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**Lucy Jones (LJ):** Today is Wednesday, April 21st, 2004. My name is Lucy Jones. I am a graduate assistant for the Florida Studies Center. Today I am continuing a series of interviews at the Nelson Poynter library at the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg campus with USF faculty, student, staff and alumni, commemorating 50 years of university history. Today I am with Jerry Notaro, media librarian at the Nelson Poynter Library. Good afternoon and thank you for meeting with me today.

**Gerald A. Notaro (GN):** How are you doing?

LJ: Good. So usually what we do is start off with sort of discussing what a media librarian does. So we can get an idea of what, who you are at the moment.

GN: Well, a lot of what a media librarian is, is dictated by the program and by the sort of the openness and vision of your director. They can do anything from buying the CDs and keeping them in order to as wide a variety as what I do here on this campus. On this campus, what I do as media librarian is I purchase of all of the media software for the university as far as the collections are concerned. And in that case that meant becoming an advocate for cataloguing those purchases, classifying those purchases and putting them out on the shelves and getting them circulated. We were the first library to that within USF and maybe within the state. I'm not sure, but I know we were the first to do it at USF. And it caused rumbles and spread. But—and that was what I felt you do as a media librarian. You do what you can to be a media advocate.

The second part of my job, which is—again we're the only campus where the media librarian does this is—I run the media department, which means media services not only

for the library but for the entire campus. And obviously you know from your interviews how we've grown over the years, and in my 20 years here that means that workload has really increased. And when I came it was just myself and Bob Thrush<sup>1</sup>, and now it's myself, three full-time people and three students, and even that's not enough. And another thing that we do is, we run the card center. The USF card center here, which is a separate department on all the other campuses. So that is really is what a—I'm an advocate for media in the library, which—my master's thesis was called "Media, the Bastard Stepchild of the Library." (LJ laughs) So it needs an advocate, and as I say now, its media's—media is Cinderella's turn at the ball, because media is the star darling of libraries now because it circulates so well.

But even for example, five, six years ago—I think it was about five years ago. The first DVD I bought, you could of—it was unbelievable. Why are you spending money on that media? You know, why are—you're gonna, you know blah, blah, blah. And everybody was grumbling and moaning, and oh, Jerry's not going to buy anymore videos. He, you know, he's gone insane. Well now, our DVDs, which account for maybe one percent of our collection, if at all, is now 35 percent of our circulation. So that's what you have to go through, even in the modern technology age.

You can go all the way back, when I became a media librarian, I got my certification and my degree at SUNY Buffalo. It was specifically a program for media librarianship, which was very, very unusual back then because this was really back in the dinosaur ages. And, but my becoming a media librarian was sort of a natural progression of having worked in libraries, big libraries downtown Buffalo, New York. [It was a] very progressive library, first county library system in the country. [I have] even been active in the library club in college and then becoming a school teacher, and English teacher, a reading teacher and then progressing to a school library media specialist, and then becoming a university media librarian.

LJ: Quite a ladder of events.

GN: I climbed to heights. (LJ laughs)

LJ: Now are you responsible for all the TVs and everything that are in all of the classrooms?

GN: Everything.

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<sup>1</sup>An interview of Robert Thrush is available as part of the USF 50th Anniversary Oral History Project collection.

LJ: Only classes than can use the DVDs.

GN: Right. Well now, see now. Here's where it gets tricky. As things change and grow as they always do, and be ready for it. That is where the computer center then comes in because we do have DVD players but then we also have computers that can play DVDs. We—and then you've got DVDs that people call DVDs that are DVDs sort of because they recorded them at home but there are a multitude of technologies. And DVD players can handle some of them and computers can handle some of them. So it gets very murky, which is—you know, I've never liked murkiness.

You know, tell me what I'm responsible for and you know—but you continually lobby because that funding is funny. Some funding goes to here, some funding goes to there, and I've always really sort of had to beg for funds because I'm also responsible for all the distance learning that goes on, my department is. And a lot of times everybody agrees that we should have it but nobody agrees who's going to pay for it. Tampa says St. Pete should pay it. St. Pete says, well that's Tampa's responsibility, and it just gets—it's an endless thing that goes on, and it still goes on. And people say, Well you're autonomous now, so shouldn't that clear? No. It's not clear. Now things are much clearer in the library than they are in the media department when it comes to, because it's an outside of the library thing. When it becomes inside the library, it's very clear, of what I'm responsible for. It's when it becomes outside of the library that things get a bit murky, but we give very, very good service. Our surveys all come back very, very positively, so somehow we're doing something right.

LJ: Well, we might as well talk about it now as later. The relationship between the St. Pete campus and the Tampa campus and especially as it involves your work, not so much the autonomy question. But what are your connections with the Tampa people?

GN: Well, that's—again it gets hairy because I do, in one department what five, or six, or seven departments do in Tampa. So for example, there's a USF card center. Well we don't have a USF card center here. That's one of the many things that we do here. So then I have to somehow go back and forth with that department, and when I call them and have to lobby or advocate, I'm advocating as a librarian and not in a position of authority. And that's really tough, and they don't listen to what I have to say. I'm not a dea—and then I've got to get—I can give you an example. For example, when we brought the SPC<sup>2</sup> on campus, which was six or seven years ago. One of the things that they all negotiated was seamless. It's all going to be seamless.

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<sup>2</sup>St. Petersburg College was formerly known as St. Petersburg Junior College. It was founded in 1927 as a private, non-profit two-year junior college and has grown to become a four-year state college in Pinellas County with 11 campuses and centers.

