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## Joseph Krzanowski oral history interview by Yael V. Greenberg, August 13, 2003

Joseph J. Krzanowski (Interviewee)

Yael V. Greenberg (Interviewer)

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USF Florida Studies Center  
Oral History Program  
USF 50<sup>th</sup> History Anniversary Project

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Current Position: Professor & Associate Dean for Graduate Affairs in the College of Medicine	Location of Interview: Tampa Campus Library
Date of Interview: August 13, 2003	Abstractor: Mary E. Yeary
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TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

*Year of arrival*

Dr. Krzanowski came to USF in 1971 as an assistant professor in the department of pharmacology and therapeutics.

*What circumstances brought him to USF?*

He had no intention to come to USF. He did his graduate training at a university medical unit in Memphis, Tennessee. He had finished three years of a post-doctorate in neuro-chemistry at the Washington University pharmacology department in St. Louis. He was on his way to the Mayo Clinic to take a job. He kept getting calls from Tampa, a place he had never been to before. He had no desire to go to Florida. The calls kept coming. He was asked to come to USF and take a look at a position, which involved helping to start a new medical school. As he started thinking about the position it was a very cold, snowy day in March. Finally, he said why not, a trip to Florida would be nice. He still had no intention of accepting any job offer. He arrived at USF and looked at the blueprints for the medical school facilities. The plans included phase I for the basic science building, phase II for the clinical sciences building, and at that time, there were construction plans for phase III, which would be a hospital associated with the college of medicine. Phase I and phase II did develop. As he looked at the plans he became intrigued. He thought how many people in their career would have an opportunity to help develop a new college of medicine. The more he thought about it, the more he realized he could go to a lot of places, which were already established. He thought it would be an exciting adventure to start from scratch. He and his wife decided to move to Tampa.

*What did the surrounding area look like in 1971?*

There was not much around USF. The only thing was the University Restaurant, which was the place to go. He remembers that Fowler Avenue had palm trees along it and was two lanes at the time. He remembers being so dismayed one day to find that the street was cleared of palm trees to make room for the widening of the road. The area was nothing but open space. There was nothing from the science center to 30<sup>th</sup> Street.

*What did the USF campus look like?*

“Most of what is here now did not exist in 1971.” It was quite barren, hardly any buildings.

*What did Dr. Krzanowski hear about USF?*

He did not hear much about the university itself. He was more interested in the medical school and the personnel. He wondered who were the people involved in setting up the medical school.

*First colleagues*

One of his first colleagues was the first chair of the department of pharmacology, Andor Szentivanyi, who eventually became the dean of the college of medicine and vice president of medical affairs. He was well-known for his work in the beta-adrenergic theory of the atopic abnormality, which concerns bronchial asthma. The theory revolutionized the treatment of asthma.

*Attracted to USF by potential colleagues and the idea of starting a new medical school*

His interest in collaborating with Dr. Szentivanyi and another colleague to do exciting research attracted Dr. Krzanowski to USF. Also, the challenge of starting a new medical school appealed to him.

*Medical school curriculum and philosophy*

The medical school curriculum and philosophy as well as the physical facilities were already on the drawing boards when Dr. Krzanowski arrived. He was shown blueprints for the buildings.

*Where was the medical school housed when he first arrived?*

Part of the medical school, including faculty offices, was housed in the basement of the science center. The classroom for the college of medicine and the dean's office was on the fourth floor. Some other departments were on the fourth floor as well.

*Existing departments in 1971*

The departments that existed at the time were the department of pharmacology, the department of physiology and medical microbiology. The chemistry department handled the biochemistry department as a division.

*Medical school moves*

The medical school moved initially from the science center to what was called the surge building, now an electron microscope suite. The medical school called it surge because they were surging ahead and moving into the big time. The surge building housed a second classroom for the students. There were a number of offices there and a laboratory.

*Medical school moves again*

The medical school then moved to a new research building that was opened for the V.A. Hospital. They were the first occupants of the V.A. research building. "It was quite a move because there were lots of debates about who was going to have which end of the hallway. It was an interesting move over to the V.A. hospital."

### *Medical school moves to Phase I*

In 1975 they moved into phase I of the medical school, where they have been ever since.

