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**Andrew Huse (AH):** It's the 10th today, right?

**Liz Lindsay (LL):** Eleventh.

AH: Eleventh, okay. Today is June 11th, 2004. My name is Andrew Huse, program assistant for the Florida Study Center. Today, we continue a series of interviews in our studio here in the Tampa campus library with USF faculty, students, staff, and alumni, in order to commemorate 50 years of university history. Today, I'll be interviewing Liz Lindsay, who came to USF in 1981 as a student, and she, thankfully for us, has stayed on working with the [USF] Foundation and beyond. Good afternoon.

LL: Good afternoon.

AH: Thanks for being with us today.

LL: My pleasure.

AH: First, I guess we'll just start at the beginning. When did you first hear about USF? When did you first think about coming as a student?

LL: Well, I first heard about USF before it began, and came up here one day to see where the campus was going to be. I remember remarking at the time, because it was a very barren piece of land, that one was going to need a camel to get from one side to the other. And it is a big campus. That was one of the very wise things that the Board of Regents did when they bought that property was buy enough land for a sizable campus, and you've managed to fill it up pretty well.<sup>1</sup> And then I, of course, knew about USF, and USF started a branch in Sarasota. I read about the executive MBA course in the newspaper one day, and I thought that that would be something I might like to do. I had been to three different learning institutions before that, and I thought that was a good way to tie up an education in one piece, with a master's degree in business. So I came up for an interview. And they decided that I was a possible student, and I got started on that in 1981.

AH: So about 20 years have gone by since the camel joke and you coming out.

LL: Yes. Absolutely.

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<sup>1</sup> The Board of Regents was abolished in 2001 and replaced by the Florida Board of Governors, which serves as the governing body for the State University System of Florida.

AH: How did it change? What were your impressions when you came on the campus then for the interview?

LL: Well, of course, there were a number of buildings then, but Fowler Avenue is much different than it is right now, in 2004. There was very little east of here on Fowler Avenue. In fact, I-75 was not open up here, and so I went up and down US 41 driving here, at peril every trip.

AH: So you got into the MBA program?

LL: The executive MBA program, and that was the first cohort of that program, was in 1981.

AH: Oh, is that right?

LL: So we were the guinea pigs for that program. It was one of the early ones in the country.

AH: So, what was that like? Tell us about your academic experience.

LL: It was an interesting experience. I liked it very much because at the time we did everything in units. We would do, say, a unit of economics and a unit of statistics at the same time, one in the morning, one in the afternoon, and I rather like studying like that for six weeks, then we'd move on to two more units. And I do like to study that way—instead of being all over the map, to concentrate on a couple of subjects in perhaps a shorter timeframe. And it was an interesting group of people. We had two PhDs in the class, who were from the campus here, one person from the medical school and one from the administration. There were two chemists, a couple of bankers, a not-for-profit social worker, as I recall, a school teacher. We started out with 18 people, we finished with 14.

AH: Is that right?

LL: A couple people along the way—there were a couple of independent businesspeople on that.

AH: So that 18 to 14, does that represent one of your classes, or the entire program?

LL: No, that was that was the entire program, because the way that program works is it's a group. You start out and you go through the two years together, and we lost more people. I think a couple of them just didn't make it because it was rather concentrated work. And then a couple people had to move because of jobs.

AH: Do any of the faculty members stand out in your mind? Was there anyone particularly that made an impression?

LL: We had some very good faculty members. The director of the program—the academic director of the program the second year was Steve Baumgarten, and he's still director of that program. He taught marketing in a very delightful fashion, has a good sense of humor, and made the classwork very interesting. We had an outstanding statistics professor who later became provost for a brief time. So it was a very good experience. We had a couple of professors who really didn't seem to know how to teach adults, mature adults, I might add—and they—we complained mightily about one, and a couple of them soon dropped out of that program. They don't teach in it any longer. I think it takes a special focus to do that. These are people of considerable life experience, and you don't approach them quite the same the way you do a class of undergraduates.

AH: Yeah, it sounds like you really had a real diverse group of people, and everyone was mature. They were bringing their own experiences to the table.

LL: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. I would say we were all—I don't think there was anyone there under 30, for example, which is fairly old for students.

AH: Sure, yeah. So having those kind of classmates probably made it all the more of a rich experience, because you could all share your different experiences.

