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Richard Pride oral history interview by Yael V. Greenberg, August 29, 2003

Richard Pride (Interviewee)

Yael V. Greenberg (Interviewer)

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TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

Year of arrival

Dr. Pride came to USF in 1969 as director of Project Upward Bound.

Circumstances that brought Dr. Pride to USF

He came to USF in 1969. However, he and his wife, Eva, were recruited three years prior to that as possible faculty members at USF. He encouraged her to come on. At the time he was principal at a high school in Hillsborough County and was not ready to leave his position. She came in 1966. He helped integrate the schools in Hillsborough County, particularly with faculty members. His wife then encouraged him to come to USF, and he did. A federal program to help students from disadvantaged backgrounds to further their education on the college level. He was also director of a program called High School Equivalency Program, HEP. He recruited students from all over the state of Florida, particularly migrant students, to participate in the program.

Why did USF want to begin recruiting black professors?

He thinks someone may have brought it to USF's attention that they were starting a university, with no black faculty members. Dr. Pride thinks USF may have gone to the school system in Hillsborough County and asked for recommendations for potential USF faculty members.

Eva Pride was the first black professor at USF.

Were there other black professors on campus when Dr. Pride arrived in 1969?

Dr. Sherman Thompson was hired as a full-time faculty member.

What did his wife say about the USF campus?

He says there were very few buildings on campus at the time. Her office was in the administration building.

How did other faculty members treat his wife

Dr. Pride says his wife was well received. She was placed in the College of Basic Studies. She was teaching a course in English called Developmental Reading. In order to appease students they had two or more faculty members teaching the course in case students of a certain race did not want to take a class with a black professor. The students

could transfer to another class. She did not have any problems at all. He thinks this was because of the support of the present faculty members that she worked for, such as Dr. Ed Martin, who was the head of the College of Basic Studies, and Dr. John Allen.

Pressure to begin accepting black students

The university did not particularly want black students. Dr. Pride was principal of Howard W. Blake High School. The only other black principal in the area was the principal of an all-black school, Milton High School. Dr. Pride and the other principal recommended twelve black students to come to USF.

Apprehension among black students about coming to USF

He says there was some apprehension among black students about coming to USF because they were used to their relatives going to the predominantly black institutions in Florida, particularly FAMU. "We worked with students and encouraged them by telling them it is a different society now and we must be culturally oriented to races of people. It began to smooth out shortly after."

Discrimination incident

There was one student, Ernest Boger, who came to USF in the music department. Dr. Pride knew Ernest as a young man growing up in Tampa. His family came from a disadvantaged background. Ernest had musical skills, which helped to encourage him. Members of the band went to the University Restaurant. The restaurant did not want to serve the group because a black person was with them. "That raised havoc." He says from then on things moved on smoothly.

Dr. Pride's wife initiates reading programs for students at USF

The reading programs were designated not just for black students but other students that needed help as well.

Blacks in dormitories in the early days

Some students did not want black students in dormitories and wrote things on dorm walls. Dr. Pride was often called to settle any disputes.

Dr. Pride's first, second, and last office at USF

His first office was next to Fontana Hall in an apartment building. He conducted two programs there, Project Upward Bound and the High School Equivalency Program. When facilities became available on campus, he moved into BEH. He was pleased with the move because in writing the proposal for Project Upward Bound to the federal government, the government wanted to know the location of the program. The location of the program was a small indicator of whether or not the university accepted it. After BEH, Dr. Pride had an office in the Faculty Office Building, which is where he retired.

Dr. Pride's involvement with Project Upward Bound

One reason the university supported this federal program was because the program brought money into the university. Dr. Pride says the university really accepted the program itself. The program started getting more and more high school students, which

influenced the enrollment of black students. The program was for all students, regardless of race.

Early challenges of Upward Bound

He did not have any challenges concerning the project within the university. Everything he asked for from the university he received, so he did not have many challenges.

