean along with a real— (both talk).

AH: (both talk) Yeah, and there was the political—yeah.

JG: —real radical voice. (both talk)

AH: The Church of the Apocalypse<sup>21</sup> had a paper called the *Eye of the Beast*<sup>22</sup>, but that was probably right before your time. They kind of went belly up, I guess at the beginning of '71. But, actually—

JG: Well, I vaguely remember those.

AH: Okay.

JG: Yeah.

AH: Jack Moore's papers—he has copies of them up there.

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<sup>21</sup>The Church of the Apocalypse a defunct radical organization, which produced a counterculture student newspaper to USF's *Oracle*.

<sup>22</sup>*Eye of the Beast* was published in November 30th, 1970, by The Church of the Apocalypse. *Eye of the Beast* was a radical student newspaper which kept students informed of local political and cultural events while tapping into the national student movement.

JG: Really?

AH: Yeah. Here in the library.

JG: Oh. Yeah, I—there was so much of that going on—

AH: Yeah.

JG: This counter culture stuff. It was all kind of awash here and we all—I was probably like most students do—. You kind of lean towards out a little bit more than, you know, being an establishment but not really. And, you know, it was nothing that made my parents disown me or anything like that.

AH: They could sympathize but— (both talk)

JG: You sympathize but really didn't make that leap into that kind of lifestyle or—now there were people here that did. But it—that never really appealed to me either, you know, basically—you know, not that sort of person so—

AH: Well, and it's just interesting that as confrontational as the, you know, as *The Oracle* was at the time. It wasn't enough to satisfy a lot of these fringe people, the 25 percent or even the percent of that 25 that was, you know, really anti-war.

JG: Yeah. We were—even though we were confrontational, we were still establishment. You know, we were mainstream. It might have been—mainstream in terms of context of most youth of that day. You know, sympathetic to the anti-war and kind of a free your life style but nothing—not like, “Tear the government down!” Not Weathermen<sup>23</sup> type stuff, you know?

AH: Yeah.

JG: Which is really a puerile viewpoint and—

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<sup>23</sup>The weather Underground Organization [WUO], also known as the Weather Underground, was an American militant radical left-wing organization. The organization was founded on the campus of the University of Michigan with a goal to create a clandestine revolutionary party to overthrow the U.S. Government.

AH: So, what was it like—let’s go to your undergraduate graduation. What was it like getting that first degree? That mass com degree? How’d that feel?

JG: Well it felt good. I mainly, you know—it wasn’t quite the life changing event it would have been if, like, you know I was going to go on and do something else. But, I had my job at *The Tampa Times*. You know, Duval Hardell says, “As soon as you get your sheep’s skin, we’ll put you on full time.” You know, to me that was—you know, I didn’t have big aspirations that some people had. I just looked at that—so, I really went to the graduation, which was down at the old Curtis Hixon convention center because, my parents—it was more for my parents and family.

In fact, I went fishing over in Fort Pierce. Grant Donaldson was from Fort Pierce and he was going over there to go fishing, and I was—I liked to fish. I was learning to fish. He really helped me learn to fish. So, he said, “Why don’t you come over?” So, we drove over there on Friday and I had to drive back Saturday night. You know, we fished all night. I don’t know how I did stuff like that. We fished all night. And then, I drove back to go to my graduation on Sunday. And so—but anyway, it was a nice event. I don’t remember who the speaker was. I think it was—it might have been Sam Gibbons<sup>24</sup>. I’d have to go look.

AH: Okay. That’s a great story though. About the fishing and everything.

JG: Yeah, it was a—in fact, I remember I was driving across [State Road] 60 in the middle of nowhere, past from Yeehaw Junction. And there was this family on the side of the road and their car had broken down, and I picked them up. You know I said, “Are y’all okay?” And they said, “Well our car is broke down. We could use a ride.” They had some cottage on a lake and they piled in. I had my fishing rods in the back of the Camaro and they all crammed in there. So, I’m driving them there and they said, “You know, you really ought to be careful about picking people up.” (both laugh) Well I said, “Well I thought that with a family I’d be okay.” you know? (both laugh).