LL: That was one of the most interesting parts of it, was the different viewpoints. That's what made the classwork so interesting. In a way, you were kind of sorry you didn't have more classwork. We did a lot of work on our own, as you can imagine, during the week. These classes were held on the weekend. But the classes were interesting because everyone came at it from a different point of view. And it was not a reluctant group. Discussion was very open and free, and we felt privileged to disagree. And that, I think, probably made it fun for—certainly for the professors who stayed with it. For the kind of person who is used to just lecturing, I'm sure it wasn't as interesting to them as teachers as it was to some of the others who got involved in the discussions as well.

AH: Sure, and kind of help shape and mold it as it went along. So you obviously were a commuting student and everything at the time. So let me see, you graduated then in 1983?

LL: Eighty-three, right.

AH: The classes were on Saturdays then?

LL: One week they would be on Friday and the next week on Saturday. And on Friday we had usually a speaker at lunchtime, and so we all dressed appropriately, as businesspeople, as we thought we were. And we had some very, very interesting speakers. Some people who were graduates of the university who had gone on to either work in government or in business or in the economy. We had a newspaper person who spoke. And I remember those lectures quite—with considerable interest, because it was a chance to talk to people who were outside the academic world. That was fun. And in fact, after I graduated, I rounded up speakers for two or three of those noontime lectures. I was at the time serving on the Northern Trust of Florida board, and their chairman from Chicago wintered down here, and he came over to speak one day. I do remember that the food was dreadful. Dreadful. I think food on the campus has greatly improved since that time. It's a much more sophisticated university than it was then.

AH: There's a lot of people that would agree with you. So the food service on campus catered those lunches then?

LL: Yes. I don't remember what company it was, and if I did, I wouldn't dare mention it. It was so bad. They used to bring us our lunch on one of the golf carts, and we had it over in the business school because we didn't have a lot of time. It was a very intense day. One time it was terribly delayed, and we didn't know why. We were kind of all stretching, because you sat so much, you know, walking around, and it seems that they had dropped it on the way over. The food service people had dropped it, and they just picked it up and put it back together and gave it to us.

AH: Oh my. So it sounds like a kind of innovative program.

LL: I think indeed it was. And of course, there are many of them around the country now.

AH: Yes.

LL: And with distance learning as it is today, some of those are mixed sorts of programs. USF also started, I believe, the first MBA for doctors in the country, the first one in the country. And they did that in two-week intervals, because they found that doctors could block out two weeks of time and do that more easily than they could one day every week. And I believe that's very successful, and they're still doing it, I think.

AH: Well, it sounds like, too, that just by the examples we've heard so far, that they really were trying to be extremely responsive to the target audience for these classes. I mean, by having it on weekends, by having the doctors at their certain times and everything.

LL: Oh, absolutely. And one of the things they did that was particularly helpful to me, and I think to all of us, because most of the people came from—certainly, there was one gentleman from Carrollwood I remember. There was someone else from east of here quite a ways. I was the only one from Sarasota, but one of the things they did was, at the beginning of each semester, we had a sort of a retreat over at Saddlebrook, when Saddlebrook just opened.<sup>2</sup> And we were over there for a whole weekend, two and a half days, and we got all our books over there, so we didn't have to go shopping for our books. And when it came time to do the registration tasks and that sort of thing, most of that was brought to us, which saved us all a lot of time, because almost everyone had families [and] jobs and were trying to do this MBA thing on top of it.

AH: So which was it more of, looking back? Is it that you look back and think it was pretty innovative, or at the time were you impressed or excited about being part of a new program? Or did all that kind of come later?

LL: I was just excited about tying up this very fragmented education that I had had into one piece, sort of. But it was a very interesting way to learn, and I enjoyed it from that point of view. I think we all did. Occasionally, some of the people would try to—some of the instructors would try to get us to do some competitive little games, but it didn't work very well. Those people—we didn't compete with each other. As this fellow who sat next to me for two years said, “I compete with one person: the fellow who sits right here in this chair.” And everyone was pretty much motivated that way to do the very best job that he or she could do and to make it a good experience, rather than sort of game playing amongst the group. The psychologist didn't like that, because it didn't work. But maybe they learned something too then.

AH: They were thinking they were wanting to bring the dog-eat-dog world into the classroom.

LL: Absolutely. Didn't work at all. Everybody had enough on their plate. We weren't interested in that kind of fooling around.