Dr. Pride works with the Hillsborough County school system on Project Upward Bound

The school system worked very well with him, especially since Dr. Pride had worked in the school system for twenty-two years prior to coming to USF. He knew most of the high school principals and he met with them every year. The principals provided Dr. Pride with a counselor in each school to work with Dr. Pride in the recruitment of students for Project Upward Bound. “We were able to get those students with great potential from disadvantage backgrounds to come into the program.”

Other Project Upward Bounds in Florida

There were from five to ten Upward Bound projects at other universities in Florida. When Dr. Pride had faculty rank, he helped other directors of programs at the other universities to get faculty rank.

USF’s Project Upward Bound is very successful (Also, why is it so successful?)

“Our program was one of the largest and most successful programs in the country. We have that record even now from the job that we did because we weren’t playing games with students. They had to produce or they were dropped from the program. We [have] placed over 3,000 students in college. The majority of those students graduated and many have professional careers as doctors, teachers, or lawyers. Dr. Pride says the success of the students from Project Upward Bound was because of the structure of the program and the determination of the program’s leaders of seeing students succeed. They have placed students in 160 plus colleges in the U.S. Students have gone to institutions such as Columbia University, MIT, NYU, and Georgia Tech. He says there were some students who did not want to leave home or wanted to stay in Florida.

USF’s support (both faculty and presidents) of Project Upward Bound

Dr. Pride was director of Project Upward Bound from the beginning of the program until he retired. Dr. Pride says while he was the director, USF did not fail him in anything he requested. The only thing he realized was to ask for something in plenty of time because of the busyness of a university. If he needed an auditorium or a room for a banquet, he had no problems at all. He says the cooperation and support stemmed from the top administrators on campus. Throughout Dr. Pride’s tenure at USF, he worked for five presidents. He made certain to contact the president at the time and involve each one in the program in some way or another. He says the involvement of the various presidents caused other faculty members, who may have been apprehensive about their involvement in the program, to support it. “I got the approval and support of the top administration.”

Did Upward Bound students and other students at USF interact with one another?

Many of the university students came to activities that Dr. Pride and Project Upward Bound held for students of the program. Many USF students, who had various projects to complete in their classrooms, wanted to talk with Upward Bound students, and wrote reports on the students. He says many USF students volunteered to work with the program and its students by tutoring them in study halls. “This really opened my eyes that they [USF students] weren’t prejudice to it [the program] because they were blacks. They [USF students] wanted to do something to help.” They came in the evening and tutored students in subjects such as math.

USF’s Science Department helps Project Upward Bound

“The science department has always been cooperative. They let us utilize the labs and provide things to us without cost.” He says congratulations and thank you to the science department.

How and when do students enter the Project Upward Bound program?

Upward Bound students enter the program in their sophomore year of high school and continued being a part of the program during the summer after graduating from high school. He says many students entered the university the summer after graduating from high school. Some students apply on their own for Upward Bound because they have heard about the program, but, mainly Upward Bound works with high school counselors who see a young man or woman with great potential and then that counselor recommends the person to the program. He says the students involved in the program feel like the program is a family.

Students of Upward Bound take field trips

Upward Bound provides educational field trips for students to visit other colleges and cities. Students have visited such places as Washington, New Orleans, Atlanta, and Chicago. “The kids love it. They go to concerts and plays, everything to elevate and motivate them to want to be somebody in their life.”

How many Upward Bound programs are there currently?

It is still called the Upward Bound Program. There are about 700 or 800 programs throughout the country, with a few in Puerto Rico.

Dr. Pride and his relationship with USF Presidents

John Allen

When Dr. Pride arrived at USF in 1969, Dr. John Allen was the president of USF. Dr. Pride had already met President Allen because Dr. Allen’s office was in the county school office building when he was doing the planning for USF. President Allen would often come by Dr. Pride’s office in the apartments by Fontana Hall. “He would come by, and I would look up, and there was Dr. Allen. I got to know his wife very well.” Grace Allen also supported Project Upward Bound.

Cecil Mackey

Dr. Pride got to know President Mackey very well. To Dr. Pride's surprise the president requested to see him one day. President Mackey had each of the deans of the different colleges present at the meeting. President Mackey presented Dr. Pride with an appreciation award. "I was totally shocked that Dr. Mackey did that."

