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Linda LaPointe oral history interview by Lucy Jones, April 14, 2004

Linda LaPointe (Interviewee)

Lucy D. Jones (Interviewer)

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USF Florida Studies Center
Oral History Program
USF 50th History Anniversary Project

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TRANSCRIPTION

J: Today is Wednesday, April 14, 2004. My name is Lucy Jones, graduate assistant for the Florida Studies Center. Today I'm at the Nelson Poynter Library on the University of South Florida St. Petersburg campus continuing a series with USF faculty, students, staff, and alumni, commemorating fifty years of university history. Today I am with Linda LaPointe. Thank you for being here with me today.

L: You're very welcome, Lucy. At this point in my life, I am a teacher. I teach freshmen and sophomores at the junior college. The curriculum I teach is primarily composition and literature electives. I've been doing that for fifteen years. I've been teaching for a lot longer than that, over thirty years total in Pinellas County. The Bayboro campus, which is what I call the St. Petersburg campus and always have, is where I began studying psychology in 1970. I was a student of Dr. Robert Fowler's because he was a clinical psychologist, and he's still here today. We had a wonderful department. There were three or four major professors, but you usually were assigned to one, and I was assigned – luckily for me – to Dr. Fowler. I'm not sure how he feels about it. Our nickname for him at that point was "Rat Man." It was clinical psychology. There was no humanistic

psychology at that point so you were all experimenting with rats. We had to perform the experiments, and I did not realize, being an animal lover, that after you do this for an entire semester, what happens to these beautiful, white lab rats – I thought they were beautiful – is they bag them in these huge, black bags, throw formaldehyde in them, suffocate them, and toss them in the dumpster. Dr. Fowler and I had ongoing arguments about this throughout the semester. That's how he received his nickname from a few of us. At the end of the semester he allowed me and two of my friends to take home and adopt three of his lab rats, which is a miserable fiasco because they don't adopt out. They become very mean, and they bite. We released them into the woods, and heaven only knows where those rats are now. It was a wonderful program, and he was a brilliant, brilliant professor with a great deal of patience and humor. It's a pleasure to see him now on campus and to be able to talk to him about those days. He refuses to acknowledge his name any longer, and I'm a little dismayed by that. My first degree was in clinical psychology, and although he probably won't admit being my major professor, he was indeed the professor that I took most of my coursework with. Rat Man. There are many songs to go along with that. The adoption of the lab rats was the big semester victory for three of us. Poor Dr. Fowler.

J: It's probably not the psychological result he had anticipated.

L: I think two years after that, lab rats were outlawed on campus. There were no more experiments with lab rats. He stopped doing that. Most of my electives at that point were in English or history. When you only have a bachelor's degree in

psychology, pretty much you're hired as a testing employee. I went to Juvenile Services Program and began running psychological tests on the adjudicated delinquents. I found that after a year of doing that, it was not what I had a passion for. [It was] interesting, but not what I wanted to do so I came back. I finished my second bachelor's degree in English and took history electives. It worked out that most of my electives applied to my second bachelor's degree. Once that was done, and I think both of them were completed in 1973 because I had the extra bachelors, I began to teach. I went back to the Juvenile Services Program, and they hired me as a teacher. I'm still doing it. That was what I was supposed to do from the very beginning, I think. I'm not sure how I did in clinical psychology, but I appreciated the degree, and the degree worked, but English and literature is what I really love teaching and working at. The history courses I had were phenomenal. We had a wonderful group of historians on campus. They would kind of take students in, no matter what your discipline or your declared major. You could just come in and take these classes. We would be in a class with these scholars, and our class sizes were five, six, or seven. I had no standard of comparison so I assumed that everyone was going to school as a junior or senior in college in the same environment. It was an amazing, amazing privilege to be on this campus. There are a great many stories. My three professors for English were Dr. William Garrett, Dr. Harriet Deer, and Professor Robert Hall. They were not known for being the easiest teachers, but they were phenomenal. It became very much, for the English students and the English professors, kind of a closed environment because we were so small. They knew us; we knew them.