AH: So how did it feel to graduate finally, as you say, “tie up” all this education that you had?

LL: It was really very nice. But I have always thought that the commencement was perhaps one of the nicest ceremonies we have in this country, or any other, for that matter, because everyone is happy. The instructors are happy to be rid of you, and your family is happy you're finished. And you're certainly happy that you're going to have a little bit different schedule. I've been to lots of commencements before that and since then. My father and my stepmother were both college professors later in life, and I grew up on a college campus, so it was not strange to me. But you had a real sense of achievement. You really did.

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<sup>2</sup> Saddlebrook is a resort in Wesley Chapel.

AH: So upon graduation then, you went about your life in business, et cetera. I noticed that you're in the [USF] Alumni Association. You were at one time president. When did that happen?

LL: Oh, shortly after I graduated, they were in those days recruiting people for the Alumni Association, and one of the professors' wife was working in the alumni office and asked if I would be on the alumni board. And I thought, well, you know, I could do that if it would be useful. And indeed it was very interesting, and the Alumni Association then was growing very rapidly, and of course has grown since then. And so I was on that board for quite a while. I was treasurer and vice president and then president of the national Alumni Association, which was an interesting experience.

AH: So, what was it like first getting involved in the Alumni Association? What kind of things did you do? What kind of things were discussed?

LL: Well, we were working very hard at that time to try to bring in the satellite campuses—at that time, Fort Myers, Lakeland, Sarasota—and that required getting some representation from each one of those areas on the national board, and also trying to get chapters started in those places. And we, I think, succeeded. The Sarasota chapter grew tremendously. And, of course, now they have not only chapters, but they have a lot of representatives from different areas in the university on that now. I no longer serve on that board. It was time to get off. I think I was on it about 10 years.

AH: Oh wow. So what was it like being president then? Were you appointed? Were you nominated by someone on the board? How does that happen?

LL: You're elected by your peers. Yeah. And it was very interesting, because I got wonderful support from university. They were just beginning to get a good alumni staff, and we got a very good director of the Alumni Association, who then went on to be director of the University of Illinois Alumni Association. He came to us from Maryland and then went on to Illinois. It was a job you could hardly turn down. And I think we made a lot of progress. The university provided some support to the Alumni Association to a little bit greater degree, which was helpful. One of the things I think that was very helpful was the alumni magazine improved so tremendously from, you know, just really four little sheets to a real magazine. I think it's quite good now. It really is.

AH: Absolutely. So, what was some of the logic behind the big push during the '80s to improve the Alumni Association?

LL: Well, this is a very young university, and in the '80s, you're just getting people who graduated in the '60s who maybe have \$10 that they can spend on something else. And it was time to get them involved. It's a much different picture now. You see people all around Tampa, for example, in very prestigious positions who are USF alumni. Back in those days, everyone was just getting started, really.

AH: Sure.

LL: Because what—the first class was 1960? Graduated in 1960. So in 1980, they were 40 years old, probably had families, new businesses, new jobs.

AH: Sure. So, what were some of the activities you planned? You talked about opening up new chapters. Were there—I believe weren't there fund drives and things like that?

LL: Yes, but of course not so much in the Alumni Association as in the Foundation.

AH: Okay, I see.

LL: Then they started homecoming on the campus during that time.

AH: Okay. So, what was that like?

LL: Sparse, but interesting. Good spirit, always. And remember, USF did not have a band in those days, nor a football team. But you know, before that time, some years before that time, and before the time I was here, back in the '60s, USF had a winning soccer team, and it was very well known, and that sort of faded in favor, I think, of basketball. And now I would say we have a full program of athletics.

AH: Yeah, it's interesting to see that over the years, the tension there between athletics or not, and a lot of students pushing for it, and during the early '80s, there were some students that were openly campaigning on campus for a football team.

LL: Yes, indeed. Oh, I think it went on for quite a while. But USF did it the right way. They raised \$5 million, we raised \$5 million before starting the program. And it came up before the Board of Regents, because in those days to start a program like that, you had to have permission from the Board of Regents. And it was—there was one vote against it, from a man who was from Gainesville and had been to the University of Florida. Otherwise, everyone—all of the regents voted for it.

AH: Well, that's something USF has really struggled with for a long time, is you have so many alumni across the state from UF and FSU, and they get into politics, and then there's this aversion to giving anything to USF medical school, for example, athletic teams, et cetera. Do you think that's starting to improve these days, as opposed to, you know, maybe in the '60s or the '80s?

