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University of South Florida, Tampa Library

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Yael Greenberg (YG): Today is Tuesday—today is Tuesday, June 10th, 2003. My name is Yael Greenberg, oral history program assistant for the USF Florida Studies Center. We continue a series of interviews in our studio here in the Tampa campus library with USF faculty, students, and alumni in order to commemorate 50 years of university history. Today, we will be interviewing Mary Lou Harkness, who came to USF in 1958 as a catalog librarian. In 1991, Mary Lou retired from USF as the director of the Tampa campus library. Good afternoon, Mary Lou.

Mary Lou Harkness (MH): That's not quite correct.

YG: Okay.

MH: The—I did not retire as director per se.

YG: Okay.

MH: I did retire—didn't—was given the title then, of director emeritus in 1991.

YG: Okay. In 1991, she retired as the director emeritus of USF Tampa campus library. Good afternoon, Mary Lou.

MH: Good afternoon.

YG: Let's begin by you taking us to the year you arrived in Tampa and what circumstances brought you to the University of South Florida.

MH: I arrived in late May 1958 and began my official appointment on June 1st, 1958. At the time I came to interview, I was a student at Columbia University in the School of Library

Science.¹ And at that time, one of my co-students—well, she was a doctoral candidate—was a friend that I had known from my days as a librarian at Georgia Tech library, and she had worked with Elliot Hardaway at the University of Florida.² And when he was recruiting staff, he wrote to her and asked if she had any recommendations for a catalog librarian. And so she recommended me, and then she—he asked me to come down for an interview, and I talked to her about that also, and she said, “The most important thing about a position is not where it is or even what it is. It’s who you work for. And you’ll never work for a better person than Elliot Hardaway.” So that was her recommendation to me.

And so based on that but also the idea of being in a brand new institution, starting right from the beginning, was a very interesting and exciting and maybe a little frightening proposition. But I did come down in—it doesn’t matter—April, probably, and interviewed. And at that time, Dr. Allen and Mr. Hardaway, and Dr. Allen’s secretary were in the courthouse.³ But by the time I came, they had moved into the offices on Plant Avenue, which was an old three-story house on Plant Avenue. And they had moved there—well, because by that time Mr. Hardaway had gathered so many books, not through purchase, because he didn’t have much of a budget, but by asking libraries—friends of his and so forth, as well as local people—to give donations and books and things that might be useful. So they were no longer—there was no longer enough room in their courthouse quarters, which probably were meant to be temporary anyway. And so they leased this old house there in Hyde Park.⁴ And so that’s where the offices were when I arrived.

YG: Let’s talk a little bit about first impressions. During your interview, that was the first opportunity you had a chance to meet President Allen and Dr. Hardaway. Dr. Hardaway was the first person, I believe, that Dr. Allen hired.

MH: Right. And he was not—he did not actually have a doctorate. Yeah, I know. That was not considered the most important thing for—Dr. Allen had worked with—I mean, had known him at the University of Florida. And so that was why he selected him, knowing his abilities as librarian. So now, let’s see—I distracted myself.

YG: First impressions of Dr. Allen.

MH: All right. Right. Well, I would say the first was probably his enthusiasm for the beginning of this university and his vision of what the university was going to be. The day of interviewing I had, we drove out to the campus and came up—of course, it was before the interstate was built. And we came up either Florida [Avenue] or Nebraska [Avenue], which was not a real exciting thing, and out to this very—I mean, there was nothing here but—what? Scrub oak and palmetto and everything.

¹ Columbia University was founded in 1754 as King's College by royal charter of King George II of England. It is the oldest institution of higher learning in the state of New York and the fifth oldest in the United States.

² Elliot Hardaway assembled a library collection for USF and helped create the first library building. Within 10 years, the library was one of the largest university research libraries in Florida.

³ John Allen served as president of the University of South Florida from its inception until his retirement in 1970.

⁴ Hyde Park is a historic neighborhood and district within the city limits of Tampa. It includes Bayshore Boulevard, Hyde Park Village, and SoHo.

But President Allen could visualize the beginning of the campus. I think the buildings were already designed. I'm not sure of my timing on that. But there were just the models on—sort of on a tabletop. And so he had that much information—that may have come somewhat later. But anyway, he did have the vision of the physical campus and certainly was—you know, also the organization of the university and the curriculum, and of all of those things. So that was—and he was a distinguished person. Very low key as far as—you know, not awe inspiring in the sense that you would feel this—you know, you'd always have to be in awe. But on the other hand, you wouldn't want to become overly familiar with him, either. He just was a very distinguished gentleman.

YG: First impressions of Elliot Hardaway?

MH: Well, here again, he was very unassuming, nothing arrogant about him at all. It was the first evening I arrived—the first afternoon, I stayed at the Floridan Hotel, which at that time was a hotel, a respectable hotel. And so he came to meet me and take me to dinner. Now, he was here alone because Mrs. Hardaway and their daughter, Sylvia, were still—Eugene, we called her, to distinguish her from her mother—were still in Gainesville. So Eugene, I think, was a senior in high school. At least she was finishing—she was going to finish her schooling in Gainesville. And Mrs. Hardaway was, I believe, working on her advanced degree at the University of Florida. So he was down here by himself, and the family only owned one car, so he did not have a car.

So he said that he would like to take me to the best steakhouse in Tampa, which was Bern's, except it was quite different then, except for the food.⁵ But since he didn't have a car, we would walk to a nearby restaurant, and I want to say it was Licata's on—somewhere downtown.⁶ But it was very good, a very good place. So we had dinner. So we walked out and I did think—he was not a tall man, but he was taller than I, of course. And I also said, sort of jokingly, that I think the fact that I was able to keep up with him was probably one of the reasons that he was interested in my joining the staff.

Anyway, we had a very, very interesting visit. And he discussed his ideas about the library, and the sort of things that he thought was more important. He had already decided, for example, that we would use the Library of Congress classification, which was more—better for a higher education library. And that sort of decision he had made, and so we discussed various ideas about—particularly about the cataloging aspect, which was going to be—would be mine. So I think he was favorably impressed with me, and I certainly was favorably impressed with him. And so we settled the—not that—I don't think he offered the position at that time. I think it was by later—by letter, but I was—certainly intended to take the position if it was offered to me.

YG: When you—before—right when you came to USF—

MH: Yes.

⁵ Bern's Steak House was opened in 1956 by Bern Laxer and his brother Gert. The restaurant is located in the SoHo district of Tampa, Florida.

⁶ Licata's Steakhouse was one of Tampa's most famous restaurants during the 1950s and 1960s, with an elegant flair for fine dining.

YG: I find it very interesting that Dr. Allen's first appointee was, in essence, an appointee for the library. Why was that so important to Dr. Allen, when he could have really appointed, I think, anyone who he wanted to in any department?

MH: Right, correct. It was because he believed in the centrality of the library. Now, the saying is that "The library is the heart of campus." And I think that he truly believed that—he knew that a library was absolutely essential for higher education, and so that was his reason. And he certainly continued to act in that position, as the university guru. I mean, he supported the library as well as he was able to financially, which—things haven't changed that much. It wasn't always the easiest, but he certainly had that conviction. And the library building was one of the first buildings in the planning stage, so that was—he carried, you know, followed through in that way, too.