John Lott Brown

Dr. Pride says President Brown was very supportive of him and his programs. President Brown spoke at Dr. Pride's banquets and programs. President Brown's wife came to banquets and programs as well and served on an advisory committee for Upward Bound. Dr. Pride says she helped Project Upward Bound tremendously by serving on the advisory committee. President Brown presented Dr. Pride with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Spirit Award at a basketball game where 10,000 people were present.

Frank Borkowski

The Upward Bound program has an annual banquet at a hotel in Tampa. President Borkowski came to the banquet. He did not say anything about what he was going to do at the banquet. Dr. Pride's dean was there and told Dr. Pride that he was going to speak about Dr. Pride because the president had not gotten there yet. Dr. Borkowski went to the wrong part of Tampa looking for the hotel. He was late to the banquet. When President Borkowski arrived he presented Dr. Pride with the Richard F. Pride Fellowship. USF established this fellowship for one million dollars for the improvement of minority educational opportunities in Dr. Pride's honor. USF allocated \$100,000 for the first year of the fellowship and has continued that allocation throughout the years. The Richard F. Pride Fellowship helps minority students complete their education beyond the bachelor and master's levels, and receive a Ph.D. Dr. Pride has received the money with every president.

Betty Castor

President Castor presented Dr. Pride with an honorary doctorate. In 1994 Dr. Pride received an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters.

Dr. Pride comments on the support of the various presidents of USF

"I was just in awe of all that has happened in my lifetime here at the university and the support that I have received from each of the presidents of the university."

Dr. Pride teaches a senior seminar

USF started requiring seniors to take a course called Senior Seminar before they graduated. The course was designed to familiarize students with the university and what it had to offer. He was selected to teach one of the seminars, which he taught for a few years.

Dr. Pride becomes involved with the College of Education

When the College of Basic Studies ceased to exist, USF asked Dr. Pride where he wanted to teach. Someone suggested to Dr. Pride that he should teach African-American studies. Dr. Pride remembers responding to this person by saying, "I don't know anything about

black people. We were never taught anything. My expertise is in administration and supervision in the schools.” Therefore, Dr. Pride ended up in the College of Education, where he stayed for the remainder of his tenure at USF. “I enjoyed every minute of it.”

Challenges that Dr. Pride faced

Dr. Pride recalls a few challenges in terms of issues of promotion and tenure, and salary differences among colleagues. Dr. Pride says he does not know exactly why he encountered problems with these issues. He says he cannot say it was because he is black.

Dr. Pride faces challenges with committees

Dr. Pride has experience in serving on committees. He served on many committees, such as the President’s Advisory Committee, committees concerning Financial Aid and Admissions, and Equal Opportunity committees. When Dr. Pride came to the university, he found that he had a lot to offer, but some people on the various committees did not want to listen to him. He stated his feelings or beliefs about a particular issue and people ignored him. Eventually he won over and they would listen to him.

Dr. Pride faces challenges as chair of a committee

Dr. Pride was chairman of a committee. He found that some faculty members responded very slowly to him as the chairman. He says some people did not show up for meetings. “I decided that I’m going to do this thing regardless.” He did the report by himself and got it approved without the help of those faculty members.

Faculty support of Dr. Pride

He says everyone seemed to be friendly to both him and his wife.

Dr. Pride and his wife are the only blacks to attend President Allen’s balls

They attended all the balls that President Allen held. Dr. Pride and his wife were the only black people there. Their picture always got in the paper because people wanted it to be known that they attended the balls.

Dr. Pride says some people held back their support

“At times, you would find that people wanted to be friendlier, but they were thinking about what others would say. He says some people have later told Dr. Pride that they wanted to help more, but they had to think about their opportunities to move ahead.

Dr. Pride faces challenges involving a faculty committee

Once a faculty committee that Dr. Pride was a part of did not call him to come to a meeting because they had already gotten together and decided who they wanted to be dean or chairman. They left him out. There were six or seven faculty members on the committee. Dr. Pride did not go along with that. Dr. Pride told them that he was not going to review the applications of a particular person when he was just left out of the process. He did not vote on it.