LL: Oh, of course. But, of course, this whole part of Florida has grown tremendously since then. And I believe it was probably three or four years ago, I was talking to some of the fundraising people, and USF had 28 people in the legislature. That's a sizable number to reckon with. So we have a voice there now. No question about it. We have a voice there now. It's been kind of tough going, but I think that's only going to improve as years go by.

AH: Oh sure. Well, and you look at the growth in the Tampa Bay area and compare that to Tallahassee or Gainesville, and there's no comparison.

LL: No, there's no comparison. Even down our way, in Sarasota, it's growing wildly. In the last five years, the growth in Sarasota has been tremendous, just tremendous.

AH: Absolutely.

LL: We had—there are about 3,000 students on the Sarasota campus.

AH: That's grown quite a bit, too.

LL: Oh yes. Since Dr. [Laurey] Stryker's been there, it's more than doubled.

AH: Yeah, I interviewed Dr. Stryker. It was very interesting. I learned far more than I ever thought I would.

LL: Of course, she was President [Betty] Castor's chief financial officer here.

AH: Yeah, and that's what I didn't know about. I learned so much about the changes taking place

then.

LL: And before that, she was an analyst and worked with the legislature, so she knows the process of how you go to the legislature and get things done. And she's been a very great asset to the Sarasota campus.

AH: Well, no doubt she and Castor made quite a team.

LL: Oh, I think so.

AH: Because they both knew the inner workings so well, here in the state.

LL: And had worked together before, too, a lot.

AH: So you were with the Alumni Association for a long time, about 10 years. How did you get involved in the [USF] Foundation then?

LL: I was asked to be on the board of the Foundation.

AH: Okay. When was this, that you were asked?

LL: I don't remember the date, but it's been a while.

AH: So, what was—how did you feel when you were asked to do that?

LL: I thought that was an interesting thing to do, and I was particularly interested in it because I had, I guess you say, “founded” a scholarship in the business school after I graduated, and I had an enlightened self-interest, I guess, in seeing how that was administered. And so that's part of the foundation that interests me—scholarships and chairs and that sort of thing. And they are doing such a good job now reporting to the contributors of how the students are doing, who's having—how the corpus of the gift has grown. And that's very important in fundraising, that you keep your networks going.

AH: Well, and that people can see what's going on, with what kind of difference that their contributions have made.

LL: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. And you know, back in those days, USF did not have many endowed scholarships, nor chairs. Now, they've done a wonderful job getting those and increasing those numbers. I don't know what the numbers are now, but they're very impressive.

AH: Definitely.

LL: And that, you know, that's money that goes right into education and program.

AH: So, what was—when you first got involved in the Foundation then, were you able to suggest those were the things that you were interested in?

LL: Usually, you were assigned some area.

AH: So they recruited you with that in mind then?

LL: I don't know whether they did or not, but they knew, of course, I was interested in that and I

had done some fundraising and so forth. The Foundation—all of the universities in the state have foundations, and they contribute an enormous amount to the university. One of the things they raise is, as I was saying, is program money, and that's harder to raise—you know, building, money for buildings is easier to raise, and program money is a little bit more difficult, though USF has done a good job with a lot of programs on the campus that wouldn't be here if it weren't for donors who were interested and got them started.

AH: Well, you know that foundations, of course, are even more high profile now than ever, and so important, because, with state support starting to—kind of flagging, private money has to kind of pick up the slack. So is that something you're conscious of when you all get together?

LL: Oh, very much so. I came here from a Foundation board meeting this morning, and that was a great emphasis—the fact that state money is becoming less and less of the budget, of the total university budget. Student fees are becoming less of the total university budget. Though, to hear the students talk, you would not realize that. When I was on the Board of Regents, that was the plea always from the student regent. You know, don't raise fees. Don't raise tuition. We, in Florida, have an awfully good deal for higher education from the point of view of the students.

AH: Oh sure. Especially for those living in state.

LL: Absolutely.

AH: So tell us a little more about working on the Foundation. What are—

LL: Well, they have the usual committees, you know. And when you're on the Foundation, you get assigned to them. I think if you objected, you could you could ask to be changed. In fact, usually the chairman says, you know, if you'd prefer to be on another committee. I don't usually do that. I usually just go along with what they suggest, and that gives you a chance to rotate through many of the committees. And it's always interesting.