YG: When you came in '58 and you first saw the campus, which was—there was no campus.

MH: Right.

YG: Were you at all concerned about the university, or did you realize that there was this vision of a university and the buildings were going to come up?

MH: Oh yeah. I had no—I had no questions. I had no doubts about my decision to come here. I thought it was a—continue to think it was an interesting and challenging opportunity. So I didn't—I never regretted that decision.

YG: Once you arrived, you said that your first office was in Hyde Park?

MH: Right.

YG: Who—were there any other employees working in that office?

MH: Just President Allen, his secretary [Ann Strickland], and Mr. Hardaway. And his secretary was a young, single woman that he had—who had been his secretary at the University of Florida, so he had brought her down here. And so she was my first social friend, so to speak, because she was the only person that I knew at the beginning. And as I say, she was single. She was younger than I, but she had not had time to make a great many friends. And so we did do social—we socialized together. She had—was rooming in a home of a woman in the Palma Ceia area.⁷ And so she was—that was a comfortable way for her to be, because she had lived at home with her parents until she came to Tampa.

YG: Where did you live?

MH: I found an apartment. It—do you want these details? I came on—let's see, it was the weekend of Memorial Day, and I came from New York and this—it had been a cool spring in New York. And I came here and right into the summer heat that was already here, at least it

⁷ Palma Ceia is a neighborhood located southwest of downtown Tampa, Florida, that is bounded by Miguel Street west of MacDill Avenue and Neptune Street.

seemed to me. And so Mr. Hardaway had gotten me a room at the YWCA downtown, but it was not even air-conditioned. And so there was a woman working as—I think—probably as a volunteer at the reception desk. And after my first night, she said to me, “I don’t think you’re very comfortable here. My sister and I have a home, and we have right now a vacant apartment, and we can’t rent it to you, but if you’d like to stay until you find a place—and it has an air conditioner.” So I moved very happily then.

I did not have a car. So that Sunday, I got a taxi and the Sunday paper and went around and looked at locations that would be reasonable and at apartments that I could afford and found one on the Bayshore. It was the most distinguished address I probably will have had in Tampa. It was a garage apartment, built above a garage. And the owners were Judge and Mrs. Reeves. And Judge Reeves was a partner in the—I should have been thinking about this—the law firm that is now Carlton Fields, and so on and so forth. And they had bought the property in—I guess in the ’20s, and intended to build their house on the Bayshore, but in the meantime, they had bought a house immediately behind the garage on the next street. And then at the—in the ’20s bust, they couldn’t afford to build, and by that time they were so comfortable in their home that they never did.⁸ So I had a long lawn leading down from this garage apartment, which was on the back of the lot, to the bay. So it was a very, very nice location, very comfortable location.

YG: How many years did you stay in the house in Hyde Park?

MH: We were—the library staff was there until the fall of ’59. And by that time the—I had my—the first—the second staff—the third staff person for the library was a clerk typist for the catalog department. And so there were—and, I think—I don’t remember whether Mr. Hardaway had hired his secretary. He may have, I’m not sure of that. But we had gotten so many books by the time—and journals, and so forth. And then staff were coming in: the deans, the business manager, the purchasing manager. I guess maybe the first—I think maybe the next position after mine was Clyde Hill, who was the campus—in charge of plants and grounds at the university. And so staff—there was more staff, and so it was getting very crowded.

So there was a little house, a three bedroom house on campus, which I think Dean French, who was the dean of the College of Basic Studies—he was the first dean that President Allen appointed—I believe the Frenches lived there for a brief time, in this small house.⁹ And I believe also that Bob and _____(??) Dennard—Bob was the business manager—they may also have. But it was just temporary for them, while they found housing. And so it was vacant, and the library staff moved out then to campus. So we were—the library staff were the first unit on campus, except for the plants and grounds people, who were already there. And so we had by that time—by the fall then, I know—I know Mr. Hardaway’s secretary was hired. And then we had—we hired two catalog librarians.

And so the acquisitions librarian came, and he came before we moved, so he was in the—he was the second professional position hired. He came in the spring of ’59. And so we were getting

⁸ The stock market crash of 1929 marked the end of the economic boom of the 1920s and the start of the Great Depression of the 1930s.

⁹ Dr. Sydney French was the first dean of the USF College of Basic Studies. In 1960, he became dean emeritus and joined the College of Education in the Higher Education Program in 1967.

quite a staff, and we moved out to campus. And the little houses, which we referred to—had always—is where the university police building is now. Of course, they've added to it and everything, but that was where we were at that time.

And so it was a very—we had an enjoyable time there in many ways. As the staff grew—and we would—lunch time we would play volleyball or badminton, or we'd go for a walk around, and we would sometimes have picnics after work. And had quite a nice social activity going with the staff. So in many ways we—some of us who stayed on have irritated later people by indicating that those were really the good days, before we had, you know, students and faculty and all of those impediments to our fun. But it was—it was obviously just a temporary place. We would—the books would arrive, we would catalog them and then pack them up again and store them in the garage, because we didn't have a lot of space. And so it was—but it worked for that period of time.

YG: Once all these books were stored, you guys, I assume, were waiting until the buildings first opened up—

MH: Right, correct.

YG: —to move the library?

MH: Right, yeah. The building—the library building was delayed, because it was scheduled to be—originally scheduled to be opened in the fall of 1960, with the other buildings. But there were two things that happened. I hope I'm accurate on this. I do know one was that they discovered that there was a big cavity under where the building was to go, as is true all through the campus. And so they had to pump grout into—and then they pile sand on top that was the weight that the building would have when it was finished. And so that delayed the construction. Then also the economic situation was not good in the state. There was a lot of rain and cold weather. I think the winters of '58—maybe started in '57—I'm not sure. Fifty-eight, '59, a lot of Tampa was flooded when I came, and the next year too. And so they had—the budget was cut, and so the library was delayed. Both for the having to do this extra preparation and have the building funds.

So it was when the—when the university opened in September of 1960 for the students, the library was not finished. And so the ballroom of the what was then called the University Center, now the Marshall Center, was the first library that students and faculty used as a library. We put—moved stacks into the ballroom and moved as many books as it would hold, which was not the whole collection. And that was a little tricky because we had our—we had our, you know, everything cataloged, and we already had our catalog cabinets so we could file and have the cards in order in the little house. And so we had to move over—move the catalog to the ballroom—but we couldn't always be sure that the books that were in the card catalog were actually in the library collection, because we didn't have room for all of them. We just tried to select what we thought would be the most useful.

So that was the library in use, and the—by that time, the first staff for the library were all what we call “technical services” staff: acquisitions, cataloging, book preparation, and the serials. And

then in the fall or summer of 1960, the public service staff—that is, the circulation and reference people—were hired. And so they were—then they moved into the University Center to work with the students and the faculty, while the technical services staff remained in the little house. And so that was the way the university library started with—and, you understand that the word—the building we’re talking about is the building that’s now the Student Services building—the main, the large part of that.

YG: I want to talk a little bit about being at USF really before USF was USF. In those—especially in those two years, from ’58 to ’60, you must have seen a tremendous amount of buildings going up, happenings. Overall, can you give me a picture of what those two years were like, how everybody was feeling? Was there excitement around?

