

6-11-2004

Liz Lindsay oral history interview by Andrew Huse, June 11, 2004

Liz Lindsay (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

Lindsay, Liz (Interviewee) and Huse, Andrew T. (Interviewer), "Liz Lindsay oral history interview by Andrew Huse, June 11, 2004" (2004). *Digital Collection - USF Historical Archives Oral Histories*. Paper 134.

http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/usfhistinfo_oh/134

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: Liz Lindsay
Current Position: Chairman of USF Advisory
Group
Date of Interview: June 11, 2004
Editor: Danielle E. Riley
Date of Edit: July 12, 2004

Interviewer: Andrew Huse
Location of Interview: Tampa
Campus Library
Abstractor: Jared G. Toney
Date of Abstract: June 28, 2004
Final Editor: Jared G. Toney

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

Ms. Lindsay came to USF as a student in 1981. She is the former chairman of the Board of Regents.

First impressions of USF

Ms. Lindsay recalls first hearing about USF before classes had even begun in the mid 1960s. “[I] came up here one day to see where the campus was going to be, and I remember remarking at the time, because it was a very barren piece of land, that one was going to need a camel to get from one side to the other.”

Enrollment in the MBA program

As she followed the university’s development, she read about an Executive MBA program in the newspaper one day and decided that it was something she might like to do. “I had been to three different learning institutions before that, and I thought that was a good way to tie up an education in one piece – through the master’s degree in business. So I came up here and interviewed.” Ms. Lindsay was accepted to the flagship program and began classes at USF in 1981. “We were the guinea pigs in that program.”

Evolution of the campus

Nearly twenty years after her first visit, Ms. Lindsay observed a number of changes on the university campus, the most obvious of which was the presence of a number of new buildings. Without interstate access to Fowler Avenue, Ms. Lindsay recalls driving up U.S. 41 “at peril” on an almost daily basis.

Academic experiences

Her academic experience at USF, she remembers, was an interesting one. “I liked it very much because at the time we did everything in units ... It was an interesting group of people ... We started out with eighteen people, we finished with fourteen” in the entire program. “I don’t think there was anyone there under thirty [years old] – which is fairly old for students ... One of the most interesting parts of it was the different viewpoints, and that’s what made the classwork so interesting.” Because many of the students were working professionals, classes were scheduled on alternating Fridays and Saturdays.

Faculty members

Ms. Lindsay remembers that she had some “very good faculty members” at USF, including the program’s director, Steve Baumgarten, who taught marketing “in a very delightful fashion ... and made the class work very interesting.” She also had an “outstanding” statistics professor who later became provost at the University. On the other hand, she remembers having a couple of professors who “really didn’t seem to know how to teach adults – mature adults, I might add – and we complained mightily about one, and a couple of them soon dropped out of that program ... I think it takes a special focus to do that.”

Weekly luncheons

The program sponsored weekly luncheons for the students, in which different speakers would give lectures on various topics related to business. “It was a chance to talk to people who were outside [of] the academic world. That was fun.” In contrast to the compelling speakers, Ms. Lindsay remembers that, “The food was dreadful. I think food on the campus has greatly improved since that time.”

Graduation

Ms. Lindsay graduated from the program at USF in 1983. “I was just excited about tying up this very fragmented education that I had had ... It was a very interesting way to learn ... I enjoyed it ... I think we all did.”

Alumni Association

Shortly after her graduation, Ms. Lindsay was recruited to work for the USF Alumni Association. She served the Association as treasurer, vice-president, and eventually president of the national organization, “Which was an interesting experience.”

At that time, the Alumni Association was working very hard to help organize the University’s satellite campuses, in addition to establishing branch chapters on the campuses. She believes that she served on the Board for approximately ten years before moving on.

“One of the things I think that was very helpful was [that] the Alumni Association magazine improved so tremendously ... I think it’s quite good now.”

There was a big push in the 1980s to develop the Alumni Association, in part because many of those students who had graduated in 1960s were increasingly capable of contributing to their alma mater. “It was time to get them involved.” It was during this time that the Association started Homecoming activities at USF, which were initially quite “sparse” in attendance. “Remember that USF did not have a band in those days, nor a football team.”

USF Alumni

Despite a late start, Ms. Lindsay remarks that USF now has distinguished alumni serving throughout the community. What is more, she recalls hearing that twenty-eight USF

graduates were serving in the state legislature as well. “That’s a sizeable number to reckon with, you know, so we have a voice there now – no question about it.”