We would go to theater productions together. We would go to their homes. We would study; we would argue. It was a consistent academic environment that just energized you. There was no weak link; there was no bad teacher. It just continued. I became very spoiled because that became, along with Dr. Fowler, the standard of comparison. Now I realize that that was an exceptional environment. When I look at my students who transfer to a very large university, not to a campus like ours, and their sitting in groups of 400 and 500 for an academic area, I'm shocked and a little bit sad that they can't experience what we did. That's how Sudsy and I became class buddies because there were only six or ten of us in a class. What else could you do but team up and study? Plus, she did great P.R. for the department. She was always recruiting people to take these classes, and we did.

J: How did you come to be a student at the St. Petersburg campus?

L: Well, I graduated from the junior college, and it was primarily my responsibility to put myself through school. It seemed that it would be easier to come here. Sudsy had started a semester ahead of me, and was doing great publicity for the professors that were on campus, but when I arrived on campus, I saw these old, wooden, white buildings that did not look like any college campus I had ever seen or looked at. Truthfully, I thought Sudsy was crazy. Then she said, just enroll; just start the coursework. So I did. At that point, the physical environment was rustic. That's the way I would describe it at that point. The teachers were so amazing that it didn't matter what kind of classroom you were in, how old the buildings were, or what kind of noises the building made when it began to storm

and the wind began to blow; you would hear these creakings. We had a volleyball net, we had a swimming pool, we had a snack bar, and a pool table. That became our recreation area. When we were taking English courses, professors were allowed to smoke in the classroom. Dr. Deer was a chain smoker. She would sit up on the desk, we would be around her, and she would just light one cigarette off the other. [She] never once stopped talking and answering questions. This went on for two hours, and it was amazing to me. Once I finished my first semester, I knew I would finish my first degree here. There was no doubt. I was captured easily, but captured well. That's how I came to be here, primarily because it was expedient, and then it became just a wonderful place to learn. I'm not sure I should say this, but I was pregnant in 1970 with my first child, and I was very large. I would kind of waddle to class. Dr. Deer and Professor Hall were very worried that I was going to have this child in the classroom so they would continuously say, if you feel anything, tell us right away; we want you out of the classrooms immediately. Sure enough – I think it was because they kept repeating this warning – one day as I was walking down the hall to Dr. Deer's classroom, I fell face down. I have no idea why. [I was] eight months pregnant. Here [Dr. Deer] comes galloping out. Dr. Hall comes from the paramedics. [They were saying] oh my god, should we call the paramedics? I said, no. I was just really embarrassed. That child was born in May of 1970. When I came back in August, he was able to come back on campus with me and stay behind the activities desk with Sudsy during my classes. His name is Shane. Shane would stay, and he would visit with the students that would go up to Sudsy and get

whatever activities information they needed. He would play in the back, she would baby-sit him, and then after class I would come and get him because we had no childcare facilities. He was the only baby on campus at that time. He was royally spoiled. It was just that type of environment that it was possible, but they were very, very worried that I was going to have that baby in one of their classes. It was a great, great opportunity for him. He kept returning to the campus periodically as he went through school. Some people were still here that remembered him as an infant. It was a good connection for him.

J: Did he end up going to school here as well?

L: No. Unfortunately, he went to North Carolina. He received a scholarship, an academic scholarship, and the other fifty percent was a drama scholarship. He went to a small liberal arts college in North Carolina, which is great for him. Now he lives in Manhattan. I'm not sure how that all worked out. This is where he started his academic career, as a baby. I'm trying to remember some of the other people that were here, in addition to faculty. The Thrushes were a constant. The registrar...we called one of the registration ladies "Granny." Another lady who worked in the administration was Helen Sheffield. The dean of the campus was Lester Tuttle. I ended up having to work on campus as well as off campus so I became the student assistant in the dean's office. He would sing. He would always be humming and singing when he came down the halls so you would know. Here he was approaching. He would be ready to give you some Xeroxing, to have you collate something, or go on errands for him. He was one of the smartest men I've ever worked for. There was a bar around the corner called the