MH: Well, I think it’s—one thing I think is interesting is the way the townspeople were at that time. Now, they were not all in favor of this new institution coming, but—and one—and, of course Mrs. [Grace] Allen has told you, I’m sure, that one of those jobs that she and President Allen had was to get to know people and persuade them in their way that—what this was going to mean to the area. But there were a great many people who were pleased. For example, Maas Brothers at that time sent all new employees credit—Maas Brothers credit card without application.¹⁰ That was just as a courtesy and a welcoming. And I remember going to the doctor—I guess that was the first doctor—who was so pleased to have someone. I was interviewed by a *Tampa Tribune* reporter to, you know, talk about what my role in the university was and everything.¹¹ So there was a lot of interest.

The state fair at that time was still held on the—I’m trying to think—it’s on North Boulevard, the University of Tampa area.¹² And so the library had—I mean, the university had an exhibit at the state fair. The first—well, I think they continued to for some time. But the first year everybody in the staff had to staff that exhibit, because there weren’t very many of us, and we needed to have somebody there at the hours the fair was open. And then one day when I was there, and I was there by myself, this man came. And of course, we had a big sign and the picture of buildings and all of this. And this man looked, and he said, “University of South [Florida]? We don’t need a university here. There’s nobody here but old people.” So I thought that was an interesting viewpoint. And, of course, completely wrong, but that was something.

But in general, I think there were—you know, I think people were interested and excited. You’ve probably heard about the “Dollars for Dorms.” And that was one thing that got more community involvement in the—there was an opportunity for them to be involved in the university, and I think that was a plus, although I do remember there was a letter to the editor of *The Tribune* saying, “Why are they asking us to contribute? After all, those high-paid faculty members can—

¹⁰ Maas Brothers was a department store located in Tampa, Florida. It was founded by Abe and Isaac Maas in 1886 and grew into a chain of stores throughout the Gulf Coast of Florida. In 1991, the brand went defunct and merged into Burdines, which in turn merged with Macy’s.

¹¹ *The Tampa Tribune*, which won a Pulitzer Prize in 1966, was the daily newspaper for the Tampa Bay area. In 2016, the *Tribune*’s ceased publication when it was sold to the *Tampa Bay Times*.

¹² The fair was founded as the South Florida Fair in downtown Tampa and renamed the Mid-Winter Festival later on. In 1977, the fair was held at its current location at Interstate 4 and US Highway 301 in eastern Hillsborough County for the first time. The University of Tampa is a private co-educational university located in downtown Tampa.

should be able to support it.” And you know, it’s always a few little negatives. But generally, people were interested and supportive. And as for the university itself, it was—I think the people who came felt, I think, as I did, that this was an interesting opportunity, something that would be, you know, quite—we didn’t realize that Florida was going to start all of these other universities. But an opportunity they would not ordinarily have had, and [they] were, in general, enthusiastic. And the people, the deans and other top department heads, as they came in were, I think—really appreciated that opportunity.

There was a great deal of working together. I even—I remember one of the early meetings when the deans and some of the department heads were discussing the curriculum and what they were going to—how things were going to go. And it was—they say—there wasn’t 100 percent agreement, of course. But in general—and the interdisciplinary nature of the program, which President Allen believed in very strongly, and Dean French, also, of the basic college. I think that was—that the deans and the faculty recruited were with this idea in mind, that this was going to be interdisciplinary in many, many ways. And so that was—the people who came were—came with—because that attracted them, and the accent on learning, which, of course, has been mentioned. The emphasis on teaching and on student—the importance of the students to the whole university was very much—I think people were of the same mind about that, in those very early years.

So it was—but this of course was beyond the two years, really, because the first two years was primarily the—the deans did come in, and some of the department heads. But faculty did not—were not recruited until—well, some did come in the summer of 1960 to begin the planning. Others started in the fall with the students. But it was a very positive and hopeful, optimistic point of view of how things were going to go and what an exciting opportunity this was.

YG: I want to go back to a couple of things you said.

MH: Right. Yes.

YG: Why do you think that some of the Tampa community and Hillsborough County was a little resistant to the university beginning?

MH: I think there were two things—and this is very definitely my bias, as you’d expect. But one were the old-time people who had a loyalty to the University of Tampa. Maybe not as—maybe they had not gone to school there, but the University of Tampa was a—you know, it’s a private [school], but it was city-supported and had a lot of support from the people of Tampa. And I think they thought, Well, why do we need another university? Why? You know, if the state has money, it should be put into the University of Tampa. And I think there was a lot of feeling like that.

So that was one. The other was there are a great many—I don’t want to say “conservatives,” because that’s unfair to true conservatives. But people who were very, very suspicious of these faculty—radical faculty members coming in—and, you know, with their ideas. And remember, this was just after the McCarthy and the radical—I mean, that era. And a great many people had that idea of college professors being not true Americans and all of this. So there was that

suspicion, and opposition really to having a—and of course, all the faculty, practically—a few locals were faculty, but mostly they came from other places. And so there was that negative feeling. I think that's fairly accurate about the situation.

YG: The name, University of South Florida.

MH: Right.

YG: Did you hear, in those early days, of people—community members, new staff members—asking the University of South Florida, “Wait a minute we're not south, we're not”—

MH: Right, yeah.

YG: What did you hear about the name of the university?

MH: Well, that—of course coming from—not being from Florida, I wasn't aware that south Florida was pretty generally the Miami and _____(??) area, but I learned _____(??) that was. So there was—and of course, we kept getting confused with Florida Southern [College]. Still do, as a matter of fact. So there was that—that this was not, you know, this was not correctly named. And, of course, a lot of places—a lot of people thought it ought to be the University of Florida at Tampa. And, of course, that was not the administration's idea or anyone else's who's connected. I think it was definitely to be a—we wanted to be sure that it was known as an individual, you know, a new university in the Florida system. But not part of the University of Florida, so there was that.

But it was questionable as to—it isn't really south, but all of the other things that were thought of were so awkward. You know, it was suggested it be Temple Terrace University. Well, that wouldn't make sense. And “Tampa Bay” wasn't used the way “Tampa Bay” is now, either. I don't think there was the thought of it—at least I didn't hear of that. And so “West Central” or, you know, just nothing—nothing really went. And so—and I know you know from Mrs. Allen how they—President Allen finally sold them all on the South Florida. And so that was it.

YG: When the school opened officially in September of 1960, do you remember the first day of the university?

MH: I remember the ceremonies, the marching of the faculty, and that was hot. It was outdoors, and that is really what I remember. I don't remember—and of course, it didn't really affect me particularly, because we were not serving the faculty and students directly. We were still in our little house doing our little thing. So it was more—as I say, that ceremonial aspect, and that's what I remember. And the medallions that the students—I think the first students got, if I remember rightly. And I'm not sure about how many of the faculty. But, anyway, those sort of, you know—but it was certainly a day of celebration because this was what we had prepared for, this was what was—what we had come for. And it was like, “Here it is.” And it's really real now—the students and all.

YG: The idea of accent on learning, which was a creed that John Allen focused on—it was his idea. He believed in it strongly. How did that affect the mission of the library?

