Miles W. Hardy oral history interview by Nancy Hewitt, July 9, 1985

Miles W. Hardy (Interviewee)

Nancy A. Hewitt (Interviewer)
DR. MILES HARDY

Hardy: My name is Dr. Miles Hardy. I am a professor of psychology in the Department of Psychology and have been with the University ever since the opening and consider myself to be a charter faculty.

Hewitt: What was your first contact with the University of South Florida and why did you choose to get involved with this University?

Hardy: My involvement with the University of South Florida was, I think, rather unique in that I was one of the few Ph.D.s that was in residence in Tampa. You can't appreciate what a desert land this was of academia. When the University came, I was a staff psychologist at McDonald's Training Center. At that particular time, the University of South Florida had offices in downtown Tampa. I went down on a lark one noon, President Allen opened the door, the deans where there and that was practically the whole staff of this very small office downtown. I introduced myself and said that I would be interested in joining the faculty. We struck up a conversation and from that origin I was appointed on to the faculty, very early, I think, in appointments. It was particularly unique in that nobody at my assistant professor level was privy to the growth conferences and meetings that went on as the University was being built. It was under construction at that time.

Hewitt: Can you tell us about some of those discussions, about the kinds of programs that they wanted to develop at USF and in what ways the plans for USF were different from or distinct from the standard university curriculum?

Hardy: Well, I think the appeal for the early people that came to the University of South Florida was there because of the direction that was laid out. The
idealism that was laid out was very much analogous to a Camelot kind of idea. This was to be a university that would first of all have its "Accent of Learning". It would select only people who were interested in teaching. It was going to stress a kind of relationship between the University and the community. Some of the early plans that cemented that were things like the "All University Book" which I suspect people have talked about. This was lovely in theory, at first, because everybody came with the same stars in their eyes. Everybody remembers classes when at least once every two weeks the president would knock on that door and would ask if they minded if he sat in and would sit a few minutes. All of the faculty remember going to the dining room where the whole University, including the president, would be. There were annual meetings, formal dances, and bands brought in. Everybody, under his command performance, was there—always very, very dry, of course, with President Allen. Everybody knew everybody. The students knew each other. You must remember that we had only a freshman class. All the students had come with the same kind of intense interest in studying. We had four hours of class, two hours of lab, and there was enthusiasm in a way people went about this.

Hewitt: What was the original College of Basic Studies like? I understand that people that taught in Basic Studies had also another departmental affiliation?

Hardy: They called it a dual commitment or a dual allegiance to the College of Basic Studies and the College of Liberal Arts. I think this was anticipating having an upper division program eventually. Everybody, of course, in their first year was teaching freshmen. I mean everybody was teaching freshmen. That tied it together very quickly. We were all content with
that idea. That was the arrangement. There was some talk that maybe we would never change. The idea was to do away with some of the artificial barriers that cropped up between people who teach underclassmen, people who teach upperclassmen, and that we were going to have a very democratic learning institution this way.

Hewitt: Did you have more contact with your colleagues in those early years in terms of discussing, teaching, and curriculum at the University?

Hardy: Oh yes. Everybody knew everybody who came to the University. There were parties with faculty and anybody that didn't come was immediately suspected and people would wonder why. They were usually ill if they didn't come. There was great camaraderie which is easy to do when you have a very limited faculty.

Hewitt: Do you have any sense of how big USF actually was in those early years in terms of faculty and students?

Hardy: No. I'm sure those figures are around. We knew that the University was planning, in the future and in this greatness, for ten thousand students. That was the peak. That seemed at the time like great plans and great growth. An interesting part that we might go on about here or not was the closeness of teaching. We were involved in programs such as "team teaching" that maybe others have talked about. For instance, there was one class in literature, one class in biological science, one class in psychology, and one in perhaps something else where the same group of students went together as a group to all those classes. They were a team. We all would teach the same group of students. Now what was interesting was that we took off a week, once a year, and went to Tarpon Springs. Now all the people who
taught those sections and the students went to Tarpon Springs. They stayed in hotels, they camped outside, and we had kind of a common kind of plan. The city opened up to us. They accepted us and gave us free Greek dinners and so forth. What happened was that they would take a subject. One day the whole class would be wading in the water, and then they would study the Greek culture and write it up for their English and Literature degree. So it was really a week long field trip. They studied the culture and so forth. And again, those things cemented a closeness that is not possible under normal academic situations.

