

2-6-2004

Yvonne Nowak oral history interview by Danielle E. Riley, February 6, 2004

Yvonne Nowak (Interviewee)

Danielle E. Riley (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

Nowak, Yvonne (Interviewee) and Riley, Danielle E. (Interviewer), "Yvonne Nowak oral history interview by Danielle E. Riley, February 6, 2004" (2004). *Digital Collection - USF Historical Archives Oral Histories*. Paper 154.
http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/usfhistinfo_oh/154

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: Yvonne Nowak
Current Position: USF Alumnus

Interviewer: Danielle Riley
Location of Interview: Tampa
Campus Library

Date of Interview: February 6, 2004
Editor: Danielle E. Riley
Date of Edit: March 30, 2004

Abstractor: Jared G. Toney
Final Editor: Jared G. Toney

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

Coming to USF

She attended community college in St. Petersburg before transferring to USF as a mass-communications major in 1982. She chose USF largely because of the location, and was able to live off-campus with a friend's family for a "very reasonable rate."

While at St. Petersburg Community College, she worked backstage at a place called the Showboat Dinner Theatre, where she was able to meet such famous performers as Don Adams, Cesar Romero, and Sid Cesar among others. She did a lot of cartooning and creative scenery work there, while dabbling in other theatrical engagements.

Initial experiences at USF

She had been visiting the campus for years prior to her enrollment because her brother was also a student at USF. Because the campus was "absolutely beautiful," she would spend a great deal of time walking the university grounds, a tradition she continues with her husband to this day. She was also able to get financial aid, "which was a big thing," and found a job on campus as a student assistant at the media center – which was located in the basement of the College of Education at that time. Her job in the media center provided her with the opportunity to work with a number of different student organizations on campus who came to the center to take advantage of mimeograph machines to print signs and flyers.

Academics

As a student, she remembers doing a lot of her studying outside under the trees near the advertising and marketing building (College of Business). "It was a great experience. I loved going to this school and I still support it." Her first class was Advertising I with Professor Bagley, after which she remembers thinking, "Boy, if all my classes are like this, this is going to be fun!" She thought very highly of Dr. Bagley, and attributes her love of advertising partly to her experiences in his classroom.

Extracurricular activities

The only athletic activities she recalls the school having were soccer and basketball, a few events of which she attended. "In between my job and my studies and my classes, I didn't have a whole lot of free time."

Art and advertising

Her father was an architect, and her mother had artistic talent as well, so she was naturally inclined toward the arts from an early age.

She recalls participating in a project as an advertising student where Busch Gardens approached the department enlisting help in developing a campaign to promote their new water theme park Adventure Island. Though the park did not use their suggestions, she felt it was a valuable experience for her and her colleagues.

Brahman Man

When she was working in the media center, she met Linda Ramsey, a University Police officer, who told her about a UP sponsored contest for the promotion of crime prevention as well as the police department's image and presence on campus. Because Nowak was artistically gifted, she decided to enter the contest, creating a fictitious crime-fighting student named Mat A. Dor who at night assumed his identity as "Brahman Man." Her colleagues at the media center were all pulling for her, and she soon learned that she had been selected as one of three finalists. On the day of the contest, she was announced as the winner in front of a crowd at the University Center and awarded with a ten-speed bicycle.

About a month after her graduation, the UP hired her to work in a free-lance capacity for the department, designing signs and flyers that incorporated Brahman Man fighting crime around campus. The figure became popular and well recognized among students at USF, and for a while the university bookstore was even selling t-shirts with images of the campus crime-fighter. She remembers a costume being made as well, and was dawned by a university policeman at various events and functions around the community. She continued doing work for the university for a couple of years after graduation.

After graduation

After college, Nowak worked in advertising for ten years with the Eckerd Corporation, developing a successful campaign for the company. Unfortunately, as a result of the pressures of the job, she developed an ulcer and had to find another line of work. Because she had always enjoyed working at the university's media center, she decided to get a job at a library, where she has been working for the past ten years.

Continuing involvement at USF

She continues to be involved with the university informally, spending time at the campus on the weekends and attending football games whenever possible. "I'm really proud that I went to this school. I was proud of it then and I'm proud of it now ... I wouldn't change a thing."

Future of the university

She believes that in time USF will gain the national recognition that it deserves. “I just wouldn’t change a thing. I think it’s a great school to go to.”

End of Interview