MH: Well, I think in general it certainly contributed to the selection of materials for the library because we were—and remember, we just had the freshmen class, the first year with a few, you know. So the collection was designed for—as an undergraduate collection primarily. Now, Mr. Hardaway, was aware of the—that there would be interest for faculty in some of their research, but the first faculty by and large recruited with the idea that teaching would be preeminent. And so that was—I think there was an agreement there. And so I think the—we had some—Lamont Library at Harvard, which was an undergraduate library was—had the catalog that—so we could use that as a selection tool. There were several other selection tools that we could use.

So it was definitely oriented towards things for the undergraduate students primarily, with recognition of future growth being—needing to be moving more into the research area. But the very first step was what was concerned. And one of, I think, Elliot's—Elliot Hardaway's—strong emphases was on the library being for the students, although it wasn't that he wasn't aware of the concerns and interests of the faculty. But he assumed that faculty also would have the same attitude towards the students, and so that there would be—equal in many ways. Things that—equality for faculty and students. And so the—it was important to have that emphasis learning, emphasis on teaching was—definitely had an effect on the library collection in those very early years.

YG: The Student Services building, which we know today, was the first library building.

MH: Yes.

YG: And you mentioned the idea of the fact that one of the reasons why the building was delayed was because of the ditch that needed to be filled up. Now, because of the idea of books and the heaviness of books, did the library building have to be supported differently, because of the weight of the books?

MH: Well, now that—I can't tell you, you know, not being knowledgeable. Except that as you remember, I said that—the grout that—you know, it's liquid concrete which was put in. So that gave that—and they did, they actually had the estimates that I think architects and engineers can do of what the weight of the building would be with books in it. And so the sand pile that was piled on top was calibrated to equal the weight that the finished full library would have. Actually, I don't think they quite got it right, because it was supposed to be—it was built for a 250—a collection of 250,000 volumes, if I remember right. By the time we moved to this building, there were over 400,000 books almost. So it was—there were more books than estimated. But that didn't make that much difference, of course, in the weight of the building, probably.

YG: When did you move out of the little house? And where did you go from the little house?

MH: The building was completed in April of 1981—'61. And so then we moved from all the rest—moved from the University Center and from the little house, and had the complete collection, as it was to be, and the card catalogs, which were inaccurate for our holdings. And so

that was in—and the library was dedicated—I think that the library dedication was in April of '61. And so that was—we were there then from—till we moved here in '75.

YG: Was the—you were still a catalog librarian at that point?

MH: Yes, yes.

YG: What were some of your primary responsibilities in those early days?

MH: Well, that the—the catalog is to classify. And as I said, we used the Library of Congress classification, and to do the descriptive cataloging—what's on the cards and in the subject headings. Well, we had the advantage of the fact [that] the Library of Congress has—I don't—I can't tell you now when this started. But by the time we started, the Library of Congress had this catalog service—that you could purchase the catalogs, the cards, from the Library of Congress with the classification. Not the—the classification was not in the call number location, but it was on the cards so that we did have that advantage. So there was relatively little original cataloging that had to be done for—because most of the material we had did already have Library of Congress classification and cataloging.

Now, we did have some—and I don't remember how early we had—I'm sure it would be much later that we had our first theses and certainly even later for dissertations. And we would get in some material that was—there were not Library of Congress cataloging for. We would wait. Sometimes things were delayed for some reasons that we didn't understand, and we would have books on our shelves that we still didn't have Library of Congress cataloging for, but we were sure they would. And so we sometimes tended to delay processing them until the—and that was probably the wrong decision, but it's a balancing act.

The one that I will—that will stick in my mind forever and—except I'm not sure if that was the title of it, but it was one about Malcolm X. And it took an inordinate length of time for the Library of Congress to catalog that and for us to get the cataloging on it. And so—and I don't know why it was delayed. But it was—they were probably having to decide—things have changed a lot in cataloging since 1960 in ways that I don't even know, because it's changed even more. But we were much more rigid in those days about—well, for example, you didn't use—Mark Twain was—had a cross reference to Clemens.¹³ I mean, you didn't use—and you didn't use the name as it was on the book, you used—you did research, if necessary, to find out what the person's real name was. And in some ways, it was more thorough and probably more accurate, but less user-friendly. And so—and, of course, there again, the Library of Congress had resources that we didn't have. So that was, you know, another reason for waiting.

I did make a bad decision in the very, very early days because the Library of Congress—not the classification per se, but the second or the third part of the call number that reflects the authorship—the number would sometimes be longer because—and I would—I thought, Well, we'll never be that big, so I'll just go ahead and we'll just go ahead and abbreviate the number, you know. Well, we had—one of the things that we had funds for in the early days—the library, relatively speaking, was better funded in the very early days than it was later on. And—or maybe

¹³ Mark Twain was a pseudonym for Samuel Langhorne Clemens.

it was just Mr. Hardaway knew how to use the resources. But we did have consultants come in, and the cataloging consultant came. Oh, it must have been in maybe '61 or so. And he had been my professor at Columbia [University].

And so he came, and he immediately said, "That, dear—this is a mistake. You should use the number the Library of Congress has just as it is. There's no point in deviation from that." And of course, then we changed our policy. And of course—I just wasn't thinking big enough at that time. I don't think—well, I didn't realize—I knew the university was going to grow, but I did not have President Allen's vision of how much [or] how large it would grow, or how quickly it would grow. The 10,000 that they thought the student body would reach by—I've forgotten when they thought it—I thought was probably about the maximum when I, you know, when I first came in. Well, there weren't too many universities that were a lot larger in those days. And so, I don't know what the University of Florida was—I'm sure it was—but anyway. But it certainly did, you know, surpass almost everyone's—even President Allen's estimates, I think. I mean, not the amount, but the—quickly—how quickly it was reached. I think it was sooner even than he envisioned the growth, but maybe I'm wrong.

YG: With this growth, obviously, the collection had to expand, particularly for master's degree and doctoral students. How did you guys meet those needs in those days?

MH: Well, here again—and there as we depended much more on faculty, as the faculty came in. And we relied on them for recommendations and for requests. And this is really getting up into my years as director. We had—because we didn't have a course-in-development department in the very early, early days. But—in fact, we didn't have even a faculty library committee in the very early days, and so our relationships were much more informal. Faculty would make requests and they would be, you know, followed—suggestions or requests, whatever. But it wasn't a formal relationship. And so—but in the very early days—and here again, Mr. Hardaway was scholarly in the sense of knowing literature. And so he himself, I think, had a good knowledge of what—but also, he did rely on faculty.

One thing I think is interesting—that was different and particularly as the university grew, faculty came in who were not—they became more discipline-oriented and research-oriented. But even fairly early on, we did have requests for departmental libraries. And that was a cause of conflict with quite a few of the faculty, particularly in the science area. Mr. Hardaway had been at the University of Florida, and they have a number of departmental libraries, as most of the major universities did have. And his feeling was that this was a disservice to, particularly, the students. He said, so often they would come into the main library at the University of Florida looking for a particular title or a particular subject and would find that what they wanted was not there, it was over in one of their departmental libraries.

And so he felt that it was much more—a better service to the students, and to the faculty when they were not in their own field, to have the collection all together. And so that was a battle that was fought, and in the early days, the library won, if you want to look at it that way. And I understand now that there is talk, I think, of a music—a separate music library. The School of Music's building not being funded is probably going to _____ (??) that. But the—when the science center was built, for example, that was one of the things that—I was on the planning

committee for the science building. And I think one of the reasons I was on that committee was to discourage them for planning for a library within the building.