Hewitt: Was the relationship between faculty and administrators also affected by that smallness? Was there more involvement?

Hardy: Yes. You have to remember, at that time, everybody was hired by the dean of the college. So there was that immediate kind of contact. I hadn't taught before except for student teaching so I guess I didn't know what to expect. But it was very close. President Allen and others were well known to come in classes, and you would expect a couple trips a month. He would open the door gently in the middle of class, sit in by the door, listen for maybe twenty minutes, and then get up and leave. There was a constant movement of the administration through the trenches. The faculty really felt that they were working together as a unit with the administration and the University.

Hewitt: How much affect did your being the only Tampa resident on the early faculty have on your personal relationship with the administrators?

Hardy: Well, having been the only faculty living in Tampa at the time of the appointment, I was invited routinely to staff meetings and board meetings of
the administrators which were held in a downtown hotel. Simply, I'm sure, because I didn't have to pay my airfare here. There was the usual, because there were always new people at every meeting, going around . . . At that time the entire support faculty could fit around a big conference table in one of the downtown conference rooms. And they would go along and everybody would introduce themselves. There were some people who had rather outstanding status as educators in the country. There would be suitable kinds of "ohs" and "ahs" and so forth. They would always come around, and there I would be sitting there with my crew cut and looking very young. I would introduce myself as an assistant professor and there would be murmuring around the table. The effect of this was that after meeting four or five times this way, people would forget what administrative position I had. I found myself then and for years later having to undo those things--"No, I was not dean of this or dean of that,"--it was kind of a pleasant . . . But once people came, of course, the fact that I had lived here before was lost pretty quickly. I did find myself driving a lot of faculty around and showing them the city as it existed at that time. I loved that.

Hewitt:  How did the faculty find housing initially in Tampa? For those new people coming in I assume that all the apartment complexes and condos on Fowler didn't exist.

Hardy:  This was a time when you had to own a home to be really in. I can remember the president saying that the place to live was Carrollwood. Some of us who settled in Temple Terrace weren't sure, but there was I think, that subtle effort to create an academic community in Carrollwood. The city was . . . I remember there were two lane roads out here. They built the University right out of the sand. There had never been a University that had been
planned and built from the ground up. Everyone had joined some existing structure of some sort before. Obviously in design there was no need to mix architecture. There was no need to have things that wouldn't fit into the traffic flow pattern. The jokes persisted that they hired a crew with nothing to do but go around and stomp on ivy when it tried to grow up the walls.

Hewitt: Does ivy grow in sand?

Hardy: Well, it could. And then of course it was the only university that was totally air conditioned and this was announced early to people who were coming south. It was a great attraction.

Hewitt: Were the breweries across the campus?

Hardy: Now that is interesting. The breweries were being built at the same time the University was being built. They were finished about the same time. This is something I remember very clearly. The first year we had a big freshman class, and they announced a program for the faculty and had a big party. It was a big party. We were all invited. They had food and entertainment. They were really just getting to know us and that was fun. Then in the middle, Auggie Busch or some Busch executive, stepped up and said what they really wanted to get across was that they had a free beer policy and they anticipated problems with the 17, 18, and 19 year old students. In fact, they used to march down to Busch Gardens, after their classes were over at 5 o'clock, and take advantage of the free beer policy. They were, in a friendly way, trying to discourage us from letting our students take advantage of the free beer garden.
Hewitt: They resolved that now!

Hardy: They resolved it with a high tariff.

Hewitt: In those early discussions you talked about those Camelot themes. What was the role of sports in the development of USF, in the image of an ideal campus?