AH: Sure.

JG: So, they were kind of trying—but, I guess they were just trying to be nice but—

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<sup>24</sup>Sam Gibbons was an admired statesman, veteran and a supporter of education who helped found the University of South Florida. During his years as a representative in the Florida legislature, Gibbons fought for establishment of the University of South Florida in 1956, making him the “Father of USF”.

AH: What about your family? Is there—was there a lot of higher education experience there or was a real— (both talk)

JG: No, my—(both talk)

AH: —sea change for your folks?

JG: It was. You know, my family valued education, but neither of my parents had gone to college. As far as—no one in their direct, you know, ancestry had been there. I mean, I had a cousin that had gone. My dad's brother got his advanced degree. Went into the teaching profession. But, I think he was the first—my dad didn't even finish high school. He grew up in Houma, Louisiana. But he, you know, he's very smart, and very well read, and very good at math. So it was just expected that we were going to school, and to college, and that we would get a job. And, he had a white collar job and he was—he sold drugs for Allen Drug Company. And, you know, so he had a good—a decent job.

My mother had gone to business school, and she ran an office and—but the expectation was there. When my sister graduated—she's two years older than me—she went to USF, got her teaching degree and is still teaching. And then, they expected me to go. So, that was—but they were very, you know, it was a big deal to them, you know? And all my—aunt and uncle who lived down the street went to [my] graduation, and my grandmother. And it was, you know—I wasn't the first because my sister—and my, you know, I had my cousins—all of our generation, all our contemporaries, pretty much. Not all of them did go to college, but the expectation was there. And so, you know, we're typical baby boomer generation. I think our experience was fairly typical.

AH: Sure. Well, and by virtuous its location. Did it make it easier for you to get a higher education, do you feel than having to relocate somewhere elsewhere in the state?

JG: Yeah. Certainly, in terms of affordability it did have this—if it had not been, I don't know what—. I probably could have scrimped and gone to USF. I wasn't going to—(both talk)

AH: You mean to UF?

JG: I mean UF. But you know, it would have made it a more —I mean, in in some ways as much—I really love my USF experience. I'd sometimes wish, you know, I'd had that experience with a football team and the whole thing that USF now has. You know, that tie to USF probably wasn't as tight as it would have been, you know, if I had—now, it's kind of gotten there more

because of what's happening. They do have, not just the football team but it's become that big. And, it's become a university. You do feel proud to be associated with. It's going places. I am proud of the education I got here but it's—you know, there were some things that you did miss out on.

AH: Well, it's like you said, It didn't have all the trappings like UF then.

JG: Yeah, not at all. And people who'd go UF are just so devoted—and FSU, too. But, it worked out for me. I don't know what my life would have been like. I wouldn't have met my wife, who I met at USF. Who knows what would have happened.

AH: So, how'd you meet your wife? If you don't mind me asking.

JG: She was in a mass com class of mine.

AH: Okay

JG: And, we just talked and hit it off. We were with other people at the time. But, actually she—I had just graduated, and she was just about to graduate. And she called me at *The Tampa Times* to say that she'd had got a job at *The Tribune*. And I said, "Well—." I asked her out.

AH: Well, look at the—(AH laughs)

JG: I said, "Well, you know so—"

AH: She's obviously going places. She's at the big paper. (AH laughs)

JG: Yeah, so—it just seemed like the appropriate time, and we just started dating, and things.

AH: Well, that's interesting. So, you really started dating after—

JG: We dated afterwards. She was just graduating, and I had already graduated, but we met there. That's kind of where we got—she'd worked at *The Oracle* and, you know—I think she was sports editor here at one time. Probably, the first female sports editor.

AH: True enough.

JG: And, for a brief, brief period there.

AH: What's her name?

JG: Lenora Lake.

AH: Okay.