Now, there are—were probably from the beginning—but there are little library collections all through the campus. That happens, but they weren't—the other thing was is you have to duplicate when you have departmental libraries. And our resources—funding resources—were really not adequate for that much duplication. And so we did not. We did maintain one major central collection through the years. And I think—and some faculty accepted it, others didn't. But, of course, I'm biased too. I still think that it was the better decision that—everyone's a generalist when they get out of their own field. And so that made that a pretty reasonable [thing] to do.

YG: Can you tell me about you becoming the acting director and then the director of the library and how that all came about?

MH: Well, there was quite an evolution in the library staffing and the administrative area. At the time the university was started, there was an educational resources area and it—the audio-visual materials were in that area—graphics and I don't know, I'm not that familiar with the area. But various things of that nature were in a separate division. And the head of that educational resources area was very, I think, very talented and a very knowledgeable person, and they had some excellent staff. But he was not so diplomatic with the faculty sometimes. And he was a little bit stubborn, I think, and like that.

So because there's—often those areas are combined into a library sort of thing. President Allen decided to appoint Mr. Hardaway to be dean—I think that it was dean of instructional services—and have him administer both areas. And it was partly to coordinate them better, but also partly to give someone over the—the educational resources head—some sort of a buffer, in a sense, an administrative person. Then Mr. Hardaway was made vice president of administration. Oh, another thing—it's a good thing that came up, because another very unusual, unique thing, about the library was that the library reported to the vice president for administration rather than the vice president for academic affairs. And this, I think, was a combination of reasons. But partly—and I guess I'm not really absolutely sure of exactly President Allen's reasoning, and Mr. Hardaway's reasoning. But I think they felt that with a new university the—and I don't remember whether the title of vice president of academic affairs existed then or not.

But, anyway, I think they felt that the colleges and the faculty were going to need a great deal of support and attention and cooperation, [and] everything. And that the library—partly because of the confidence that Dr. Allen had in Mr. Hardaway, that the library could function without that relationship to—not that there wasn't a good relationship between the academic affairs administrator and the library—but it—and then, there's so—the budgeting is so important to the library, extremely important. And budgeting for libraries is different than budgeting for academic—the academic areas—the colleges and the faculty, and so on and so forth. And so that position then was to whom Mr. Hardaway reported. Well, then when the person, Bob Dennard, was—left the university and left that position vacant—here again, Dr. Allen felt that Mr. Hardaway had such a good grasp of the administrative end of the university, and he'd worked closely with the administrative head, that he was given that—appointed to that position.

So then that left the dean of instructional services position vacant and—but it also left the director of libraries [vacant]. And so they—I'm trying—I'm just not sure in the fact that chronology would—had to be—in those days, we didn't have search committees and all of this. This was, you know—it was not done that way at all. And so I had the most experience in the library, and—in the meantime, now—I have to back up a little bit—sorry, the acquisitions librarian, Jerry McCabe, had left the university and had moved to the University of Arkansas, to be associate director at the University of Arkansas. And so his position was filled with someone else, an acquisition librarian.

Well, the building planning for this building, for the new building, had already begun while Mr. Hardaway was—probably while he was still director. I guess it would have been while he was still director, at least when he was dean of instruction, because he—as dean of instructional services he continued to be director of libraries. It was not a separate decision. And so then he brought out—then Jerry McCabe's position at the University of Arkansas did not turn out. He'd basically gone there with the understanding that he would be promoted to the directorship when it came up, and the director there decided not to do that. And so Mr. Hardaway brought him back as assistant director of planning of the library building, which incidentally at—I don't know whether Jerry had had experience in that before, but he has certainly—he has gone on in his career to be a consultant in many library buildings.

But, anyway, he came back as assistant director. We hadn't had an assistant director before, we had just had head of cataloging, head of acquisitions, and then head of reference. Those were the positions. And—oh, Special Collections—Margaret Chapman had come early on as head of Special Collections. So when Mr. Hardaway was promoted to the vice presidency, then he appointed me as interim library director, as having had more experience and having, you know, and I think had confidence in me. And the position of dean of instructional services was still a vacant position. And so they did recruit for that, and they brought a man who had been director of libraries at the University of Alaska to come. And he came to the position, but he discovered in his year here that Mr. Hardaway was still pretty much in administering the area. I was director of the libraries—acting—but I was director of libraries. And there really wasn't a position for the dean of instructional services, so after a year he resigned and went back to Alaska. And then I was appointed director of libraries, and Jerry continued to work as assistant director on—in the building—building planning. And I'm ready for break.

Track 1 ends; track 2 begins.

YG: Okay, we've changed tapes. And I was talking with Mary Lou about becoming, first, the acting director and then eventually the director of the Tampa campus library. Mary Lou, approximately what year did you become the acting and then the director of the library?

MH: Well, I—if I remember correctly, and I may not, I became acting director in 1967 and the director in 1968.

YG: We were talking about McCabe and the divisions of the library, how Mr. Hardaway was doing something different. How are you—and that you were the most senior person in the library with experience. Being a woman in those early days, I'm sure becoming the acting director and

then later the director of the library was a pretty significant thing. Can you talk a little bit about that?

MH: Thank you. I was the first director—woman director in—of the libraries in the state university system [of Florida] and one of the few in a university library in the country. And it was, I would say, basically because of Mr. Hardaway. He would—there were a great many libraries when I got in—came into the profession, where there was a director—a male director of libraries and [an] associate director who was a woman. And in many ways, the library director was the front man, the outside man. And of course, he also was a—but a lot of the actual administrative work was done by that associate director, who was very frequently a woman. Mr. Hardaway would not have—that was not his style. I mean, he did not evaluate me as whether I was a woman and could do the job or not. He just assumed that any good librarian could do the position. And so it was not a coincidence that I became the first woman library director in the state university system. It was because Mr. Hardaway was the one who made the decision, really. I think that's true.

YG: Did you feel, though, being a woman more—or a higher sense of responsibility?

MH: To some extent, I did. I don't know that I had the pressure that women in other fields—because librarianship, of course, is—you know, has more women. But there were very few women administrators. So yes, I did feel that I was—it was important that I do a good job for my gender as well as to do it. The library—the state university system library directors have very good communications. We met on a regular basis with the person from the Board of Regents staff, who was appointed as our liaison and who reported to the chancellor for academic affairs. And so the first meeting that I went to as library director, the person that was the liaison, said—he would ask me to take minutes. And I said, “You're asking me to do that because you assume that's a woman's role.” “Oh, well no. Not exactly. But you go ahead and do it.” Well, I didn't—I didn't do more than just make the protest. I wasn't going to make any points by saying, “No, I won't do it.” Like getting coffee, you know, for other secretaries. But it was—that was symbolic.

But, in general, that was sort of an exception. My colleagues seemed to accept me as certainly as their equal. I had much more difficulty representing the University of South Florida vis-à-vis the University of Florida and FSU than I did, I think, being a woman. Because there was, and I think still is—and certainly the Board of Regents staff at that time assumed that the University of Florida would take the leadership role if FSU would be, you know—and the University of South Florida would conform to what—that was that.