Hardy: The initial image of the University of South Florida was that it would have an emphasis on excellence in academia. There was to be no fraternities and no major sports. There would be, of course, intramural sports and that was fine. And that was very appealing to many faculty too, who had come from other universities where they had seen certain errors occur, certain faults, and certain breakdowns in academic skills through big athletics and big fraternity kinds of control. So that was part of the Camelot picture. We would never have big football, big sports, good or bad, but that was the image, and it was the image when the Athletic department was formed. The athletic facilities were designed around that sort of academic intramural sport.

Hewitt: Certainly, in terms of athletics as well as in terms of the curriculum, there have been drastic changes at USF since the early curriculum was established. When did you see those changes start to occur and what were the forces that you think shifted the whole model of education at USF?

Hardy: Through the years I have asked that question also because I like sports and I know that universities must grow and I am realistic enough. But I saw the changes come over and they weren't good. I'm sure they were realistic and they were predictable, but they weren't good. The same kind of wonderful harmony that occurred between all departments and all faculty when we opened
began to kind of deteriorate as people's normal ambitiousness began emerging into the second year. Then there was talk about needing an upper division and people couldn't major in Basic Studies. They had to have majors and those were Liberal Arts majors. This was the second part of our dual commitment in the Basic College and Liberal Arts. And so there was a rather infamous coup one summer when strangely enough a lot of the people who had been brought here as heads of areas, like the head of Behavioral Science which included Psychology . . . These were called programs. There were no colleges. The ambitious young seconds that were in there and who enjoyed some of the higher ranks had a lot of discussions, some quietly and some clandestinely, and went to Dean Cooper. Out of those meetings, with which few of us had any kind of contact, there emerged, almost overnight, a new College of Liberal Arts with its own chairman. So, for instance, in Psychology, although we had all been hired under our director Les M., who is now president of a university up north, he came back from summer vacation to find out that he was Chairman of the Behavioral Science Program, and one of his second colleagues was Chairman of Psychology which was a bigger kind of thing. And this happened overnight in many areas of the University. I'm not bitter about the people particularly, but that is the way it occurred, and I think it is a mixture of something that was inevitable. Plus some ambition and the clandestine kind of thing began to start there, and then things were never quite the same. In retrospect I think it could have been handled better. And then we were asked to decide. Did we want to be primarily in Behavioral Sciences or primarily be in Liberal Arts? Some people chose one and some people chose the other. I had my allegiance with the chairman in Basic Studies, and so I said I would stay in Basic Studies. I did and actually was the last chairman of the Basic Studies program before
it was dismantled. Then I joined Psychology as a trained Clinical Psychologist. By that time we knew the writing on the wall and it was a rather smooth transition. In looking back that had to happen. I can't imagine a powerful university with doctoral programs and not having departments of psychology. But it did disrupt the smooth flow where everybody felt a part of the same package.

Hewitt: Alot of people that I have interviewed have mentioned that there was a major transition from the presidency of John Allen to the presidency of Cecil Mackey. I'm wondering if you could tell me a little bit about what your sense was of that transition?

Hardy: The transition came out of, and there may have been alot of other things involved, but it came out of the general disruption of the universities throughout the country at that time. It was very "in" and very appropriate for young people to be against everything at that time. Dr. Allen who took his ... he was a Quaker as you may know and took his ... the people liked him very much and didn't have the resistance to disapprove ... to being hung in effigy, was not taken as easy as it might have been. He suffered, I'm sure, tremendously by this from this terrible disappointment and disillusionment because I think he sincerely thought he had given his life to the school. He essentially quit, and then Mackey was appointed to come in. Mackey came in with a new kind of administrative approach which was totally different than the other. It was a businessman-corporate kind of approach. Right out of Washington, he had had a big job in the Department of Transportation or someplace in Washington. He brought his own second-in-command in and proceeded to do an efficiency job, which is probably good business, on the administration. I think the effect was alienating
faculty from probably the top to the bottom almost over night. Different sets of values and a different set of concepts that had been very dear to some of the people who had been here . . . Everything. The emphasis on excellence seemed to be second. The general feeling was that we had a president who was ambitious and who was really kind of using this as a step to go and do bigger and better things. I have, not in my own course here at the University, had alot to do, personally, with the administrative level. I do other things. I watched it happen. It didn't affect me directly or indirectly, but I think it was, in retrospect, a serious turn in the University morale.

