

9-23-2004

Joseph Ingrao oral history interview by Andrew Huse, September 23, 2004

Joseph Ingrao (Interviewee)

Andrew T. Huse (Interviewer)

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/usfhistinfo_oh



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [Other Education Commons](#)

Scholar Commons Citation

Ingrao, Joseph (Interviewee) and Huse, Andrew T. (Interviewer), "Joseph Ingrao oral history interview by Andrew Huse, September 23, 2004" (2004). *Digital Collection - USF Historical Archives Oral Histories*. Paper 117.

http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/usfhistinfo_oh/117

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by the Digital Collection - Historical University Archives at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digital Collection - USF Historical Archives Oral Histories by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact scholarcommons@usf.edu.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

This Oral History is copyrighted by the University of South Florida Libraries Oral History Program on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the University of South Florida.

**Copyright, 2008, University of South Florida.
All rights, reserved.**

This oral history may be used for research, instruction, and private study under the provisions of the Fair Use. Fair Use is a provision of the United States Copyright Law (United States Code, Title 17, section 107), which allows limited use of copyrighted materials under certain conditions. Fair Use limits the amount of material that may be used.

For all other permissions and requests, contact the UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA LIBRARIES ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM at the University of South Florida, 4202 E. Fowler Avenue, LIB 122, Tampa, FL 33620.

USF Florida Studies Center
Oral History Program
USF 50th History Anniversary Project

Narrator: Joseph Ingrao
Current Position: USF alumnus

Date of Interview: Sept. 23, 2004
Editor: Mary E. Yeary
Date of Edit: Oct. 25, 2004

Interviewer: Andrew Huse
Location of Interview: Tampa
Campus Library
Abstractor: Jared G. Toney
Date of Abstract: Oct. 25, 2004
Final Editor: Jared G. Toney

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

Mr. Ingrao came to USF in 1990 as a student. He served as Technical Director of the Special Events Center until 2003.

Background

Mr. Ingrao attended high school in New York City before moving to the Tampa Bay area. After completing two years at St. Petersburg Junior College, he transferred to the University of South Florida as a mass communications major. "It took [him] a while to actually graduate," Mr. Ingrao explains, because he was "working heavily" both on campus as a sound and light technician at the Marshall Center and off campus at *The Tampa Tribune*.

Audio-Visual Technician

After working for some time at the Marshall Center, Mr. Ingrao was given a USPS position as senior audio-visual technician. Close to graduation, he was "really becoming involved with a lot of the things that were going on on-campus.

Memorable professors

Mr. Ingrao remembers "many instances" where he had particularly enjoyable classes and professors as a student of mass communications. Specifically, Dr. Manny Lucoff "Who is actually a great guy and ... had a profound impact ... on my experience ... He was a tough teacher ... He was legendary ... for just being very difficult, having very high standards." Students used to refer to Lukov as "The Gatekeeper" because he taught both the intro and exit courses in mass communications. "The school of mass comm. ... was great ... I was really glad to graduate ... [but] for me, I had found my direction at the Marshall Center."

Communications department

When Mr. Ingrao first arrived at USF, the mass communications department was still housed in Cooper Hall while its new building was under construction.

Phyllis Marshall

Mr. Ingrao's career at the Marshall Center (then the University Center) began when Phyllis P. Marshall was still serving as the facility director. "She was really a legendary force on this campus, I would have to say ... She was one of the original people here on this campus ... Phyllis was great." Ingrao remembers that when Mrs. Marshall was working on campus, "Things were a lot of fun for the students ... She was one of the ... key ingredients in ultimately getting the Special Events Center" built at USF.

Special Events Center

At the time of its construction, Mr. Ingrao recalls, the Special Events Center was "something that the students really really wanted."

Student Government Productions

In his early years of involvement, Student Government Productions at USF was a newly developing and still relatively unsophisticated organization. "It didn't go over very well with the professional acts," Ingrao remembers. The construction of the Special Events Center provided the impetus for SG Productions to provide a more professional service to incoming acts. "I happened to be there right at the beginning of that ... I was just an OPS guy ... but I tell you what, we had a lot of fun back then." In addition to the events held at the SEC, there were also frequent performances of one kind or another at the Empty Keg in the basement of the Marshall Center. "It was just a rockin' good time ... The students would come out in droves [in addition to] people from the surrounding community ... Back then it was a popular thing, [and] the youth of the day were into it."

After several years, SG Productions were able to put on some "quality productions" and attract national acts to the University of South Florida.

Graduation

Mr. Ingrao graduated in 1996, after attending university classes part-time for eight years. "I thought that it could all be done ... so I did do it – it took a little extra time, but ... there it was." He took over as technical director at the Special Events Center in 1998, where he worked until 2003. "Honestly, that probably was the best time in my life ... I was running the ship ... I was just growing in so many directions ... Life was great ... I felt like I was really doing my part."

Diversity

During his tenure as technical director at the SEC, Mr. Ingrao was "all about diversity. People talk diversity, but I still think they're exclusionary when they're trying to be diverse ... I would take anyone who had an interest ... I always had people from all over the world on the crew, which I loved so much ... It's a bonus for having come to USF, that's really what I was trying to do."

Technical program

Learning to work the sound at a show, Mr. Ingrao suggests, is "not really rocket science – it's an art form ... It's a different sort of learning ... but I did have a training process ... I

don't really take credit for anybody's success, I'm just very glad for whatever little part that I may have played to help them."

Famous acts

Among the shows Mr. Ingrao has worked are Billy Joel's lecture tour, a great number of politicians like Pat Buchanan, James Carvill and Mary Madeline, Al Sharpton, Michael Moore, and hip-hop acts such as A Tribe Called Quest and Busta Rhymes, among many others. The SEC has also hosted a lot of rock bands like Beck, Primus, Peter Murphy, the Pixies, and Living Colour.

High school students

Mr. Ingrao also had the opportunity to work in conjunction with local high schools in order to promote the University of South Florida to young students. On occasion, high school proms and homecomings would be held at the USF Special Events Center. "We would set up some awesome shows, and they just loved it."

Advice for Future Students

"When it comes to doing your projects in college, just go ahead and start doing it early. It took me until I was in my very last year of college to figure that out."

End of Interview