

7-6-2004

## Scott Wilkinson oral history interview by Danielle E. Riley, July 6, 2004

Scott A. Wilkinson (Interviewee)

Danielle E. Riley (Interviewer)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/usfhistinfo\\_oh](http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/usfhistinfo_oh)



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

---

### Scholar Commons Citation

Wilkinson, Scott A. (Interviewee) and Riley, Danielle E. (Interviewer), "Scott Wilkinson oral history interview by Danielle E. Riley, July 6, 2004" (2004). *Digital Collection - USF Historical Archives Oral Histories*. Paper 232.  
[http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/usfhistinfo\\_oh/232](http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/usfhistinfo_oh/232)

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](mailto: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 50<sup>th</sup> History Anniversary Project

Narrator: Scott Wilkinson  
Current Position: Inter-Fraternity Council  
President  
Date of Interview: July 6, 2004  
Editor: Danielle E. Riley  
Date of Edit: July 13, 2004

Interviewer: Danielle E. Riley  
Location of Interview: Tampa  
Campus Library  
Abstractor: Jared G. Toney  
Date of Abstract: July 13, 2004  
Final Editor: Jared G. Toney

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

*Mr. Wilkinson came to USF as a student in the fall of 2001.*

*Background*

Mr. Wilkinson is originally from Louisville, Kentucky. While he applied to a number of universities, USF was the only school outside of the Kentucky area. His decision was influenced, in part, by his mother, who is herself a USF graduate. Before his visit to USF, he had never before been that far south. "I came and checked it out in the winter. It was nice and warm and sunny, so I decided to try it out ... I got here and I loved it."

*First impressions of USF*

Mr. Wilkinson was particularly impressed when he first saw the university. "It was everything I wanted in a school campus," he recalls. "Just a really beautiful campus ... it makes it easier going to class."

*Deciding on a university*

The final decision, he remembers, took him about a month or two to make. "I liked [USF] the best out of the four schools I applied to, but it just took me a while to ... decide if I wanted to go that far from home."

*First semester at USF*

He began his first semester at USF in the fall of 2001. He chose to live on campus his freshman year, and moved down to Tampa a week or so before classes began. "It was awesome. I recommend staying in dorms to anybody coming to USF. You get the full university experience staying in the dorms as opposed to staying off campus ... You meet so many new people, it's definitely worth it."

*Joining a fraternity*

Joining a fraternity, Wilkinson asserts, is what got him most involved on campus. Walking around the campus one day, he received a flyer on Greek life at USF from a fraternity member. "I just got real involved ... finally decided to go through recruitment week." Though he had not intended to join a fraternity, he discovered it was an

invaluable way to meet people and make friends in an area where he did not know anyone. "It was pretty much like having a home away from home, for me."

#### *"Recruitment week"*

Recruitment week "was fun," Wilkinson recalls. Each night has a different theme such as "game night" in which all the fraternities participate. There is also "usually lots of food," he says. The purpose of the week, Wilkinson explains, is so that pledges are able to meet members of the various fraternities and decide where they best fit. The fraternity he joined was the only one that had a house at the time, located just off campus.

#### *Phi Delta Theta*

The name of his fraternity is Phi Delta Theta. "Our motto is actually, 'One man is no man.' So we're about coming together all as a whole ... we pretty much share the same values and morals - stuff like that. Pretty much we lean on each other for everything. We're really strong on brotherhood." Currently, there are between forty-five and fifty members in his chapter.

#### *Living arrangements*

After spending his freshman year living on campus, he moved into the fraternity house off campus in the fall of 2002, where he lived for a year's time. "You wake up every morning, and you've got sixteen of your best friends just living right next to you." Although they are allowed to have parties at the house, alcohol is not allowed because it is a "dry fraternity."

#### *Benefits of fraternity life*

"I think being in a fraternity has made me more responsible, because I have to figure out a way to balance [academics and fraternity life] or else I'll have to drop ... the fraternity ... It really prepares you a lot for what's after college, because it teaches you how businesses are kind of run ... you have to do so many different things ... You have to learn how to manage your time real well."

#### *Charity work*

Because Lou Gehrig was a member of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity, much of their community service goes toward the fight for ALS, the disease which strickened the former baseball star. Often, the fraternity sponsors sporting events such as kickball and basketball tournaments to raise money for the cause. They also spend time with children at community hospitals around the holidays.