AH: Well, we talked about the chairs and the programs. What are some of the committees— some other committees, maybe, that you've enjoyed working on the most?

LL: Well, there's always an audit committee, and usually bankers and people like that on that. There's always an investment committee, and there's budget and finance. There's usually a committee named various things at various universities that has to do with academic programs [and] works with the provost. There often is a committee that works with the student life part of a university—housing and that sort of thing, as an advisory position. They often work with the vice president, who is in charge of that or with the deans. So if you rotate through some of those committees, you get a pretty good picture of the whole—the foundation as a whole.

AH: So, what are some of the things going on now that are hot topics?

LL: Well, the big thing now in, I think, almost all the 11 universities' foundations is raising endowment money. I think they're all concentrating on that, to whatever degree is possible.

AH: Sure.

LL: About maintaining their other programs and their other fundraising. Florida schools don't have much endowment compared to some of the older schools in the country.

AH: True. So, what are some of the aspects we missed?



LL: Well, I think perhaps I enjoyed my nine years on the Board of Regents.

AH: Oh, I had no idea.

LL: It gives you, or should give you, a view of the entire state university system. And I found, for the most part, while almost everyone on that had been to a Florida school, not all, but most—I found for the most part, with one or two exceptions, that people soon became very apolitical, so to speak—well, apolitical in the sense of party and also in the sense of which university—and concentrated on what was good for the system as a whole. And to me, that was extremely interesting, because I've been interested in higher education all my life, and from the point of view of having lived with it, so to speak, and so I enjoyed that, those nine years.

It's a lot of work. There's a lot of work. Very interesting to go and meet on the different campuses, learn about the different universities and how they are different. And they are very different. You know, we can't—we don't want them all to be just the same. You hope that nowadays, that with costs being what they are, that you can provide an opportunity for people to get their basic work or their core work fairly close to home. But when you start to specialize, then each university can't be all things to all people. They have to have their own character and their own way of distinguishing themselves.

AH: So in your mind then, what are USF's greatest strengths right now?

LL: Well, they have very good engineering school, a medical school, an extremely good school of business, in which the department of accountancy is very distinguished, as you know. They had the top final grades in the accounting exams for the past few years, and several years the USF people have scored the top scores. So they have a very distinguished record in those areas. And, of course, now the fine arts are growing here, and the school of education is growing—provides most of the teachers for this area. So it's a very good all-around university with some interesting specialties.

AH: So working on the Board of Regents then—what did you think about the decision to dissolve the Board of Regents in favor of the local trustees?

LL: Well, I wouldn't say it was in favor of the local trustees. I think that's a misperception. The Board of Regents was dissolved because there was a university that wanted a law school and one that wanted a medical school, and they couldn't get it through the Board of Regents. But, you know, the Board of Regents has been reconstituted now. Senator [Bob] Graham started a constitutional amendment effort, which passed overwhelmingly. And so now there is a new—they call it “Board of Governors” now, and each university has its own board of trustees.

I think that probably would have happened in any case, because the Board of Regents was very busy when I was on it in pushing responsibilities down to the individual universities. Just remember when that all started, there were two universities—state universities—in Florida. And since USF was the third, and that didn't start till 1960—so it was founded in '56, and the first class graduated in '60, I believe. So after that, since then—we now have 11 universities, and each one of those now has, for example, a campus architect. They have their own set of financial officers, to a very sophisticated degree, and that was not true back when the Board of Regents assumed many of these responsibilities.

Before I left the Board of Regents, the provost had spent a great deal of time on developing core courses and numbering systems so that one could transfer around the system with ease, if you had your basic courses. Now, if you start out deciding you're going to be an English major and suddenly

in your third year want to become an engineer, you may have to do a little accommodating to that wish. But basically it's possible to go to community college or to undergraduate lower division and transfer around the state, and that was one of the things we worked on very hard. And I think they no longer reviewed drawings for buildings on campuses. Individual campuses were handling that themselves. So I think the next step would have been boards for each university.

AH: Okay. Were you in favor of bringing back the Board of Governors?