Well, you've got to get the details down and the costs down and all that kind of stuff. And one of the things they wanted them to have them was an ID card. Well, it became a very difficult thing because, IDs are generated from records such as admissions records. Well there are no admission records. So we had to have the ability to input that. Well, we don't have the ability to input. So, you know, you try telling these people, look, here are the problems that are going to be coming. You all met over coffee and made certain agreements but, this is what the reality is in the trenches. And it was a nightmare.

For a full year, I tried to get Bill Heller<sup>3</sup> into it. I tried getting my director into it, which didn't really help because he or she—whoever at the time—I think it was Lanny Graves<sup>4</sup> at the time. I mean, what do they care when Lanny Graves calls over to Tampa. I mean, if it's not a library issue because it really wasn't a library issue. And that is how things happen. Same thing happens with distance learning, and then distance learning started to fragment. Certain colleges took over their own distance learning like nursing. And everybody's touting distance learning, distance learning, distance learning and using it, but no one is—and trying to convince faculty to become involved in it—but they're not talking about the reality of what it takes to do it successfully. And that was what the problem is because even when you have everybody agreeing, problems come up.

But when you had different departments, different colleges, different divisions and different campuses involved and everybody thinking that somebody else is going to take care of it, it becomes a huge problem. So that's where the problem is. Never really is a library [problem]. We've really been lucky. My cohort over in Tampa, as I said, all the different media people do something differently now. There's a media librarian—there used to be a media librarian in Sarasota but they—the media center broke off, even though it's in the library and became under the dean of Academic Affairs, which sounds okay except then the library part of it died. Without a media librarian being an advocate, media can get—that bastard stepchild can end up in the cellar real quick, skinny and scraggly. And that's really what kind of happened.

But fortunately in Tampa, the distance learning person and AV services person over there, who is now head of the USF card center as far as functionality is concerned, is a former librarian. That really helped because librarians think in certain ways. I think they are very service oriented, and they want to get things done. We get a lot put on our shoulders because we do get things done in the fastest, cheapest way. I really think that's true and—which maybe our success is part of our problem, with image.

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<sup>3</sup>An interview of William Heller is available as part of the USF 50th Anniversary Oral History Project collection.

<sup>4</sup>F. Landon "Lanny" Greaves was the director of USF St. Pete's library from 1995 until 1999.

It's like nurses and doctors. You know, the doctors get the respect and the nurses don't, and the nurses do 90 percent of the work. You know, it's sort of like with librarian and teaching faculty. But we'll go there another day because we are faculty; although, when I was hired we were not faculty. When I came here, librarians were A&P [administration and professional]. It really didn't matter to me. I had already been a tenured librarian twice in two different situations. It didn't mean that I didn't have academic credibility.

I wanted to make sure I was compensated properly but uh—and then we did become faculty. And that's another part of our history is that librarians became faculty, I would say, maybe 18 years ago. But not tenured faculty, and that kept us apart. Many, many of the times I go down to Academic Affairs and say, why didn't we get this? Oh, this only goes to faculty. We are faculty. For the 18th year, we are faculty. It's a little better now because things are automated. We're on a list somewhere so we get stuff. And they really don't mean it, but we are faculty and it's—I think advisors are faculty now too.

It was very tricky at one time as to who was and who wasn't. And when we used to have a smaller faculty and really have faculty meetings with votes that counted and real arguments about things, it got real hairy as to who was faculty and who wasn't. And so—but we get along well with, I think, back and forth. We really have. We've been lucky. The libraries have gotten along very well. It's when I have to go outside of library functions that I would say it gets to be a problem.

LJ: Now the media, from talking to Bob Thrush, it seems that the media grew out of the Tampa program. So that is was sort of a—has that been severed? Has that tie been severed?

GN: That was severed before I came here.

LJ: Okay.

GN: It was Sam who did that. I'm sure you heard Sam Fustukjian<sup>5</sup>, that name, many, many times. And you will no matter who—what area you are talking about. Sam brought me here. Sam brought me here from Indiana, and he had a lot of knowledge of media and had a vision of media. I mean, I wouldn't have come to work here if it wasn't for him. And, he was my mentor once I got here. I mean, he was frustrating as a person. But the

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<sup>5</sup>Samuel "Sam" Y. Fustukjian assumed the role of Interim Dean for USF St. Petersburg Campus after Dean John Hinz stepped down from the position, until July 1986. A native of Lebanon, Fustukjian came to the U.S. in 1969. He served as St. Pete's library director before eventually transferring to USF Tampa to take over leadership duties for the system of USF libraries.

man had vision like no other that I had ever worked with, and if you had an idea, he would let you run with it. And he allowed me to do a lot of things that were very cutting edge, even today.

I'll give you an example. I belonged to many, many, many lists, listservs. And people are arguing as to whether media should circulate, and I'm talking of big name libraries. Not only does ours circulate but ours isn't even in the media center anymore. It's out on the shelves with the books. And that to me is a huge success story. There's no reason why it needs to be babysat, except for people who want more things to do on the job I guess.

But um before I got here, Sam had hired somebody right out of media school and it didn't really work. That person wanted to sit around and put numbers on records and write out three by five typing cards and stuff. That has never been my thing. If I wanted to do that, I would have been a cataloguer or a book librarian. I wanted to do things. So when I came in, he had already severed the ties and Bob [Thrush] went from being a Tampa employee to a St. Pete employee, and not only to a St. Pete employee but a library employee. And Sam was a builder. He was an empire builder. He would do things like that in order to gather in any—and you know, he was criticized a lot for it, but it gave more influence to him when he came to a decision.