### *The first faculty*

When Dr. Krzanowski arrived, there were fourteen members of the faculty.

### *The first students*

There were twenty-four new medical students who were members of the charter class. He thought the charter class consisted of very interesting individuals.

### *Faculty and student interaction*

Dr. Krzanowski says the faculty knew the students very well. They went to the movies together and between breaks they played hockey together on the fourth floor of the science center. Carrels acted as goals, and they used yardsticks and masking tape as hockey sticks. "It was really a unique time in developing a new institution, [and] recruiting faculty and students." "The camaraderie we had with those students was just unique. It has never been the same since then when everybody knew everybody else." He says the medical school faculty and students had a lot of parties and social gatherings. It was a social and learning environment.

### *The medical school did not receive accreditation right away*

"It didn't seem to be a big problem then." The medical school received accreditation a few years after it began. "The number of students to be selected for the charter class was only twenty-four so we felt like we had the cream of the crop. We had tremendous faculty that came from across the country." He says because of the prominent faculty members and successful charter class, they knew accreditation would not be a problem.

### *How were the first twenty-four students selected?*

Most of the students were selected before he got to USF. He was involved with selecting students after the first charter class. Faculty selected the students.

### *Diversity in the first class*

He knows there were women in the first class. He is not sure about minority groups.

### *Tensions with a new medical school*

It takes a strong leader to attract support, and the dean of the College of Medicine, Donn Smith, was just that. Dr. Krzanowski says there were problems with rest of the USF community because the community sees new buildings going up, new furniture, etc., while members of the community are still housed in older buildings. Also, tension existed between the College of Medicine and the medical community. A lot of physicians came to the area to staff the medical school, which creates competition for other doctors in the area. "In professions like medicine, if you don't see patients, it's not a guaranteed salary, so competition becomes a big issue. Tensions existed between the already established college of medicine at UF and the new medical school at USF. They competed against each other for resources at the state level. "Who is going to get what portions of the pie?" Dr. Krzanowski says all of these issues and tensions existed when

USF started a medical school. “In the early days when we were in the science center, administratively there were always battles, [such as] whose space was where, and who was infringing on which space. How come we got this and they got that?”

*How was the College of Medicine funded in the early days?*

Most of the funds came from the state level.

*Positives and negatives of starting a new medical school*

Dr. Krzanowski says the idea of having a group of people coming together and having an opportunity to develop new things has both good and bad sides to it. As faculty arrived, especially from prestigious institutions, they had different views. When something starts from scratch, people will have different ideas and this can create conflict. On the positive side, people are not hampered by having to stick to an established routine or way of doing something, or deal with senior people who would not allow for new ideas. “On the other hand, many of the things you would like to accomplish that were routine from where you came from are not available here.” When the medical school first began, faculty did not look highly upon the ordering process. “You had to wait until there were enough things to order in order to have a major order. If you just got here after an order was placed, you were in trouble because you might have to wait thirty days before you got something.” He says ordering at the institution he came from took place almost everyday. If they needed something, they would call first thing in the morning and usually receive the items that day. “It was hard to come somewhere where there was no pattern or track to do things.”

*Dean Smith*

“He initially came across as being a rather straight-laced individual, pleasant and kind.” At a reception for new students, Dr. Krzanowski had a plate of appetizers, including a meatball. As he conversed with someone, the meatball fell off his plate and rolled across the room. He went to retrieve it and when he found it, he realized it had landed on Dean Smith’s shoe. Dean Smith was not very pleased. “He was an interesting man, the kind of person we really needed at the time.” He was a tank commander under General Patton in WWII. “He was going to take the hill so to speak, and he did. He came in and got things done, hired faculty, established things, [and] got buildings [up].” Dr. Krzanowski says one always knew where Dr. Smith stood on an issue. It was pretty much black and white with him.

*Why did USF want a medical school?*

“I think everyone wants a medical school. It was the late ‘60s and early ‘70s and we recognized that we had a shortage of physicians in the country.” About ten or twelve medical schools started around the same time as USF’s medical school. Dr. Krzanowski says it was unusual for Florida, being the fourth largest state in the Union with its population, to have only one state medical school. “Certainly the community of the state would welcome another medical school. We train physicians who are here to provide medical care for the population. That is a very valued entity. A state certainly would look to establish one [medical school].” He does not know why USF was the location chosen.