LL: Yeah, I think Florida needs a Board of Regents or a Board of Governors, whatever you want to call it, because we are a large system. We're a very large system. Texas and New York are perhaps bigger, though we bounce around there pretty even with Texas. And I think we need a coordinating body, because we cannot afford to have 11 medical schools, 11 law schools, 11 veterinary schools, and, you know, a PhD in Greek philosophy at every university. And so, in order to provide for the state the necessary resources, they have to specialize, particularly in the upper division.

AH: Sure.

LL: And I think that takes some coordination, with a coordinating body.

AH: So mainly that's the new role, then, for the Board of Governors, rather than making all the micromanaging decisions, it's more of a traffic cop.

LL: I think we had given up micromanaging decisions long before that. The coordinating part of—that was going on was caught up in the academic coursework, sort of, the provision for the different kinds of colleges within the universities. The other thing that was very advantageous was that we used to lobby federally, as a system, and the last year I was on the Board of Regents, we got more federal money into the system than had ever happened before. And when you stop and think about it, you have a congressional delegation of—how many people? Maybe, I don't know, say 20. It varies. And you have 11 universities, who are trying to lobby each one of those people. There just isn't time. Presenting a unified front in that fashion, I think, was much more productive—much more productive. In fact, I've heard a couple of congressmen say, I just don't have time to talk to all of these people.

AH: Sure.

LL: You know, if I can talk to the system as a whole, I can do more for them.

AH: Well, that makes a lot of sense. So is that continuing now into the Board of Governors? Do you know?

LL: No, I think the universities are lobbying individually more.

AH: Okay.

LL: They still lobby, I think, as a system, but I think the universities are doing more individual lobbying than they were. And, of course, they all have a presence in Tallahassee. They work on that.

AH: Okay. Well, to shift to the focus then more locally, you're on the Community Leadership Council.

LL: For the Sarasota campus.

AH: For the Sarasota campus. Okay. So, what's that like?

LL: It's a body of local people, businesspeople and others, who are interested in that campus and interested in promoting that campus. We've been working very hard at it the last few years. And as you know, the legislature has appropriated \$14 million for the first USF building on that campus. And it will be really its own part of the campus. It will be very good for USF in Sarasota. It will have an identity. And we—USF shares a campus with New College, which is now part of the state system on its own.

But that campus, while it's very beautiful and has some lovely buildings on it, is very tight on lab and classroom space, because many of those buildings, as you know, were former Ringling homes. And they don't adapt themselves terribly well to academic use. They're fine for the sort of communal use that you have on a campus, for instance, the alumni center and that sort of thing. But they're short on that kind of space. We have a library there, a good library. The library is a joint library, and the library was built by the state of Florida back when New College was part of USF.

AH: So I know Dr. Stryker herself is very interested in engaging the community there.

LL: Oh yes.

AH: And so this new building—when is it slated to be built?

LL: Well, I think that they—I think they've almost finished with the permitting process, and I think they're standing by with a shovel, literally.

AH: So that must be exciting.

LL: That will be very exciting. It'll be the first, really, identity that USF has had in Sarasota, and there's, I think, an enormous market for students there that are just really waiting for that opportunity. We have a lot of them now, and there are some other things going on in Sarasota that are unique to that community. We have—some years ago they started a learning—latter-day learning institute for adults. Noncredit courses, you know. And they put a little article in the paper, which I think was probably two columns wide, and maybe two inches deep, three inches deep. And the first night, 600 people turned out to find out about it.

AH: Oh wow.

LL: So there's a real interest in that community in learning and expanding your horizons. And there are a lot of interesting, very interesting, people there who have either retired or are still active in extremely interesting and unique areas. Many people who commute there, who work in Chicago or New York or Washington, or at other universities in a part-time way. So we have a very rich community in that fashion. This is going to be very helpful to increase that area.

AH: It has nowhere to go but up. I mean the kind of growth in that area.

LL: Yeah.

AH: And as more people get opportunities, there will be less people having to drive to Tampa, for example.

LL: And that's becoming more challenging. It's 68 miles from my front door to the front door of the

business school—the parking lot at the business school, I should say. And it's—during the wintertime, it's a challenging drive. It is. I-75 has been very helpful, except that everybody drives 85 miles an hour, you know, and it's very, very crowded. It can be done, but it's not fun.

AH: You say in the winter months, because of all snowbirds coming down.