Now there are things that make him more difficult because of that. It would be nice to be able to just pawn that off to another side of the library, and nobody wants to be responsible for it because it is a pain, but it has to be done. And libraries, just as I said, traditionally take care of those kind of tasks well, even in St. Pe—Sarasota is just amazed at our success rate and our lack of complaints up here. I mean, they get complaints all the time down there about stuff not being there on time or not being delivered or mis-deliveries or—you know, our biggest complaint that we ever get, with every survey we've done, and we have to—of course because it's (inaudible) we do a lot of surveys—is lack of funding for what faculty think they should have either in the collection or in the classrooms. Those are the best kind of complaints to have.

LJ: That's what you want.

GN: That's what I want. That means I'm—we don't get any, you know, many complaints about me. Maybe once or twice I can remember somebody saying, you know, well I didn't like that person's attitude or something about a particular event. When I investigated, it turns out it was a misunderstanding or whatever. But uh, it's really the lack of funds, and there again, where the library is expected to fund the whole campus. Again, I go with the cup [and say] "I know what we need. This is what we need, now who is going to pay for it?" And everybody runs. Like a DNA test you've being given

(laughs) at an orphan shelter. (LJ laughs) You know, I mean it's, but that's how I—you know.

LJ: Could you tell me a little bit more about how Sam Fustukjian recruited you?

GN: Well actually I can't say he recruited me. I applied for, when I turned 35—I had been an English teacher, and a reading teacher, and then a school librarian. And after doing that for seven, eight or nine years, I said you know, I've done my duty to God and country. Oh, I really loved being a school librarian. I really did. But there was no support for it. I had four schools, four libraries [and] no help. And I was the break for the teachers every day when I went to a different school, and it was just getting to be a little bit much.

So I used—media was very hot. AV was very hot at the time, and again, nobody wanted to touch it. None of the established librarians. Everybody shuffled it around, the responsibility. Well, that was my in because why would any university or college want a school librarian? You know how they look down at the, you know, elementary. But that was—that I was willing to come in and take that responsibility. So what I did was, I had to leave New York where I was and go out to the Midwest to prove myself.

So I went out to a small college called Franklin College in Franklin, Indiana, which luckily was a very fine, small liberal arts college, and enjoyed myself, did my five years there. And then when I hit 35, I said, "Okay, now I'm going for the biggie (sic) job that is really going to be where I'm going to sustain. I'm going to work the rest of my career. I'm going to do some good. And I really, really looked hard and applied for what I considered to be three dream jobs. And this was one of them because I knew that it was growing. My parents had sort of retired here. There were still going back and forth, but I knew they would end up here. I had a sister down here, and my best friend had moved to Tampa. So even though I swore that I would never live in Florida, because it was too hot, and Florida was a very different place 20 years ago. You really had to decide if you were going to give up the culture and everything.

I mean we have it now down here, I mean because of everything else. And St. Pete is a wonderful place. So I applied for three jobs and I said, "Okay, who wants me and who wants me first." (LJ and GN laugh) And I heard from two, and Sam I remember, I remember—believe me—I remember the phone interview. I remember calling Signy, Cindy. I remember thinking that Sam was Southeast Asian. I thought he was from India, from his accent. And, but he was so enthusiastic and so knowledgeable about media that I really wanted to come because it takes that in order to do what you want. Some people like going where nobody knows what you are doing or what you are, but I knew [it was necessary] in order to have an advocate at a higher level to let me bring it where I needed

to be. And then I came down, and there were four finalists, and at that time I was being wooed by one the other jobs. So I figured that I could be a little cocky.

So I was a little cockier when I came down that I thought I would be. But Sam and I really kind of spoke the same language, and I said to him. I said, “You know, I know that I’m going to get another offer. Where do you think we’re at?” Well you know, blah, blah, blah. I said, “Look. You’re going to have to offer me the top of the range because I’m making such—“Well you know, you’re coming to Florida now.” And I said, “I know, but this what—.” And I said, “Now how is the decision going to be made?” He said, “Well, there’s a committee, but the decision is basically mine.”

And I knew at that point that he wanted me, and that he was probably going to strongly recommend me. So I left kind of knowing. Well. I wanted to be wanted by the other job too, but before I knew it I got a phone call. Now here I am in Franklin, Indiana, which is right near Indianapolis by the way. And [it is] the county seat, as they call it when you’re from the Midwest. I had never heard of that, being from New York, but if you’re from the Midwest, you know what a county seat is. And he said to me, and this was like two weeks later, “Well, I’ve got good news and I’ve got bad news. The good news is that you have the job. The bad news is that you have 30 days to get down here (LJ laughs) because I’m afraid they’re going to freeze the position out on me.” I mean, you know how the budget goes. You’ll never know how fast you can move until you get a phone call like that. And within 30 days I was done here.

So that’s how I got here. Now, my success—what happened after I got here was kind of interesting. Sam and I locked horns. He wanted to tell me how to do my job. And that didn’t make me happy. I wanted him to ask me or to let me suggest and then support me or talk about it. But he wanted to tell me. So, there came a showdown about six months after I came down here. I knew that I wasn’t used meat by 35. I knew if I felt I wanted to move on, I could. Although I loved it. I mean, one of the first people—the minute I walked into the door, Bob said to me, “You must meet Sudsy<sup>6</sup>.” (LJ and GN laugh)

LJ: He just knew.