JG: But no it—you know, I say, USF—. I'm very—you know, I've written a lot about us as an editorial writer. I've written—and when it was under attack by Don Sullivan—not just because I went there [but] because I thought that was a bad public policy. But I was glad to be able to kind of—

AH: Well tell us about that. What was the issue there?

JG: Well, the issue was to break up the campuses. Create new campuses out of the St. Pete campus and Sarasota. And, really take away—it was really just what I thought was almost a personal attack on the university.

AH: For those who don't know, who's Don Sullivan?

JG: He was a state senator at the time. Now he's a state rep.

AH: Okay.

JG: Who's done a number of—he did a number of good things on education. And apparently, he was also interested in the job here. At one time, being president—wasn't interviewed and that kind of—I don't know if that's what—but, he had this idea that they weren't giving—paying enough attention to the Pinellas campus. He's from Pinellas. And it was just going to arbitrarily, you know, through legislative fiat, split them away. And you know, we came down on that real hard. There were some other things involved too, in terms of campus administration. And I think there probably was a time when USF didn't give Pinellas enough attention. But it certainly had, you know, in recent years and prior to this.



So, we were able to stop—it did result in—I say we—I mean, it was stopped rather. I don't know if the editorials played much of a role or not. I hope—I'd like to think they did, but I don't know that. I'm sure all the political, behind the scenes, and Judy Genshaft's hard work had a lot more to do with it. But they did end up setting up this semi-autonomous structure for the St. Pete campus. And I'm not sure it's the healthiest thing in the world but given the alternatives, it's better than that. And the people of Pinellas deserve, you know, their needs should be met, so—but, I don't necessarily—. I think you have a university, you should have an administration. Let them decide what goes where and what's—you know.

AH: So, what—what have we missed?

JG: I don't know. (both laugh) I—

AH: Feels like we covered a lot of ground.

JG: Yeah, I feel like I'm about talked out. I wished I'd thought more—studied up on those memories.

AH: Oh, no. No—no problem. (both talk)

JG: I don't—you know, I'd say I'd made a lot of friends that I remain close friends with. You know, Grant Donaldson, Ben Waxman, who was the best man at my wedding. We met at the writing class here. He went to work—he got out of journalism and went to the family business: paintbrush manufacturing. But he was a great writer. A lot of people like that. I mean, there's a lot of—if you went back and tracked some of the people that went here—that worked here then, at *The Oracle*, and then their journalism career. Paul Willburn, who now works for the City of Tampa, but he had a distinguished career. Bill Nottingham went to the *LA Times*. A lot of other ones. Michael Kilgore went to *The Tribune* and now he works at the Performing Arts Center [Straz Center], but he worked for a long time. It was a good, you know—

AH: So, before we go. What advice would you give to people trying to crack into the journalism—you know, journalism these days?

JG: The thing I'd say is get clips. You know, it was easier in my day to go to work and work your way up from copy boy to—but work for the college newspaper, work for *The Oracle*. Get some clips. Show people that you can write [and] then go to a weekly and work. I mean, just do the lowest level job that you can get. But get into—don't wait to—it's amazing to me that I've got people calling. I mean, people my age that think, you know, they're through with one career and they want to be a columnist. They think they're going to be a columnist like they can—and it

doesn't matter what their talent is. You don't just walk in unless you've got some great well-known name.

But, what you need is those clips. Show people you can write; show people you have that desire. And, that's—if young people do that, if they'll write anything, doesn't matter what they cover, and get that experience. That's the best way to—you'll find it. You'll get in there if you've got that kind of motivation. You'll find a job, you know. If you got—and, that's even—I mean talent is important but you can develop that. But, you know, you've got to have that desire, so—

AH: Great, well I'm—sounds like, you know, over the years you've had that drive and desire, and you know you've made it to a certain level of professionalism there. *The Tribune*. Now at the big paper.

JG: Yeah.

AH: So, I just want to thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to come see us today.

JG: Thank you.

*End of interview*