LL: Oh yeah, the traffic's fierce. Traffic in Sarasota, just getting out to the interstate, is very dense. It takes a long time. I can scoot home from here at night, sometimes you know around 9:00 o'clock at night after a meeting or something, and it doesn't take very long. But during the daytime, it can be quite a ride. And for students who are doing regular work, you know, we're beginning to get a lot of undergraduate students on the campus now, because we do have the courses there, which we did not have before. We didn't really have the choice of courses. You really couldn't finish your degree there. And for a student who's going to class every day, or four times a week, something like that, driving up here is kind of a waste of time and energy, because you can't do much while you're driving. You know, you've got to pay attention. If there were some way to commute on a bus and you could study, that would be helpful. So I think the campus will become more and more important to the area.

AH: Sure. So, what kind of challenges are there, with having all these joint facilities with New College? I mean it seems like there's a lot of advantages to be had, because you have a joint library, for example.

LL: Absolutely.

AH: Are there some challenges too?

LL: Well, the programs are very different.

AH: Yes.

LL: New College, of course, is in session about eight months of the year, mostly during the daytime—in fact, almost entirely during the daytime. USF has daytime and evening classes. We're growing in the daytime, and that's what's making it crowded—[the] campus crowded. And as I say, the programs are so different. There's not a lot of commingling of students. They have different schedules, different objectives, and so forth. But I don't see any real problems to sharing that campus. Both administrations, both of New College and of USF—Dr. Stryker and [New College President Gordon “Mike”] Dr. Michalson get along very well together and understand each other's positions, and the students are—they just don't have a lot of reason to get together.

AH: Sure. Well, and there's always—ever since '75 when the two schools kind of got together for a while, ever since then there has always been, you know, a sharp distinction between the two groups of students. New College students feeling they are part of an elite, I guess, thinking that the USF students might be run-of-the-mill or whatever, and so I'm sure that it doesn't take a lot of encouragement from above for there to be a sharp distinction between the two.

LL: You know, I don't think it's anything that students—certainly not the USF students—even recognize as such, because as I say, their schedules are different. Their objectives are entirely different. It's an entirely different kind of education, and believe me, I'm all for what New College does, and had been very dedicated to getting it started in the beginning. And my children have all gone to different kinds of institutions, some of them to the very sort of residential college that New College is. So I think they both have a place, and we're fortunate to have such things in the state. So I don't think that's a problem.

AH: Yeah, sure. Not so much that it's a problem, but you mention that they're two very different things.

LL: Oh, very different, very different. New College students do very well. It isn't for everyone. The ones who go there and stay benefit mightily from it. And almost all of them go on to graduate school, though some of them, a few of them, have become very entrepreneurial and gone out and started their own businesses right away and been terribly successful. One or two have gone into politics and been very successful. One student I remember from New College went into politics while he was still in college and got elected to his state legislature, and came back and went to school in wintertime, went back. So there's no reason they can't cohabitate on the same campus, and benefit one from another. And, of course, you have enough mass there to be able to get some pretty distinguished people to come to lecture at both places, or jointly.

AH: Exactly.

LL: So there are some advantages.

AH: Absolutely, and the library will be another. I know that a lot of times if I'm looking for a certain kind of book, it's down in Sarasota, because New College has a lot of specialized programs, so they have a lot of books that we might not have even here at the Tampa campus.

LL: Right. So I think there are many advantages, and I think perhaps we haven't exploited or taken advantage of those the way we should. And perhaps that's something we should be looking at.

AH: It's the kind of thing where it's really a learning process, too, don't you think, to try to identify the advantages and take advantage of them more.

LL: Right. And, of course, New College has bounced back and forth between being private to being part of USF. Now it's part of the [state] university system, and I think this is probably the last bounce. And I think now it's time for us to look at some ways that we can cooperate to the advantage of both. And there certainly are going to be a number of them, I'm sure.

AH: Definitely. So, what's next? When you look into the crystal ball for the Foundation and/or the Sarasota campus, what do you see down the line as being some of the big trends, challenges, things to look forward to?

LL: Well, the big challenge is going to be money, on all campuses. I think one of the other challenges, of course, is going to be the fact that our universities—we have more big universities than almost any other state—more big universities. We have an enormous number of students in higher education, and we are a very new system, very new, and even USF, which is the third-oldest in the state, is a very new university. So we haven't had time to build up the assets that the other universities have. So it's going to be that kind of a struggle for the next 20 to 25 years, I think. And, of course, the challenge there is to keep the quality and the programming diverse and still be able to meet the challenge of more people moving to Florida.