So that was really the concern I had at that time, and probably Mr. Hardaway did not have quite the difficulty because he was known by all of them and he had greater experience than I had, so—but I suspect he had something of that same situation. But, actually, I'm not sure how much interaction that the library directors had up until about that time, because we were moving into the period of automation technology, where it was important. Of course, budgeting also was very important.

The libraries were budgeted as a state library system budgeted. So the funds were our—appropriated as a fund and then had to be distributed according to the—really the Board of

Regents staff somewhat made this. And so that was always a struggle. We had a formula that was worked out, and a formula that, because of the way it was worked out, favored the—and, of course, at that time, both the University of Florida and FSU were larger. But the University of South Florida had begun by that time to have our regional campuses. And those regional campuses were figured in this formula as though they were departmental libraries on the same basis as a departmental library at the University of Florida or FSU.

So there were some difficulties that we had and that I had to cope with, shall we say, in the budgeting situation, which was always a major concern, because after the first few years—after the very first couple of years—I think our funding was fairly adequate for our needs at that time. But that was _____(??) staffing, particularly in staffing. We really were well staffed in the very beginning, but we didn't—our staffing didn't grow with our enrollment. And our book—the book budgets were always so erratic that it was—we never knew how much we were going to get. It was usually not adequate, except the one year when we got a grant from—I'm trying to think—it was a federal grant. And then they did an—the legislature gave us an extraordinarily large book fund. And that year, we had too much money, in the sense that it all had to be spent in one year. But most of the time, it was a budgetary struggle so—kind of got off on that. But anyway.

YG: Before we talk about the new building—

MH: Yes.

YG: —and more about the directorship. I want to talk about the Johns Committee.¹⁴

MH: Right.

YG: What you experienced here at the university, how the university handled it, and really the implications of the Johns Committee.

MH: Well, I think—first, I was going—it was interesting. I think I—and I never really talked with Mr. Hardaway about this much afterwards. But I think it was interesting that the library, which, you know, in some situations could have been affected by this sort of—but it was not. I don't think that the library was ever—I don't think that—I don't think the Johns Committee—ever occurred to them that the library might be important in this sense. So that—what might have happened did not happen to the library itself. So the concern was really for the university as a whole and for the whole situation. And it was just a very, very difficult situation.

The university was so young, so new, and not entirely popular with the other universities—taking resources that they could have used. And so it was vulnerable. The charges, of course, were the kind that are difficult for—innocent people got hurt. Although, really, I don't think there were any who weren't innocent in their ways. But there were some that were—fell in the category that the Johns Committee was looking at. And so they certainly were. The biggest

¹⁴ The Florida Legislative Investigation Committee, or Johns Committee, was established in 1956. It mainly targeted academics, civil rights groups, and alleged homosexuals in state government and public education.

concern, I think, was the fact that the faculty and the president did not see things the same way. And that, I think, is almost inevitable.

President Allen had the—really had the future of the university to be—was threatened. And he was very aware of that. I don't think the faculty, by and large, perceived that threat. And they felt that he was too compliant and did not fight hard enough for the academic freedom issue and all that was involved. But he had to walk a very, very delicate line, because it was a real threat. And the rift between the president and the faculty, I think, was one of the sad things about it. Some faculty understood, but not—the majority of them didn't, because they saw it, you know—it was a much purer issue for them, I guess. And it wasn't that it wasn't to him, except that he had to consider what impact it was going to have on the university. And so I think that was really a—and I wasn't—now, I was not that much involved at the time.

My husband, who was not my husband at that time—he was—he had—was the founder of the AAUP chapter on campus.¹⁵ And so he was very involved and very concerned. But I was aware only of just really as almost a bystander, in that sense. And what I know about it now I've learned since from hearing some very knowledgeable people talk about it. And I think one of the things that I was impressed with—when I heard—oh gosh, I'm thinking of his name—anyway, he was our information—the university's information/public relations person, I guess you almost might say. The time he talked about—the *Tampa Tribune* and the *St. Petersburg Times* were the best supporters that the—and the most, I think, influential supporters that the university had. That they probably played a major role—a larger role than faculty realized.

But it was very harmful to the university, and it took a while to recover. And, in a sense, this current situation is—you see echoes of that coming back. And the difficulties that administration has in facing situations that are much more clear-cut to faculty. So that was—it was a serious situation, and the university came out of it better than they might have. But it left scars.

YG: Let's, real quick, talk about your husband, Donald [Harkness].¹⁶ Because you met your husband here at the university?

MH: Right. Yes.

YG: What was he doing at the university?

MH: He was a professor, originally in the basic college, in the American Idea program. And then, when the basic college was abolished—absorbed into the other colleges—he became a member of the American studies faculty, which was his field. He had his doctorate in American studies from the University of Minnesota and had—that was so—this was a good situation for him. And he was charter faculty—he came—in fact, he was the one who came in the summer of

¹⁵ The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) is a nonprofit membership association of faculty and other academic professionals with members and chapters at colleges and universities across the country. Since its founding in 1915, it has helped shape American higher education by developing standards and procedures that maintain academic freedom.

¹⁶ Donald Harkness, a USF professor of American studies, was hired in 1960 to teach in the College of Basic Studies. He later met Mary Lou Barker, and in 1965 they were married.

1960. And so he was—or again, as I say, he started the AAUP chapter here. But he was definitely a teacher, and not a research scholar, in that sense. And so he was very much in that group that was, you know, enjoyed this accent on learning, the teaching emphasis, and also the fact that in those early years, the faculty were—there was a small faculty, a small student body.

The faculty all knew each other, they shared the—you know, offices were not—it was not departmentalized, as far as that was concerned. And the interdisciplinary nature of American Idea and American studies were just what he was—what he was interested. So that was what he really—he was very much of the group that came. And like all—like so many—another thing about the early faculty, is that all—most of them were young. Most of them were at the early 30s, at the most. Some younger, some, a few, older. And so he fits in that group. And as the university developed into a research—more of a research university with emphasis on scholarly research and publication—this was difficult for him because that just was not what he had come to this university for and what his greatest interest was.

But he was still devoted to the university and very proud of the university. And he was—I think made a good contribution to—once in a while, I still will meet a student of that era who will comment that—how much they appreciated his classes. He had them do comment papers, and as often as once a week or something like that. Just anything they wanted. Something that caught their attention in the newspaper or something you heard—just to, you know, kind of get their—put their ideas and thoughts down on paper, and that was part of his teaching techniques. Another thing—has anybody talked about the senior seminar?

YG: Nope. We can do that now.

MH: Right. Well, I'm not as knowledgeable about it as—I thought maybe someone—Margaret Fisher, for example, I think, taught the senior seminar.¹⁷ But in those early years, it was a sort of a capstone or summary course that every student had to take in their senior year. And, as I understood it, the idea of it was that this was a time for them to sort of—kind of coalesce everything, their experience, and what they had gotten out of their university experience in their final year. And it—you know, I thought it was a very good idea. Here again, it fell by the wayside as we became more college and departmental oriented. But it was—and I don't know if the Honors College has something like that now or not. They may very well. But he enjoyed the senior seminar—he always taught the senior seminar. I don't know whether in [the] early years it was [a] regular assignment, but in later years it was a voluntary thing. It was an add-on to your, you know, to the hours of your teaching and—but he enjoyed doing that. So that was his role at the university.