GN: He just knew. And of course, then that’s history of the USF (recording skips) singers because I started doing that right away. But Sam and I—I went into Sam’s office. He had an open door. It was wonderful, and I went in and I said, “You know Sam, since you know how to do my job so much better than I do, why don’t I leave and save you that

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<sup>6</sup>Interviews of J. M. Tschiderer are available as part of the USF 25th and 50th Anniversary Oral History Project collections.

money and you can do my job and your job?” “What! What do you mean? Blah, blah, blah.”

And I told him and it was fine ever since that day. And I miss him to this very day. In fact, I was offered to go over there, and I was on my way over to Tampa to run the digitization program for USF when he had his misfortune. Of course I wasn't—why would I ever go to Tampa? Why would I ever go to Tampa except to work with Sam again. And of course to start something up from the ground up, which is what I did here. It was, I mean—it was like four video tapes when I got here and two overhead projectors. (GN and LJ laugh)

And although Bob was wonderful. Bob was wonderful to work for. Bob was a terrific guy, and you know he made me job easy when it came to that part of it. But he wouldn't—I mean, the technical part of it is just—running cables and knowing so much about, you know, the different technologies. It's just unbelievable what they get out of my department for such a small amount of money. (LJ laughs) In fact, in Tampa they have engineers, broadcast engineers and all these things doing what we do over here, with you know, at an AV specialist's level, which is not a very high level. And I, you know, as years go by, I mean I'm responsible—I'm also a librarian and I do library work.

I mean today, three hours today and four hours yesterday in reference, I'm expected to be [a] top-notch research librarian on top of what I do. So I've sort of had to farm the technical stuff over to David, to take care of making those decisions. I mean one person just can't do it all. And if I had a choice, there would be no question I'd run right through that library door rather than the technology door. The technology door got me in the university level, and I really enjoy it, but you know, as the years go by, I have to fight to stay the librarian and not the technician.

LJ: Well, keeping up with the technology is difficult.

GN: It is difficult.

LJ: And not everybody can do that.

GN: Right. And then sometimes it comes at a sacrifice of my librarianship and that will never happen. I won't let that happen. I really—I love doing library work. I know I was born to be a librarian. There's no question. These 20—let me see, I've been a librarian, oh almost 30 years I've been a librarian. And they really have flown by. I mean I've loved

my library work. It's been challenging and being a media librarian is not one of the easier areas to go into.

In fact I don't even know if anybody really kind of goes into AV. It seems to be computer librarians, what everybody has to do. But really computer librarians, and media librarians, and digital librarians really face the same problems, the same prejudices, the same—oh that's computer stuff, that's not library stuff. That's the computer center. You know, it's the same thing with the AV—oh well that's not library stuff. That's the AV center or you know, so—

LJ: What are some the more interesting projects that you've been involved with at USF?

GN: As a librarian? Well certainly there's the number one thing, is designing and opening up the new media center and the new library. Nothing will ever rival that as far as the amount of work we put in, the challenge that it was. Exciting. Agonizing. I mean, I used to wake up—I'm telling you the honest to God's truth, it sounds so ridiculous, like I don't have a life—but I used to wake up in a cold sweat that I forgot something important. What did I forget? Like a parent that was packing, you know *Home Alone*, you know, leaving the kid behind. What have I not thought of? But we really did such an incredible job. And the minute I got here, Sam started planning for a new library. And we didn't get one for another 11 years. We planned right, that was number one. And we were consulted, that was number two.

That had to be the most exciting thing is the fact that we've—we planned the library and we have such an incredible media center layout and everything. You would never know until you go somewhere else to see how lucky we are. Now as an academician I would to say the most exciting thing that I was involved with is winning the Professorial Excellence Program award. There's only two librarians that has ever gotten it. And it's an academic, it's an academic honor. So being—the type of person that's looked on as a technician. Jerry, my DVD is broken. What should I buy? Jerry, I can't tune in, you know, Channel 49, what should we do?

It's really wonderful that—and that took a year. You had to really submit like you were going up for tenure or for full professorship. (coughs) And getting that was one of the—that was a highlight of my years (recording skips) and many other things that I've been involved with that have been wonderful: the founding of SAPL [the Society for the Advancement of the Poynter Library], the USF singers has certainly been a wonderful thing that I've been involved in. The founding of this club that I just, you know, the *Crow's Nest* just reported on. It was the front page of the last—

LJ: Of the the uh—

GN: The gay and lesbian group. Yeah, that's been a very, very proud day for me (recording skips) the time. And just—that we were the first to do a lot of things. Not because it's number one or we were the first as much as it is that I was able to convince the powers that be that that was the best way to do it. A lot of people, they would spend money from the department for resources and then keep them in their closets for 365 days and bring it out for the one day—hour that they used it. And I was able to go through them and say, Look, this doesn't make sense. If you let me have it, and let the library have it, or let me have the funds to purchase it, everyone will be able to use it. You'll always be able to have it. And it will be catalogued. It will be protected. And I've been very successful that, very, very, very little of people who have spent departmental funds on media and then put it in their drawers or in their departments. And if you go to other campuses and other colleges, you will find just the reverse. The majority of stuff is stuck somewhere in a departmental closet somewhere.

LJ: And one of the things I like about the media center here is that it's on the second floor. It's not up in the attic or in the basement of the library. It is, it's in the middle.