Hewitt: I've been here for only four years and since I have been here it is clear that although the stated mission of USF is still "Accent on Learning," that there is a tremendous pressure to publish, research, get grant money, and those sorts of things. How did that shift from an "Accent of Learning" to an "accent on research and publication" affect the early faculty who had come in with one set of assumptions and now were being asked to do different things?

Hardy: Perhaps again, an inevitable growth. Remember the people who came here and joined the University were teachers. Each one to the man, and woman, I think, prided themselves on being an excellent teacher because that is what they were going to be called upon to do. There was little or no research facilities. In fact, for instance, I and Dr. Malpus registered the first sponsored research grant here at the University years ago. And so there wasn't much research. Everybody was doing teaching. As that became a growing kind of thing and pressure to do that kind of thing, as it became clear that that was the avenue for promotion and the avenue for tenure and
so forth, we all joined that. Perhaps I had more research experience than the others, so I fit easier into the Ph.D. programs than I did some of the other programs. There was a great deal of interest at that particular time. There was a lot of war and poverty kind of things. Some of us dove deeply into those sort of demonstration research projects and maintained them along the way. I think those changes were as predictable as they could be. If a school was going to be more than a Liberal Arts kind of four year college, I think it had to move a lot that way, and so I am not as bitter as many people who discuss these times because I know it was inevitable.

Hewitt: For a long time, I guess until the last couple of years, Psychology had the only Ph.D. program in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Could you tell me a little bit about how that Ph.D. program came about, and why Psychology was the first one to enter the Ph.D. field?

Hardy: I'm not the best person to talk about that in that I was Chairman of the Behavioral Sciences at that time. I watched it, of course, and we coordinated our courses and so forth. I do know that the course of the growth of the Psychology department had historically been rocky also. There was a time, for instance, the Chairman of the Psychology department hired five psychologists because everyone had quit that year and he had no faculty. By the time these new ones came here, he had quit and so the new psychologists that came here were the only faculty that came. These stories are true and not too pleasant. So they have had a rocky core. I think there were a lot of very good, solid people. Psychology was enjoying a period of support, by things like the Kennedy programs and others. There was money for training grants. I think it was the time to do that. They had the master's program for awhile, and then they developed the doctorate program and the two other
doctorate programs in Experimental and Industrial Psychology. That has gone very well. Of course the advantages of having people at that level, research level, means that the library reflects this kind of thing and even undergraduate classes reflect that sort of thing. It's been good. I suspect that, again, it's an inevitable... It happened because of just the incidence of psychology, as in the treatment pressures from mental health and so forth, that had hit at that time they gave us that added emphasis which gave us that start.

Hewitt: I understand that you were the person who developed the first animal laboratory at USF. Could you tell us a little about that?

Hardy: We developed a Behavioral Science course and had a lab that went with it. One of the issues is that we wanted to demonstrate some things with animals. Rats were of particular interest. I have a history which I try to keep secret, and that is of working with animals and doing research with animals and I try to get away from that. It came back to haunt me because I had operated the lab at FSU and some other places. So the University gave us a truck and we had called up Gainseville and said that we wanted to start an animal laboratory. In the interest of sister universities, they said that they would give us a start. So we went up in the university truck, and they unloaded on us about 40 of the oldest rats you ever saw in your life and some old cages that stunk badly. They were free so you couldn't knock them. So we moved into the would-be animal laboratory here with Gainseville's leftover rats. As far as I know we have maintained the same breeding stock, and so we are really closer sister universities. We actually have genetic contacts with each other.
Hewitt: Was the first animal laboratory in the basement of the current College of Social and Behavior Sciences?