AH: And, of course, we don't have any shortage of out-of-state [and] international students. Those kinds of numbers seem to keep increasing.

LL: Yeah, they certainly do. They seem to be growing rapidly, too. So we have considerable diversity in our universities, much more so than many states, i.e., in the Middle West, for example.

AH: And with, you know, three—at least three really big—I guess you could throw UCF into that category of being a pretty big university.

LL: Well, UCF and USF are neck and neck. I think every once in a while, UCF maybe passes the number of students by a few, and then USF catches up. They're very large universities. They're both bigger than Florida State University, both larger than Florida State. Of course, University of Florida is still the largest. But I think the larger universities are going to start having to cap the enrollment on their main campuses and work more with their outlying campuses. And those are getting pretty large and pretty sophisticated.

AH: So when you look back at your time on the Foundation, all these other, you know, a lot of service, on your part—is there anything that we missed, that I might have—

LL: I don't think so. I don't think so. I'm sure that there are other things that are going to crop up from time to time, but I would have to say that I have enjoyed my association with USF and with higher education in Florida. Because it is something I've been very interested in all my life, and I had, as I say, a very fragmented education, simply because [of] moving around, and nowadays one of the things we do for people is we treat students as customers, and we try to make it easy for them to get to a campus and to get an education. You know, 40, 50 years ago, that wasn't in anybody's ken. That wasn't necessary. And now of course, with the population growing the way it is, and education as important as it is, we're going to have to work very hard to meet those challenges.

AH: Well, and as the first urban university in the state, and then the first one with all these branch campuses, USF has really gone with that philosophy of going where the customers are, going where the students are.

LL: Oh, absolutely. Yes, they certainly have. And the state of Florida has done that with the community colleges—we have 28 community colleges—and the 2-plus-2 program. In other words, you can do the first two years close to home, and then you may have to go farther afield for the next two. But that's what all that work on core courses was about, was being sure that you can do that and transfer into a four-year university without losing ground. So I think Florida is working very hard to try to do a good job with that.

AH: Well, before we close up, I'd like to ask you to give some advice, first to students coming into the university system. What advice would you offer them as they prepare for their university years?

LL: I guess one of the things I would say would be to get your private life in some kind of order, so that you can concentrate on living in an entirely new environment, a new world. Don't be too overly distracted by cars. I guess all the equipment that students bring to college nowadays—you know, you used to go to college with a trunk. Now they come with a trailer. Students live very differently nowadays; they don't live as institutionalized as they did. So you kind of have to be able to manage on your own. And I think it's important that they know that when they come, so they don't get lost in the shuffle. They're coming into big universities, and it's like moving to another town, the size of that university. And you're pretty much on your own, so you need to be pretty self-sufficient. And if you're not, or need help, be sure to ask for it, because most universities have all kinds of help available—help other than academic help, and that's there too.

Students come from a very different variety of high schools, and some good, some not up to par. Curricula vary, tremendously. So I think they need to be pretty self-possessed when they go off to college. And, of course, we hope they know how to study before they get here. I know that that's one of the things that my three sons, who all went to different universities, said, was the one thing

they knew when they got there was how to study. And one of them was talking to someone who just graduated from the school, he went—was going to college, going to a big university, and was just getting overwhelmed in his freshman year, and he said, “Well, when it got to be really too much, I put on a shirt with a collar and a tie and went to the library to get my life back together.” So I think that's the best advice I could give students, is to get their lives in order before they come to college, and be able to concentrate on that experience, because it will be a wonderful experience.

AH: And then one last question, which would be—someone in your position, about 20 years ago, graduating and starting to think about university service, of which you've had the whole spectrum—what advice would you give them, going into this kind of new experience, whether they're going into [a] foundation or alumni association? What kind of pointers would you give them to look out for?

LL: Well, I think it's incumbent to belong to the alumni association, because you get a lot of information that way, and you should keep in touch with your college, your university, because you don't do that on your own. A lot of people—not the least whom are the taxpayers who are helping along that way—and so I think they should contribute to the alumni association in whatever way you can, and then keep track of what's going on at your university. There may be some things there that would be advantageous to you, or in some way that you can be helpful to the university.

AH: Well, I thank you for being with us today.

LL: You're very welcome. It's been a pleasure.

AH: Likewise. Thank you.

*End of interview.*