GN: Right, and that's where it belongs. Now luckily, we are—we're able to be there because of the bridges. The bridges that go—because we have to bring equipment out.

LJ: So you can take it over to other—

GN: So you can take it over without having to go through the rain or to be undercover and stuff. So that has really kept us on the second floor of both buildings. And now it started off in the marine science, the old marine science building near the auditorium. There was a huge auditorium over there. It's probably still there. I don't know if anybody uses it. We used to have movies there on Friday night with popcorn. That was a Sudsy thing. It was sort of a closet there, where the equipment was. And the faculty came and got their equipment from the closet and went to the classroom and used it and brought it back. That's what happened when Bob came over. He was an employee of Tampa because [the of] head resources was in Tampa.

Even now those questions of who's responsible for what are still not answered. It's whoever's bold enough I guess and can afford it to just go ahead and do what they want to do. But those questions still come up today. They come up—I was at meeting last week in Tampa about diversity and multiculturalism and even those questions. “Well what is Tampa responsible for?” “What is the division of all—equal opportunity and diversity doing over here?” Those things are never addressed.

LJ: Yeah. Let's go back to the buildings, and I think you mentioned, perhaps before we started taping, that when you came there were only three buildings on campus and now there's—

GN: That's a little bit of an exaggeration. They had—Coquina was just being finished when I got here. The new library had been built for a couple of years. When I walked into that new library. The first floor was like an airport hangar there was so much room. Within seven years, you couldn't move. That's how quickly, and that's why when we designed this building, we tried to design space-wise for utilization as best we could. And there was Bayboro building. This was the Bayboro campus for—not the St. Petersburg campus as you well know.

When I came down here, my cousins had been—come down here in the '60s and one of the graduated from here. And he said, "Oh, you're going to be at the Bayboro campus." I didn't know what he meant because that was before I got there. Well no, I'm going to be on the St. Pete campus. Oh yeah, that's Bayboro. The name is so strong. That's why when this one [building] opened, we renamed it. Now, there was the library. There was Coquina. The pool was not open. It had been closed, and Davis—well Davis was Bayboro. Well that's what I meant. The three main buildings were the library, Coquina and Bayboro. That was it. They all looked sort of alike. They had just finished Coquina when I got here. And—but then there was the old section. But by then—by that time—Sudsy was really here from the very beginning. I sort of was—came at phase two.

When things moved over to these three buildings that existed, and that was it. Those were all the three buildings. That's what I mean by the three buildings. They were relatively new. They had air-conditioning. (GN and LJ laughs) Marine science was marine science, and at the beginning we were all kind of one. But that was, we were over there, but of course—and now that we're even less than one, than we were. Because when I came, we used to still have the keg parties over there on Fridays. When Sudsy came, the cafeteria, everything was over there. Now when I came, they had sort of moved over here. There was still some things going on over there. There were a lot of AV things still going over there. The auditorium was still being used for movies and for films and things. And uh, but the classes had all pretty much moved over here.

LJ: And since then we've also gotten the—

GN: Oh yeah, well since then we've gotten—we've got everything. Everything, it's just unbelievable. Every time we turn around, there's a new building. And it's—of course it's even bigger now. I remember when the CAC [Campus Activities Center] was built, and

again that was in stages because we didn't have a lot money. And that was I believe '89, it opened up. And the reason I know is because I was approaching my 40th birthday, and I swore I was going to go over there and lose weight.

So I spent six months over there during my lunch hour, every day until I lost about 30 to 35 pounds. By the time I was 40, I was down to my fighting weight. We won't talk about how long ago that was. But it was '89 I believe. Actually the end of the '89 and the beginning '90 because I turned 40 in June of '90. So that was about when that—and again it opened up in stages. There was no gym then. I don't think there was a gym in there at that time. I don't know, who can remember? They added things on, as thing go by. Go in and there's a new section open.

LJ: Who were some of the people that you remember the most? You've mentioned Sudsy. You've mentioned Sam Fustukjian, you mentioned Bob—

GN: Well those were all the people that I, you know, of course Ray Arsenault<sup>7</sup> was here when I got here. Although Ray and Kathy<sup>8</sup> were in France, living in France when I got here. So I didn't get to meet them until they came back. But Ray and Kathy of course. Harriet Deer<sup>9</sup>. Oh my God, Harriet Deer. You know all the people that were here all those [years]. It's just, it's terrible, you know, to talk about how wonderful they were. And Harriet, and of course Harry Shaleman. My God, Harry Shaleman. You know, we all know each other. Sudsy was over at, you know when they opened up Coquina. Her office was there and that's where the dining was.

Well, we all saw each other every day. I mean, Sudsy was the heartbeat of the campus as far as I was concerned and for people who have been here for a while. We all had lunch every day. We saw each other every day. We said hello every day. And, I'm trying to think who else. It's going to be terrible if I forget people. Of course Bob Thrush. You know. I'm trying to think of people who, you know, who have gone. It's been so long. We have—when Dot came in and showed me that picture from the old time, well we laughed and called it the old timers' luncheon. That was 1990. That was 14 years ago. I mean, it's amazing how many people had retired back then. Of course, the associate dean, the Blake—see this is embarrassing that this is—

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<sup>7</sup>An interview of Raymond Arsenault is available as part of the USF 50th Anniversary Oral History Project collection.

<sup>8</sup>An interview of Kathleen Arsenault is available as part of the USF 50th Anniversary Oral History Project collection.