Dr. Pride is elected to the faculty senate

He was elected to be on the faculty senate to represent the College of Education. There were four faculty, including Dr. Pride, that were chosen to be on the senate.

Dr. Pride comments on the challenges he faced at USF

His says it was not the many people that gave him problems, but the one or two.

Dr. Pride helps meet the needs of his students

Most of his students needed financial support. He was able to work with the university in getting students scholarships, work studies, or even just accepted into the university. He says he is in favor of affirmative action. He did not have any problems in getting support at USF. Dr. Pride says he would not recommend a student to come to USF if he did not think the student could succeed. Dr. Pride says he and others provided the motivation and encouragement that some students had never received throughout their lives. With encouragement, students became motivated and determined to succeed.

Dr. Pride writes a proposal for a program called CROP

Dr. Pride wrote a proposal for another program called the College Reach Out Program, or CROP. This program was for junior colleges. He heard about CROP and went to Tallahassee and fought for a CROP program to exist at USF. USF was the first university to get the CROP program. CROP is the same as Upward Bound, but it does not have the federal funding. Students of CROP have tutoring, but do not take as many field trips that students of Upward Bound take.

Dr. Pride helps create a black caucus at USF; issues of concern for the black caucus

Dr. Pride says he and others saw a need for black faculty at USF to have a group that addresses their concerns and needs. At the time, there were about ten people who had their own concerns and wanted to bring it to the attention of the administration from the president on down. It was Dr. Pride's idea to get together and form a group. They first got together as a friendly group with no formality. Eventually they got total approval for being a club or a set group on campus. The caucus addressed issues such as promotion and tenure. Dr. Pride says he and others organized the black caucus so that their concerns and needs would be known. Also, they organized because the caucus provided the black faculty members with a social setting. He says the caucus brought cohesiveness among black faculty members. At first the caucus consisted of just faculty members, but eventually the caucus added staff. The group still exists.

Early issue of the lack of blacks in administration at USF

At the time, there were not many blacks in administration. USF decided to have a training program and selected a faculty member to work under the president in administration. Dr. Pride says that unfortunately the training program lasted just a year. Dr. Pride interviewed the first black person who became a part of administration, Troy Carter.

Dr. Pride starts the first black fraternity at USF

Dr. Pride and others wanted to provide something for students. Dr. Pride started the first fraternity among black students at USF. It was not limited to just black students. The fraternity is called Alpha Phi Alpha, which is a national fraternity in most black colleges, and including at some white colleges, throughout the U.S.

A fraternity for black women begins

Around the same time as the creation of Alpha Pi Alpha at USF, Dr. Pride had a staff member who was an Alpha Kappa Alpha. This staff member started the women's AKA group at USF.

Currently, how many black fraternities are there at USF?

There are four black male fraternities and four black women fraternities at USF.

Dr. Pride comments on the creation of the first black fraternities at USF

He says the creation of black fraternities at USF brought about socialization for blacks and led to blacks becoming presidents of the student government.

Dr. Pride comments on USF

Dr. Pride says throughout his tenure the university treated him well.

Dr. Pride's wife, Eva, leaves USF

Eva remained at USF for three or four years. Dr. Pride says she left because she was not getting the pay she should have been receiving. She was an assistant professor. HCC had recently opened. The college recruited her to come and set up a reading program at HCC. She decided to accept the position at HCC.

Dr. Pride worked in education for forty-eight years

Dr. Pride had worked in the school system for twenty-two years prior to coming to USF. He devoted twenty-six years to USF. Dr. Pride spent a total of forty-eight years involved with education.

What is Dr. Pride most proud of in his twenty-six years at USF?

"I think it's the general acceptance of the administration and faculty here at USF." They supported Dr. Pride in anything he wanted to do. He was able to get support for his programs.

Dr. Pride's last words about USF

The university is very accepting to various ideas if it's well prepared and planned, and [if] you can get enough people to back you with whatever it is, you will receive that support. Dr. Pride says people should use their heads or psychology and work within the system to get what they want.

End of Interview