*Dr. Krzanowski develops a new course*

He was charged with developing a new course in medical pharmacology because he was a broad-based cardiovascular pharmacologist. The new course included a lot of animal laboratories. The course was developed with two other faculty members. He was the kingpin of the course, running it and setting it up.

*Medical school switches from a four-year to three-year plan*

In the beginning, the medical school was a four-year school. There was a trend in the country at the time to change medical schools to three years. A lot of medical schools had already changed to three years. The idea was that instead of students starting in September, they would start in June right after finishing undergraduate school. The students would not get the three-month break between their undergraduate year and their first year of medical school. Then there is a three-month break between the first and second years of medical school, and the second and third years of medical school. The break times total nine months, which is a full curriculum. The idea was proposed on two reasons: one was that it would be more efficient, and two was that many more physicians would be trained across the country. Dr. Krzanowski says the planners realized that efficiency in education is not necessarily a good thing. Students might need room for any kind of catching up due to illness, childbirth, or a death in the family. “It became clear that the stress level for students was really too much.” “When you just finished four years of college and you graduate, and now [you have] to start into an intense program in medical science.” It became obvious that it was not a good idea. “We eventually switched back, as did other medical schools in the country, to a four-year medical school.”

*Major changes in the College of Medicine over the years (A new emphasis on research)*

The real major change was a change in the emphasis of being a training school to a school that was really interested in developing research. The transition began to occur in the early 1990s, a time when Dr. Krzanowski was the associate dean for research and the associate dean for graduate affairs. “There was a conscious decision made by faculty and administrators that we needed to be a research institution if we were going to hit the big time.” In measuring success, Dr. Krzanowski says to look at where medical school students end up when they finish and look at the residences of students. He says USF medical students are at many top institutions. “You don’t get people in top places unless they have been well-trained.” He says it has always been a real emphasis of the faculty to take a tremendous interest in students and education, but the research development always lagged behind. In 1990, the medical school had \$5 million in external funding. When he left in 2001, it had close to \$62 or \$63 million in external funding, and the amount is still increasing. He says new faculty is coming on board who are very interested in research.

*Dr. Krzanowski develops a research day*

Dr. Krzanowski developed a research day so that students will come out and talk about their research. He says it is a real exciting day to watch people from laboratories, staff

members, students, and people just walking by, come over and listen to students talk about projects on which they are working.

*The excitement of new medical facilities*

He says it has been great to get things such as the Moffitt Center, Shriners Hospital, additions to the V.A. Hospital, and a small research wing added to the college of medicine. Currently there are plans to develop a combined nursing medical facility, which will be built in the relatively near future.

*What is Dr. Krzanowski most proud of in his thirty-two years at USF and the College of Medicine?*

He is proud of two things. One, the contributions he has made in the education of medical students, and graduate and undergraduate students. Two, the research contributions he has made, including research of a protective mechanism that exists in the airways so that people will not have unusual contractions of airways.

*Family affair*

“It [USF] has been a great opportunity and environment for my own family. He has raised two kids that he is very proud of. One is a pharmacist at the Moffitt Cancer Center, and the other one is a speech therapist. He says USF has provided an opportunity for his family to contribute to society.

*Where does Dr. Krzanowski see the medical school in ten years?*

“It will depend a lot on the new faculty who are recruited to the institution. A lot of senior faculty will be leaving in the next five years. The junior faculty members that are coming on are exciting individuals. They have an interdisciplinary approach to education, learning and science that will continue to grow.” USF is in the growth area of the state. He says the college of medicine will be a vital part of the growth because the population and the people are here and they will demand things from an institution that will cause it to become even more successful.

*Last words that Dr. Krzanowski would like to leave behind about USF*

“USF is an interesting institution that is still in its infancy. In the short time that it has been an institution of higher learning, it is ranked fourteenth in the nation, and is in one of the largest in the nation. It has nowhere to go, but up. It has contributed tremendously already to both education and to the development of new knowledge through research and it will continue to do that. I not only had great expectations when I came here thirty-two years ago, I continue to have those kinds of expectations for the future of the institution.”

*End of Interview*