<sup>9</sup>An interview of Harriet Deer is available as part of the USF 25th Anniversary Oral History Project collection.

LJ: Shaleman??

GN: Bob.

LJ: (inaudible)

GN: Who did you say?

LJ: Norman?

GN: No. Associate dean, our first associate dean, English teacher, second floor, Coquina building when they all moved over there. He was just a wonderful—and also musician. We had such wonderful music, and programs, and international programs, and the brown bag lectures, and concerts, and theater, and it was—we had a lot of that back then. You know, we felt it was our obligation to make this place different than a community center. And one of the things that would raise it would be the culture that we brought. And we worked really hard.

And then there was a change in attitude as you well know or you may have probably heard, and that change was well, it's the students' money let them spend it the way they want it. And that's when we started getting jugglers and you know caricatures, and contortionists, and balloon twisters, and they're on campus now. We never had anything like it. We didn't spend money on stuff like that before, but them that paints the walls picks the colors.

So uh, of course Sam was such a huge and he was a big influence on campus. As you know, he was acting dean twice. So he wasn't just—and he went over to Tampa and was the director, dean or director over there, and most likely would have been the dean of libraries had he survived his operation<sup>10</sup>. Bob Hall of course. These were teachers that people will talk about forever, especially for somebody like Harry Shaleman. And I remember meeting him the very first day. Oh hi, I'm Harry, you know, I mean. Those days, you didn't know who had a doctorate and who didn't, and it didn't make any difference.

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<sup>10</sup>Sam Fustukjian unexpectedly went into a coma and then died at only 54 years old after an operation in 1999. Derrie Perez stepped in as interim director during the time that he was incapacitated and was appointed the permanent director after his passing. Derrie fought to make the library director a dean position during her tenure and won, which is why Notaro is saying Fustukjian “most likely would have been the dean of libraries.”

Both Harry, Harriet and Harry were both, and Sterling, Pam Sterling too I believe at the time, they were—did not have PhDs but were highly, highly regarded in their profession. When Harriet found out that I had been, you know, active in theater and film and all that stuff, and that I was the new media librarian, she just about, you know, flipped. She just —because we got along so well and I spoke her language, she spoke my language. When she wanted something, Oh yeah, I’ve course we’ll get it and happy to get it. Or we already have it, and she was—it was like music. It was like humming music because she helped me and I helped her. And she taught Shakespeare a lot. Today Shakespeare’s perfect by the way.

LJ: Oh.

GN: So and then when she taught a course on—it was an interesting course that was Shakespeare on film. They would study different versions of the same play on film, which you don’t get to do very often, but what an academic exercise. And I used to have to go out and find all the different versions of *Julius Caesar* and all the different versions of *Hamlet*. I mean, those were great times finding those kinds of things and trying to come up with those.

Those were real academic challenges. That’s what you get into academia for. Not that it isn’t academic now but it’s not a personal place like it used to be. Now those are the pains, growing pains. And I’ve always told Tampa, over all the years, that as we become, as they—they always say they’re getting more like Tallahassee or Gainesville. I say, “Yes but we’re getting more like you because you see the difference immediately going back and forth.” Now when I first came here, I lived in Tampa because my best friend lived over there. My other best friend moved to Tampa. And I really didn’t want to live in St. Pete because it had the reputation of being God’s waiting room, and my parents lived here and I didn’t want to live in a retirement community, which was a very big mistake. And luckily one that I rectified within three years.

I moved here and luckily was here long before the boom came again where I could actually afford to live in a nice house in St. Petersburg. It was immediately apparent when you went over there. Now there were some advantages. Now when I became involved in multiculturalism and diversity, I mean, there wasn’t any here. And I started going over to Tampa and got into some big committees over there so I could, felt like I was part of somebody who thought I like I did. But it took a bigger and diverse-er, more diverse place—diverse-er (said with wry tone)—more diverse place to have that kind of thinking that I had. But luckily, I’ve been able to come back here with what I’ve learned over there, and the fruit is the proof. Well not necessarily the fruit. (LJ and GN laugh)

LJ: Could you tell me some more about multiculturalism in St. Pete because that's one of the things that I notice between the two campuses.

GN: Big difference.

LJ: Very big difference.

GN: Very big difference. I think that they just—well of course you know Tampa is a more diverse population. I mean, right away you have a large Cuban population over there. You have a large African-American—I mean when I lived over there, moved there, I had gone from New York to Indiana to Tampa. I mean it was like going back to the dark ages when I went to Indiana, although it was a wonderful place. I mean, you didn't find a Greek restaurant or—I mean, if you went to a Chinese restaurant, it was run by two farmers whose family had been there for 47 years, and they knew how to boil rice. When I got to Tampa, I moved into a part that was very influenced by the Cuban culture, and in fact it's—I went shopping there about a month ago and most people speak Spanish in that neighborhood now. I was happy for that. I loved all that.

On this campus, I wouldn't say it's because St. Petersburg is any more racially divided; although, it may have something—we have—I think we probably have a worse history, probably because of the tourism industry. You know, [if] you read Ray's book and you understand why that all happened. I'm not justifying it. I'm just saying you understand it. And the lines were a little bit more clear, but we just couldn't get the diversity over here. And we had nothing to attract people here. At least in Tampa, now let me tell you though. Tampa's changed a lot in 20 years, a lot. It wasn't like it is now, even ten years ago. But they worked at it. They worked at making it more comfortable and more diverse. And that really is a lot of the difference.