Hardy: Oh no. That building didn't exist at that time. This was over in the third story of what is now called the Life Sciences building. That was where Psychology and Behavioral Sciences were housed. We did a few superficial experiments. Mainly we set up good demonstrations for the students at that time. Another anecdote was the first registration here at the University. It has been well documented that this occurred in the middle of a hurricane. Tampa had a hurricane and it was raining, blowing, and we had our first registration. It all occurred in what is now called the Chemistry auditoriums, the heavily-tiered auditoriums. Both of them are back to back. So it is hard to remember that the entire first registration class fit in those two auditoriums. But they had the TV crews there, and TV was not that new. This was a big occasion. Then they set up the crews down below, and they were going to film this first registration. It was nice and all the faculty were helping. They were ready to shoot and one of the cameramen said that he couldn't do this. I asked why not. He said for me to look through the finder. Now they were down at the bottom shooting up at the students who were registering and this was the age of the mini-skirt. And what they were doing was televising right straight up all the skirts of the female coeds! They had to stop everything and move the television cameras up on top and shoot down.

Hewitt: Do you think the hurricane kept very many students away?

Hardy: No. I don't know that. That would be interesting. This was such an anticipated event, and it attracted the best students from all around. Parents lined up outside during registration, in the rain for their
children. It was a big operation. This was the time of the "All University Book" which started out with the same kind of fantasy world. For awhile, when one book would be declared the "All University Book," it would be in all the bookstores. Every course was required to have exam questions about the book relative to their subject. There was TV and radio programs with students, faculty, and townspeople talking about the book. It was a way of wedding and uniting the entire community because the book was everywhere for sale. It would be selected once every two months or something. All that went well until somebody, meaning well, asked for the book The Making of a President which was a perfectly recognized book. But it had political implications and the cry went up from certain elements and the whole theory just collapsed overnight.

Hewitt: I actually never heard why the University Book went by the wayside. You mentioned getting the community involved in various ways, and parents of students and all of that. Although I think there is certainly still interest in community involvement at USF, USF does seem to be more isolated from the community now than it was earlier. What could you tell me about your role in any kind of community relations having to do with USF in the early years?

Hardy: I was a licensed psychologist in the area at the time and had been active in state affairs, so I have led the Psychology Department in trying to maintain that kind of state representation. In that sense, I have been active in the professional area. Some of the research I did involved work with people in the ghetto and with blacks. At one time I had three different store front operations going in the area. This was a time when you tried to hire the best people. You had to go through the University system so I used the old
technique of just playing dumb. I went out and hired the head of the NAACP thinking that was best and it turned out to be an excellent selection, but they had to do some pretty fast talking to justify that sort of thing. But he was able to open all the doors when you needed to open them. It worked very well.

Hewitt: What kind of store front programs were they?

Hardy: They were community service centers that were funded during the Kennedy administration. We trained people to prepare for applications, we had reading, we had nights classes, and we operated them... Predominantly blacks would come in. We worked with teaching machines that would prepare people for interviewing, and we did role playing so they could make a better kind of impression and so forth. It was a very popular kind of course. It went very well. Actually we had one in Plant City, too. It operated quite largely through the area for awhile. In fact it operated so well that to do this in the city we had to go down to the city council and get permission to do this. So I made presentations there and delivered what they thought was a good product and had, for about four years, a very good relationship with the black community and with the city. That was when the University of South Florida decided they would open a "sub" (this is kind of an area which nobody likes to talk about) downtown. They got a building and refurbished it and were going to teach classes. They were going to be manned by "not too prepared" teachers. It was sort of a junior college kind of thing, nights and so forth, working again with less privileged people. The city council said they didn't know about this. So they let them have it one year, and then it began to kind of not do well. To make a long story short, the city council called us in and the University said that they didn't have
anything to do with the new program. So we allowed the University to use
our name in that sense, which pulled it out of the bag for awhile. But then
it went down hill. We found ourselves in an embarrassing situation of
having sponsored something that we had nothing to do with and no supervi-
sion. That was one of the black marks I think the University isn't too
proud of. But it quieted down.