USF Foundation

After serving on the Alumni Association for nearly ten years, Ms. Lindsay was asked to work for the USF Foundation. “I was particularly interested in it because I had founded a scholarship in the business school after I graduated, and I had a ... self-interest I guess in seeing how that was administered.” Ms. Lindsay reports that the Foundation is particularly good at establishing and maintaining networks with contributors, and monitoring student scholarship recipients throughout their academic careers. “I don’t know what the numbers are now, but they’re very impressive.”

Foundation committees

Through working for the Foundation, Ms. Lindsay has become involved in various committees with a number of different people. Among the regular committees are audit, investment, budget and finance, academic programs, and student life, among others. “If you rotate through some of those committees, you get a pretty good picture of the Foundation as a whole.” Presently, the “big thing” among the state universities is raising endowment funds.

State Board of Regents; State universities

Ms. Lindsay also served for nine years on the State Board of Regents. “I found for the most part ... that people soon became very apolitical ... and concentrated on what was good for the system as a whole. To me that was extremely interesting.” Serving on the BOR gave Ms. Lindsay an opportunity to visit the various university campuses around the state, “Learn[ing] about the different universities – and how they are different ... We don’t want them all to be just the same ... When you start to specialize, then each university can’t be all things to all people. They have to have their own character and their own way of distinguishing themselves.”

USF’s strengths

Among USF’s greatest strengths, Ms. Lindsay asserts, are a very good engineering school, medical school, school of business, and accounting program. “Of course now, the fine arts are growing ... and the school of education is growing ... So, it’s a very good all-around university with some interesting specialties.”

Dissolution of the Board Of Regents

Ms. Lindsay asserts that the Board was dissolved because the state universities wanted a medical school and law school, but couldn’t get it through the Board of Regents. The program has since been reconstituted by Senator Bob Graham, and currently goes by the title of Board of Governors. Each state university now also has its own Board of Trustees, largely because one board of oversight could not effectively monitor eleven state universities. “The Board of Regents was very busy, when I was on it, in pushing responsibilities down to the individual universities,” Ms. Lindsay explains. Another thing they worked on was establishing a state university standard so that students could better navigate the system from one school to another.

Board of Governors

“I think Florida needs a Board of Governors ... because we are a large system ... I think we need a coordinating body because we cannot afford” repetition at all eleven state universities. “They have to specialize, particularly in the upper divisions, and I think that takes some coordination.”

Community Leadership Council

Ms. Lindsay currently serves on the Community Leadership Council for the USF Sarasota campus. “It’s a body of local business people, and others, who are interested in that campus and interested in promoting that campus.” The Florida legislature, she proudly announces, has just recently appropriated \$14 million for the first USF building on the Sarasota campus. Because USF shares the campus with New College, Ms. Lindsay asserts that, “It will be very good for [us] – we’ll have an identity.”

Sarasota campus

Also unique to the Sarasota campus, USF began offering a non-credit learning institute for adults in the local community. “The first night, six hundred people turned out to find out about it,” after the program was announced in the local newspaper. “So there’s a real interest in that community in learning and expanding your horizons.”

“We’re beginning to get a lot of undergraduate students on the campus now, because we do have the courses there which we did not have before ... So I think the campus will become more and more important to the area.”

Because USF Sarasota is growing so much, sharing a campus with New College becomes increasingly difficult as limited resources and space are increasingly crowded. “I don’t see any real problems sharing that campus ... I think they both have a place, and we’re fortunate to have such things in the state.”

Future challenges

The big challenge in the future, Ms. Lindsay confidently predicts, “is going to be money.” Another, she suggests, is the relative young age of the state universities in Florida. “So, we haven’t had time to build up the assets that other universities have. So it’s going to be that kind of a struggle for the next twenty [to] twenty-five years, I think.”

Closing comments

“I would have to say that I have enjoyed my association with USF and with higher education in Florida. It is something that I have been very interested in all my life ... Nowadays, one of the things we do for people is we treat students like customers, and we try to make it easy for them to get to a campus and to get an education ... We’re going to have to work very hard to meet those challenges.”

Advice for incoming students

“Get your private life in some kind of order so that you can concentrate on living in an entirely new environment ... don’t be too overly distracted ... You used to come to college

with a trunk, now you come with a trailer ... You kind of have to be able to manage on your own, and it's important that they know that when they come. Don't get lost in the shuffle ... You're pretty much on your own, so you need to be pretty self-sufficient ... and if you ... need help, be sure to ask for it ... I think that's the best advice I can offer students."

For those continuing involvement with the university, "I think it's incumbent to belong to the Alumni Association, because you get a lot of information that way ... keep track of what's going on at your university."

End of Interview