I never—I was open from the day I came here as far as my lifestyle, and I was—I didn't want to anywhere where I couldn't be. And I got a little bit of flack, not much to my face. And really only from, there were a couple of long-timers that I know were pretty homophobic. And but, I also knew they were a lot of other kind of phobics. So I didn't take it personally. They didn't promote multiculturalism or diversity the way it needs to be promoted in order for people to feel comfortable being there. And I think Tampa got that message, and boy did they get accelerated when lawsuits started flying. And that's the difference. They have got a slew of people over there who's responsibility it to do that. We don't have that over here.

LJ: Now how is St. Pete able—not get away with but how is it a reflection that it's not considered an equal part of the Tampa campus?

GN: I think because of our size we don't have to have a whole office. Now we do have a diversity officer.

LJ: Okay.

GN: And that's Gary Olson. And before that it was, I think, Winston Bridges. And think before that it was Herm Brames<sup>11</sup>. But it was, these were secondary duties for somebody who was very, very busy.

LJ: They were professors or administrators.

GN: Well, they were administrators. Well both—Winston, I think, rose to the rank of, I think, associate. I'm sure Gary Olson, his time in academia, I mean he's still in academics. He's head of academic affairs. Winston Multin(??) was more of a teacher than a publisher and a researcher. And course Herm wasn't faculty at all. Now you know, I'm sure you heard plenty about Herm. He came here the first day. He was here when Jesus left his sandals here. He lived on campus, you know that too I'm sure. As a historian you need to know that. Did you interview Herm?

LJ: No. Somebody else I think has.

GN: Okay.

LJ: But, I'd be more than willing to hear it from you.

GN: Well, no. I don't want to give you anything secondary, but I know he was the first one here. And I mean, he actually lived on campus with this wife and one boy at that time. He went on to have another boy and a girl. He was here right from the very beginning. And, but things went to—we had our first sort of semi-official diversity meeting about a month ago because we have a multicultural coordinator, but it's a programming position. It's not a diversity position. But that was enough for us to say, Hip hip hooray and let's have meeting. We had to turn people away, and we went on an hour longer than we were supposed to. So that shows the interest that's there.

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<sup>11</sup>An interview of Herman Brames is available as part of the USF 25th Anniversary Oral History Project collection.

We have a mailing list with I think 34 people. In fact, right from here, the very next thing I have to do, is we had a campus climate done, study done. And I went over to Tampa last week and listened to the report. I'm going to give my summary of the report to everybody on the list. We have people who are very interested in it. We need to get hardcore about it. As I told people in that meeting, we never had an eyebrow raised about any diversity issue until they did a study about why so many African-American students were happy at JC<sup>12</sup> and didn't come here. Boy did it raise some eyebrows. They said they just didn't feel comfortable. And I know minority faculty that told me they don't feel comfortable. Not so much here, but in St. Pete.

You know, it's not like being in Atlanta or New Orleans or other cities that are more friendly as far—now we are going—we are in the process of opening up a museum of African-American history, especially that around here. And we have to do that. These people are still alive that are very significant to our African-American—and we lost Shelton [Shelton Perkins] not too long ago. I mean he was living history. But we need to start talking and gathering this information. So, things are getting better but we need more than workshops. We need, you know, very soon are going to need an office of diversity and somebody to track these things and work with it before it gets to be, you know—before it gets to be a problem.

LJ: Do you think that it would be easier to get such a person if the two campuses were separated?

GN: No, I really don't think that's it. I think it's just a matter of money and priorities. I mean, we have a lot of needs. We have a lot of needs and a lot of money poured into this campus in the last few years in positions because of faculty. And you know, but I'm hoping the day will come soon that we'll have an Office of Diversity or EEEE or whatever they want to call it, but somebody who is responsible, both legally and culturally for the—what we call the cultural climate—and comfortable because these are not just things that just happen. You know, we like to go, Oh we're a great big melting pot. Whoever comes in is welcome. That's never been a success.

LJ: And that touches on another topic, which is the relationship between the university and the community.

GN: Okay.

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<sup>12</sup>St. Petersburg College was formerly known as St. Petersburg Junior College. It was founded in 1927 as a private, non-profit two-year junior college and has grown to become a four-year state college in Pinellas County with 11 campuses and centers.

LJ: And, you mentioned the St. Pete seniors as an example and some of the other programs you've been involved in. And so, how—

GN: Well, a lot of those programs were targeted to specific audiences. Of course, Bill is the one, Bill Heller is the one who made us known in the community. But those things come at a price. There's a little bit of, you know, there's sometimes you wish you were anonymous when they come piling in and, you know, and you've got to serve a population that's tough to serve because our resources are limited. And that was sort for a lot of the problems that went on during Bill's tenure was, you know, he opened the floodgates, and we didn't have much to give away. But it just is his nature and—but the plus side was people started knowing who we were. There are people who still don't know where are. You know that.

LJ: Oh, I know people in St. Pete that I have to tell them how to get here.

GN: Oh absolutely.

LJ: Yeah.

GN: And it's—there's no excuse for it. I mean, we're a big force in the community now, and they certainly turn to us quick enough when they need things. I mean, I'm on the phone. I'm a reference librarian. I know what they call us for. I mean, they'll call us and ask us for a phone number rather than, you know, pay a quarter to call somebody else or look it up. So I mean we do, especially as a library, we're a big resource. And of course a lot of that goes with media. You know, as much as it irks me that we have to put such an emphasis on that. We—it's just an evil necessity to do that kind of PR stuff.