YG: Eventually, the library building, which was the Student Services building—I guess, as more students came to USF, there became a need for the library to really have a bigger building.

MH: Oh, yes.

YG: When did the library move? And was that one of the—was space one of the issues?

¹⁷ Dr. Margaret B. Fischer was a member of the charter faculty of the University of South Florida and served as the first and only dean of women at USF (1962–1971).

MH: Well, space was a major issue. We moved in 1975, but we had—like I said, we—the library, by that time, had over 400,000 volumes in a building plan for 250,000. And so we were using space and a storage space, and it was really crowded. And so—but one interesting thing is that at the time we began planning this building, the idea of an undergraduate library and a research library was very much in the universities of the—in the country—Lamont at Harvard being one of the early ones. University of Michigan, I remember, had an undergraduate library. And so that was what we were planning. This building was to be the research library, and that was to be continued as the undergraduate library.

And so this building was—trying to think—it was originally planned for just four floors? I should remember that, because Dr. Riggs was very proud of his role, which he had a right to be.¹⁸ But, anyway—let's see, I was going to say—actually, it's five—it was five floors. But we—that was the way the decision was. At the time that—well, President Allen was president and Elliot [Hardaway] was vice president for administrative affairs. Well, then after President Allen retired and then President Mackey came in and we had the administrative turnover, which I think we discussed informally earlier.¹⁹ But it's not unusual. I mean, I think all the subsequent presidents have brought in new staff in their administrative area.

And, incidentally, I think when speaking about my being a woman and library director, I was one of the few administrative position people who kept the position. And I think my being a woman had a very positive effect there. President Mackey was—the women's movement was really moving along at that time, and so he was very supportive. And I think it would have been an unpopular thing for him to have discharged a woman library director. So I do think that that had a positive thing for me.

But the building at that time, when he came—was it '72, I want to say. We were already well in the planning process, and at that time then, the reporting was changed from the administrative vice president to the more traditional vice president for academic affairs, who was Carl Riggs. And so he was very much involved in the library. Well, I say “very much”—he was very interested, and so he thought that this idea of two separate libraries just didn't make sense to him. And so he said, “Let's look at this planning and where we are and”—I'm not absolutely certain of just where. But anyway, “Let's add these two extra floors to the library, and not have the undergraduate library.” So that was the decision.

And we didn't need that much space at the time we moved. But those two floors were—actually were vacant for some time. Of course, gradually people filtered in as space on campus was so valuable. But that was the change that made—that Dr. Riggs always took great pride in having, and he deserved to. And so that made a change in the planning. But the—I guess the—just trying to think—in the basic design of the building, what we needed of course, at that time, was more stack space. And so those were always—that was always available for expansion, in that respect. So that was how that came about.

¹⁸ Carl Riggs served as provost under President Cecil Mackey. During his 31 years at USF, he helped push the university toward a greater emphasis on research.

¹⁹ M. Cecil Mackey served as president of the University of South Florida from 1971 to 1976.

YG: How do you go about moving 400,000 volumes of books from one building to another building?

MH: I'll tell you what you don't do. You don't expect the students to do it. That was suggested and the—it's a popular idea because you think the students will be involved. And actually, I had had a little experience with that when I was at Georgia Tech. We moved from the old library to the new library and they used student help. And it was not a very efficient way to do it. But that was suggested here, and with some enthusiasm, by the administration. So we had a—see, I don't know what—how you would call—we had a sort of a sample day or demonstration day. And we had faculty and students and the administration all, you know, help and participate in moving the books. And it pretty well demonstrated that that just was not going to work.

So what we did was—and actually, one of the things we were short on [was] funding. The building was finished by—before the end of the fiscal year, which is July, and was ready, really, for occupancy, but we didn't have any money to do any move. So we delayed the move, and it was better anyway because we were able to do most of it between terms and the summer. And we hired a moving company. And it was a very good thing to do. The planning for it was done by Merrily Taylor, who was the head of the circulation department at that time. And she planned where everything would go in this building, and had everything labeled, and very, very well designed and planned. And it worked quite efficiently. But what we have now—and you'll have to talk to some of the people who were involved, because the details are sort of lost in my mind now. But we had moving to vans and they took—from the—I think from the top floor of the old building, and brought the books up in moving vans and brought them over here and unloaded, and it was a process.

But the moving company and the staff worked like, you know, like slaves and did a lot of the work. But it went quite well and was quite efficient. Merrily since then has—the Association of Research Libraries had a project where librarians who were not yet in the administrative area or were not taught in administration could have a year internship with one of the Association of Research Libraries.²⁰ And so the understanding was that the library would give them a year's leave with the understanding they would come back at the end and work then—use their experience in the library of what they had learned that year. And so I recommended Merrily apply for that. And she was accepted, and she went to Yale, where she worked for the university. And Ivy Leagues don't have directors of libraries; they have university librarians. So she worked with a university librarian of Yale and was—learned a great deal. And I think that—I think he kept her on another year, then—she did not come back. I didn't really expect her to. It was an—it was—and maybe in a different library it would have been more reasonable. But she was definitely ready for bigger and better things.

And so then she went to Columbia and worked with the Columbia University university librarian, who was a woman. And then she went to Brown as university librarian and has been there ever since. So she's our star. But she got her—I mean, she had a lot of the training here in—she was reference librarian and then circulation librarian, so she got some administrative

²⁰ The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) is a nonprofit organization of research libraries at comprehensive research institutions in Canada and the US.

experience there. And then this library plan, which just—she showed her abilities in that way, and so she—we gave her some good experience to start, but she carried on, on her own.

YG: In terms of technology—[you] started in 1958 and moved to the '70s, eventually retiring in the '90s. I'm sure that you personally experienced a lot of technological advancements, particularly in the library. How did technology affect the library?

MH: Well, obviously, it had a major effect. I would say one of the things—we moved into it slowly. We got a lot of criticism for not being more up in the forefront. But the technology itself develops slowly. The new—the first idea—the early ideas of how automation would be done in the libraries were stepping stones, but they were—it needed a lot of development. And so we did not—we're not among the first, at all, to start doing automation and getting technology.

We had an advantage of being—that was one of the big advantages of being in the state university system. The state university system librarians worked together. The directors worked together very well. And as we were planning to go—and the first thing—the first areas that used automation tech was circulation, and that was the first. Well, actually we used punched cards at one stage along the way to that. I just saw on CBS *Sunday Morning* they had—I think it was—I've forgotten—a 100th anniversary of the development of the punch card, something like that, but anyhow. So we had that.

But there were systems being designed all over the country, and commercial vendors. And so when the decision was made that we should all go in—that the state university system should have a unified plan, they—we worked—the Board of Regents staff and some of the library people worked on a bid document. And the low bidder was a company that had done circulation systems for public libraries. But I don't know that there were any academic libraries that had done them. There may have been. But, anyway, they were low bidder, and so they got the bid. And we were not—most of us did not feel like that was the right vendor, that that system was not—it was fine for public libraries. It was not good for academic libraries.

But there wasn't—didn't seem to me much funding was there, everything. So we went ahead and ordered the—fed our order in, and all the stuff arrived on the loading dock. And the University of Florida, we heard, and probably told us, that they flatly refused to do that. That was not a good system. They had found another system was better, and they were going to go with this other system. It was Northwestern University _____ (??). And so, I said, "If the University of Florida can do this and wants to do this, we can too." So we sent the—sent back—and we all got together and agreed that we would go back and convince the Board of Regents staff that this was a better system. And so we did that. And that was how we could develop the—we started with circulation and into the online catalog.