Hewitt: Speaking of your involvement with these store front programs and people who
were involved in the NAACP, did you have any link or any role in discussing
minority recruitment at USF or contacts with the black community?

Hardy: I found myself in this area. I have a plaque up on the wall from them from
that kind of thing. I remember, quite by accident, the first year the
school opened, that I found myself in a group that went down, as a committee
of which I was a part, to a luncheon given by the black community down in
Ybor City. It was a nice luncheon. It had perhaps 40 of the true black
leaders in the community. Obviously very intelligent and very articulate
leaders. The general gist of the meeting was that the black community had
decided not to encourage their black students to enlist or to register at
South Florida, the first year or the second year, because the atmosphere
around the country was very shaky about their entrance and this was still a
southern school. After all there was Tallahassee. They have a black
college. We forget very easily that the atmosphere here at that time was
real shaky. But they elected, and it was all done in an excellent, warm
kind of agreement, not to embarrass the University until they could get
started. Then after the second year, they planned to screen themselves,
their black community applicants, to make sure they had only the best
because they wanted to make the best impression. I was impressed by that
and as far as I know there was nothing official, certainly nothing ever official, said about it. But it was true. As far as I know there wasn't a single black registered at the University when it was opened in the first or second year. And I have had program involvement that way ever since. I find myself doing minority counseling at times and that is fine.

Hewitt: I understand in those early years that there were some demonstrations at local restaurants that wouldn't serve blacks at USF?

Hardy: The only restaurant that was really around that was a mecca for all the faculty was called the University Restaurant. It still exists. It's hard to remember that that road was a two lane road and had nothing on it but the University Restaurant and the next stop was the University of South Florida. The University Restaurant was enterprising. They had the University Restaurant before there was even a University opened. And they gave credit cards to all the faculty with a 10 percent discount. So we all ate over there and drank over there. It was very close and very nice. And then the issue of allowing blacks to eat there came up. The owner said "No, I cannot do that." Thinking, I'm sure, that his clientele would be hurt. There was no mixing at that time. So the faculty, almost to a person, simply said they would not eat there. They boycotted the place and it lasted, I think, for perhaps a month. As a result and perhaps other things, the owners broke and allowed blacks to enter there. The relationship would still have been good between us, but the atmosphere in Florida at the time the school opened was right on the cliff of how this thing was going to go.

Hewitt: Sounds like in that sense USF was on certainly the right side of an issue and leading a cause that was very important.
Hardy: Oh yes, I think so. Remember now, the faculty was predominantly from the north. I suppose in a sense they were liberals in that they were educators. They were interested in education, they were conscientious, they were naive perhaps, and predominantly young, too. So it was a natural thing. I think that you would find that sort of leadership from the faculty.

Hewitt: I know it's hard to summarize 25 years of activity. What do you see as being the best trends of development over that period in changes at USF, and what do you think are the worst developments?

Hardy: The best trends in development over the past 25 years? I think one can't deny that to watch a school grow larger, and basically a good school with a good reputation, is like watching a child grow up with all of its faults and all of its disappointments. I think it has grown to be a very charming and very proud young adult. I sometimes feel like it is a child, and I would like to kick it and cuss it. Yet I love it. I think it is a fine school. I wish that . . . and perhaps because we've moved into the new area, what I would like to see different . . . I think the University, like other things, reflects the times. I think the very things I would say that are errors at the University probably are errors with maybe our society or our culture. They involve a growing kind of greediness and a growing kind of, "Let's get my buck out of it fast. What good can that do me." I can almost still remember the first time a student in advising said, "Well, I don't want to study that, what is the fastest way of getting out and how can I make the most money?" It's a shock. I know that goes on, but it is a shock. I think changes are inevitable in the growth of the community and the school.
I think the school reflects what is going on generally in the world. I am proud to be here, and I think really it is an excellent university.

Hewitt: Thank you very much Dr. Hardy.