The earliest involvement that I remember, long before there was a community board and long before there was a board, long before there was a community association and all that stuff, there was SAPL. SAPL was founded, I think, the year I came. It was Sam's idea, and he brought all the big people in town: the Sally Wallaces, and Marion Ballard, and a lot of big names, Andy Barnes from the *St. Pete Times*. He was the—that was the first time they were invited where their opinion was asked for and certainly their money and their time. SAPL was—in fact there was a little bit of friction when they brought a fundraiser and development officer on this campus for going after the people that were already giving to the library. That caused some—because Sam was such a visionary, he was ahead of the campus. And he's the one, when he became acting dean that founded the CAB, Campus Activity Board, I think that's what it stood for.

LJ: What does SAPL stand for?

GN: Society for Advancement of the Poynter Library. And when I first came here, the Poynter Library was being built. I went up on the roof every three days for six months and took photographs. And when they opened up, I went over with a tray, and I had narrated it and [added] music—I hope they put it on a DVD or a video someday—and showed it being built. All the different stages of it being built. We were really excited. Again, it was Sam's idea. He started it and then I took it over when he came. The man was just incredible. And they have it in their archives over there. So they should be about 20 years, 19. It would actually be 19 years on June 14. That was my first day, Friday, June 14th. So, I'll be going into my 20 year come June. (long pause)

LJ: So—

GN: Don't feel obligated to ask me more if you don't have any more. (GN and LJ laugh)

LJ: Well I don't want to—you know sometimes things come up.

GN: That's true, we don't mind pauses.

LJ: No. Oh. Students.

GN: Okay.

LJ: When you interact with students all hours of the day—

GN: Oh yes.

LJ: —so you have the ID cards and the library (inaudible; LJ and GN talking at same time)

GN: Oh, absolutely.

LJ: —how have they changed over the past 20 years?

GN: A lot. Most of the students were not active with things that were going on here. You had—we had the student—what was it called back then, Student Union Board or whatever. It was mostly Sudsy and whoever was the president of student government, and you know a few people who did everything and did all the work. And Joe Alvarez, he was one that comes to mind. I think Jimbo<sup>13</sup> was too. I think Jimbo was president of that little group at one time. He's—they all become, you know, important to the campus, and they become community leaders in their own way. They were all older and mostly getting certification, and the big change came when the SPC, which was SPJC at the time, when they brought the freshman and sophomore in.

Now I remember we were really nervous about that because these [students] were really different in ages, not necessarily in ability but in age. And I think it was terrific. It was really refreshing. We never saw anybody walk hand-in-hand on this campus. We never saw anybody sitting on the grass or on the floor in the library, or you know. And there was lot of like “rar-rar-rar” growling when they came here. But I thought they were terrific. And I really, really liked working with the administrators. I thought they were terrific. Now there was some real hot, heated stuff going on at the top between the leaders, leadership: territory, rivalry, rules, history, that kind of stuff.

But I'll tell you, I was impressed by the administrators. I thought they did a good job, and I really liked having those students on campus. It caused problems that were not their fault. They were technical problems, they were not problems brought on. And they were respectful. They may have been 18, 17, 19 but they were respectful. They enjoyed being here a lot, and I think it was a good move. It wasn't a move that I was that thrilled about at first. I have to say, I was among those who were not real thrilled, but, it changed. And then of course, the learning communities came in, and then of course freshman and sophomore classes. And then all hell broke loose.

But no, we're more—we're a lot busier. I'm telling you. That's another thing is, we're so busy. We were never this busy. I mean we're really hustling to keep up, and funding is getting to be a problem now. I mean, we've got all the programs here but we don't have any extra money. We have all these students here, but we don't have any extra room, or extra class space, or equipment, or resources. We're busier down in reference. This is why I love being on reference because I know what's going on down there. Although I know what's going on upstairs too, from being in the media center. But, because we're certainly not isolated there either. But, you know, we've got also different levels—and also the graduate programs grow, are growing like crazy. I just heard yesterday that we're going to be offering a PhD soon in field of ed leadership. That will be—

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<sup>13</sup>Notaro is most likely referencing Jim Schnur, and an interview of Jim is available as part of the USF 25th Anniversary Oral History Project collection.

LJ: That's good.

GN: Yeah. It's just going to be amazing how much extra work that's going to be. I mean these people—the demand and the level of the librarianship is going to be incredible. I mean, not that we're not up to it. We certainly are. We've certainly get PhDs in other areas but it's the amount and in the increased amount of areas. It's going to change.

LJ: When you have to focus more on those subject areas?

GN: Very and hardcore. When somebody—I work with a lot PhDs from the Tampa campus who happen to live over here, and I help them out with their research in education. My background is in education. That's what I have a degree in, so—but if somebody comes in with an area with I'm not as familiar with the resources, that takes a lot of preparation.

LJ: Uh-huh.

GN: And when you're doing work—when you're research at the PhD level. You know, there's not much room for—when somebody needs something, you can't say, Oh can we get something else for you? They need “that”, and they've already known when they walked in the door and identified that “that” is what they need. So you just—when it comes to interlibrary loans and other resources that we use, it becomes different.

LJ: Do you have any last thoughts? Anything that you came in here thinking you would talk about that we haven't covered?

GN: No. My memory was a little bit better. I wish it was even better. But, no not really. I think I've been pretty chatty enough.

LJ: (laughs) Alright. Well thanks for coming in and doing this.

GN: Thank you

*End of interview*