And it was—and the Florida Center for Library Automation was then developed—created to do a lot of the technical for all of the library. One of the best decisions we possibly could have made. I think the librarians deserve a lot of credit doing this very cooperative project. And it has worked, I think, very well and I'm really, obviously, very proud of that part. And that was, you know, the role that I had in that. So we started with the circulation and moved into acquisition

cataloging and the Lewis system. And that was—and I can't tell you the year. You may have it somewhere. But, anyway, it was, I think—

YG: Nineteen-eighties.

MH: Something like that, yeah. And that was the—sort of the thing that made me feel that I could see all the other automation that was coming, all the online information sources, and all of this. And that this was going to take a lot more work and a lot more knowledge, and I just wasn't the person to do that. And so that was what made me decide to retire from the library directorship. So that was my—

YG: Where do you see the university and the library in the next decade?

MH: I really don't think about it, to tell you the truth. I think the library is going to continue to acquire printed materials. I think they're going to still be necessary. I think there's going to be more and more and more information available in online methods. Of this digitalization that everybody talks about, I am fascinated by it, and I don't understand at all. But I think the library is going to continue to be—in many ways it's going to be center to the university. And yet it's center in the fact that it's not a place people come to, it's a resource that they use from remote sources. And I think that's as far as I can—and I don't have a crystal ball. And I'm not—I mean, I hardly use the Internet at home, just because I don't—I'm not doing that sort of thing. I can use, to some extent, but my use of the computer is mostly word processing and e-mail. So I'm not up on the technology, but I think that it's—I hope it's—the thing that concerns me, it concerns, I think, almost every person who thinks about it, is the fact there's so much on the Internet that is not accurate—not supported. And it doesn't—I do worry about the students. And I think that's a real problem for faculty to decide but—I need another break anyway.

YG: Sure.

Pause in recording.

YG: Okay, I want to ask you two more quick questions. The first being about Special Collections: how Special Collections developed in the library, what is Special Collections, and who was the first head of Special Collections?

MH: Okay, I'll answer the first—the last one first. First Special Collections librarian was Margaret Chapman.²¹ Margaret was at the University of Florida, and she was the Florida history specialist. She was a member of the Florida Historical Society and—I don't know if was at the time she came—she was executive secretary of the association. But she served at that role when she was here. And so the first emphasis of the Special Collections was on Florida history, and the Florida Historical Society Library came here because of her position with them and because of her interest and Mr. Hardaway's interest in our having a Florida history collection. So it was a good fit.

²¹ Margaret Louise Chapman was a special collections librarian, Florida Library Association President (1965–1966), Florida Historical Society Director (1960–1962), and author.

And so we—that was the first emphasis. The other areas in Special Collections, the rare books and some of those—the unique items, were natural collections for a scholarly library. We didn't have a lot of resources to acquire things, but as we did, then we were, you know, it was good to have those sort of things. Margaret left the university with the change in administrations and became a librarian at Queens College in Charlotte, North Carolina, from where she retired, and then she returned here in her retirement. But I felt that the effort to develop a strong Florida history collection was not very reasonable, given the strength the University of Florida had and how much would be needed to do that. But while Margaret was here, and then the subsequent library, we were slowly getting local materials and local history. And I felt that was where our strength—where opportunity was, and also where we really had a responsibility.

And so I supported the Special Collections librarians in developing that aspect and in trying to collect more and more local history, and to be strong there. And I think we've done a very good job. I'm very proud of that. And I think what's happened is that when you start developing an interest like that, it begins—it becomes known, and people who know that there's somebody else's, or some other society's material's here, they think, Well, then that would be a good place for their society to put here. So I think this was the right direction to go on. I think that the library has done a very good job in developing it, and then I can—you know, I think in the future, that's going to be an extremely valuable resource.

And although they—the digitalization, if I understand it correct, is going to make this material available elsewhere, I think this is always going to be a place that people will need to come and will want to come to see these things. So I think that's a strength. The other collections that we have, so much of them have been sort of targets of opportunity. The music collection, for example, we had an opportunity to get that and got—had some financial support. And so we got that. Jay Dobkin deserves a lot of credit for a lot of the development in that area of the—I think the juvenile collection, that's somewhat unusual, and things like that. So we have some real strengths.

And my concern about Special Collections is my concern that I have for the entire library, and I guess when we—you said about the future—I think one of the unfortunate things is that people do not realize that libraries require people. And you can have all the online access, you can have the materials, but you have to have people. You have to have people to process the materials, and you have to have people to be experts in showing people how to use them. And that's something that in—we've been short in all through the history, except, as I say, the very early years. And certainly, the Special Collections—that's certainly true of Special Collections, because there are resources there that will be hidden resources for many years if we don't get more people to do that processing. And that's a tough one, because, as I say, it's something that only—I think only other librarians really recognize that it takes people to make a good, effective library.

And I haven't kept up with how the staffing is doing. I know Special Collections because I work in there. But I don't say that they're any more short-staffed than the rest of the library. I think that's one of the things that automation has helped, technology has helped. Certainly makes cataloging and acquisitions more efficient. But you still need people. But I think, as I say, I think

the local history of Special Collections is the most, perhaps, important. But all the other collections, I think, are very good. And I think the future in there is really very good.

YG: My final question to you. This is something that I've asked everyone in all of my interviews this year. After 33 years of working at the University of South Florida, if there is something—a statement, a thought—that you could leave on camera about your history at USF, whether it be to future staff, students, and faculty, or to the first administration, what would you want to say about the university and the university's effect on you and your life?

MH: Well, of course, it had a very major effect on me and my life. Of my—let's see how many years—40-plus years as a librarian, the greater share of it has been here. I certainly grew and had—never, when I started librarianship, did I ever expect to be director of a library, let alone of a library of an institution of this size. It's just beyond belief. One of my regrets, and I think that may be true of several who have this, maybe a little ego thing, is the fact the university is still not known as a major research institution. My undergraduate college, which is a small college, doesn't really recognize the fact that one of their graduates became director of a library that's larger than many of the libraries that they know and, you know, think have a high reputation.

So that's ego involved. But I think that the time is going to come when the University of South Florida is known and recognized as a research library. Of course, my personal life—meeting my husband here and having 24 years as a team, because we really were a team. And I don't think I could have done my job as well without his support, both in, you know, the way that a couple—I mean, a spouse—do, but also in the social sense, because there was much in my life as a library director that required social activities and would have been much more difficult for me to have done that without him.

So I don't—there's things I regret that happened with the university, and then things that I know—things I wish I hadn't done the way I did. But I think it's been a wonderful experience. And I hope that many people associated with the university feel the same way about it. And I hope the people of the Tampa Bay area, and the state of Florida, recognize how fortunate they are to have the University of South Florida. I think in the cultural area, if nothing else, it has had a major impact on the area, and will continue to. And, of course, the students who've gone here—there's been so many students who never would have gone to college if we hadn't been here. So it's important. And I'm very proud of the university.

YG: Thank you, Mary Lou.

MH: Thank you.

End of interview.