#### *Inter-Fraternity Council*

One of his older fraternity brothers once suggested that he participate in an IFC meeting at the university. He was appointed to a minor position on the council, and progressively became more and more involved with the organization. His sophomore year, he was elected to treasurer. The following year, he was elected president of the Inter-Fraternity council, a position which he currently holds.

### *Demanding schedule*

In addition to his responsibilities with the fraternity organizations, Wilkinson is also pursuing a degree in engineering at USF. “Sometimes it gets a little demanding ... Really, if you know how to manage your time well, you can do it. I have a good support group around me.”

### *IFC President*

His duties as president of the IFC include oversight of the organizations on campus, setting up different processes to manage and monitor the fraternities and sororities. “One of our main goals has been risk management, trying to reduce the risks” in the operation of the newly constructed Greek housing units on campus. “There’s no liquor allowed whatsoever ... That’s been one of my big things since I’ve been president ... trying to figure out how to set this process up [without upsetting the fraternities].”

### *Greek organizations at USF*

“We [the IFC] have a good relationship with the chapter presidents now – they’re real good guys. They understand where we’re coming from. They kind of know that [these] are the steps we have to take, or else series [consequences] can happen ... They know the risk[s] too, so they cooperate with us usually.”

### *Reputations*

In terms of the reputation of fraternities on campus, Wilkinson believes that, across the nation, “it is pretty bad,” though problems on the USF campus are minimal. “[The practice of] hazing has been almost weeded out ... you rarely ever see it anymore. They think that we drink and party all the time ... We’re trying to take the fraternities where they are supposed to be ... that’s why we’re doing the community service ... stuff like that. That’s what they were started for.”

### *Relationship with the community*

Wilkinson believes that the Greek organizations have a fairly solid relationship with the local community in Tampa. “There’s a lot of alumni out in Tampa ... that come from these fraternities and sororities ... the surrounding community’s real supportive of [us].”

### *Benefits of involvement*

Wilkinson espouses the merits of fraternity life, asserting that such involvement “prepares you for what’s after college ... it really does give you a lot of connections.” He has also been able to make a home in Tampa, largely through his involvement with the fraternity at USF. “I meet new people every day ... I know people everywhere in Tampa ... Just getting involved on campus, you meet so many new people.”

### *Academics*

He is currently studying industrial engineering at USF. “Grades always come first for me now. I think being in a fraternity has actually helped out a lot ... The best thing about it is, you’ve got so many other brothers in your same major that you’ve got people to study with, and they help you out ... It’s just all about being motivated ... The chapter president always see the GPAs of the members ... when guys start slacking, all the other brothers

get on you because they don't want you to have to drop the fraternity to get your grades back up.”

#### *Industrial engineering department*

The industrial engineering department, Wilkinson believes, is probably the smallest within the College of Engineering. He chose it because, “Once you get out of school, you have a lot of options ... as opposed to other engineers [who are] kind of stuck in one area ... Industrial engineers can do almost anything they want, because it pretty much teaches you how to make the right decisions.” Because the program is so small, he has been able to establish strong personal relationships with many of his professors. He also sees many of the same students in his classes, and they have come to rely upon each other within the program. “The good thing is, all the professors I've ever had ... are always willing to help you out of class, anytime you want ... They always stress office hours ... They try to get you to ask questions. They all want you to learn.”

#### *Plans after graduation*

After Wilkinson completes his bachelor's degree, he hopes to pursue a Master's of Engineering Science and Management here at USF. “There [are] not many universities across the country who have that program ... it's like a business degree for engineers, so it's kind of cool. I'm really looking forward to taking that actually.” He hopes to graduate in December 2005.

#### *Advice to incoming students*

“I would recommend ... get[ting] involved on campus ... You meet so many different people. It really prepares you for what's after college. I think that's the best thing you can do.” The first step to getting involved, Wilkinson suggests, is participating in various events that are promoted on and around the university campus. “Anytime you see a flyer, always read it, check it out, and you never know what it's going to be like ... they always have free food and everything – at least go for that, and you never know what you'll end up liking.”

#### *End of Interview*