Stick and Rudder. It was a very sleazy little bar. I think it was older than even the structures on campus. Some students were known to go there during their lunch break. It was also very dark in there, so I think that encouraged you to drink a great deal more than you would drink in the sun. We would frequently go over there and relax between morning classes and afternoon classes. That was fine, but Sudsy was able to go back into the activities area after that, and I had to go back to Dean Tuttle's office and work and then go to class. One afternoon, she did that, and I went back. There was a couch in Dean Tuttle's inner office. I thought, he's not here, nobody else is here, so I'll just stretch out on the couch and read before my afternoon class. That did not work out. I literally fell asleep. The next thing I know, he's tapping me on the shoulder. [He said] Linda, Linda, Linda do you think you need to study right now? I think you need to study right now. I bolted off that couch and ran to my class because I was already late. He knew exactly where we had been, the Stick and Rudder. It was the bane of that first two years of our degree work. This is absolute temptation. He was a wonderful man, a brilliant man who also had a very kind streak, thank goodness. I worked for him for the two years that I earned my bachelor's degree as a student assistant in his office. There were many opportunities like that on our campus for students who needed financial aid to supplement what they received, either on scholarship or grant. We could do it here. There was not a lot of competition so it was a very gracious environment for that kind of assistance. I did work for Sudsy, but she was such a horrendous boss – I'm so glad I have this on tape - so demanding, that I had to go to Dean Tuttle. I'm sorry. That's probably the last

time I'll reveal that side of Sudsy's nature. We were able to also have student activities through Sudsy's dedication. I think she built that part of this campus. We started with dinners and a movie, the chicken dinners, a free movie. There was nothing on this campus for students to come together and to meet one another. Even though we were small, we needed to have that kind of collective opportunity so we would know we were a college group and this was from all disciplines. It worked. It worked because every year the demands for more student activities would grow. We had this very small, xeroxed publication called the *Crow's Nest*, which now has evolved into a newspaper. Then it was mostly who's on first, who's on second, who's on third? It was fun. Those types of activities initially allowed students to feel welcome, to feel comforted even though this was a small campus. It was also a commuter campus. Instead of just having students arrive, take classes, and leave, they were able to participate in all those activities because they were free. They were held after class on Friday night when a lot of students would need a social activity. It was wonderful. Faculty and student volleyball teams evolved. Faculty and students would swim laps in the pool in between classes. They would become competitive about who was swimming. The marine scientists would always win. Dr. Betzer would swim lap after lap of the butterfly. Pretty much the backwash would drown the rest of us in the pool. It didn't matter because the campus atmosphere was always one of acknowledging that here we all are together. There was no elitism. There was no hierarchy. I found that to be remarkable in an academic environment. Now that I'm thirty years into an academic environment, I know how remarkable it is.

Maybe then I was naïve, and just thought, this is the way it is. Now I truly know how remarkable that was.

J: You've kept some connections with the campus over the years.

L: Absolutely. Absolutely. There was a time when I was teaching middle school, and I thought, it would be advantageous to get a master's degree. I came back to do that. I was able to study again with Dr. Deer, Professor Hall, Dr. Wells, and Dr. Garrett, which was exciting. I finished my master's degree in 1983. Sudsy and I were the first literature graduates – I hope this is correct – with our master's on the Bayboro campus. I've been lecturing all morning, I should know better. When we came down, it was just a graduation ceremony out on the water. I think what was remarkable about the master's degree is we were told we had to go to the Tampa campus to finish our degrees. It was an exhausting drive, but the professors on this campus managed to manipulate the curriculum so that all of our coursework, except for two courses, we were able to finish on the St. Petersburg campus. When we graduated with our master's, we were St. Petersburg graduates. As we walked down to receive our diplomas – it was a very informal ceremony because it was so small – we were lined up, and there were three of us. Sudsy and I, and I cannot remember the other student's name. Professor Hall and Professor Deer were right there, and they stepped out of line and gave us a huge hug. This is in the middle of the ceremony, so it was amazing. That degree means a great deal because it was an arduous degree. It was so much work and so much, as you know from history, and we were both working full time during that degree. I literally was not sure I would make it through, but with these professors,

we were able to. I was darn glad that it was over. I do remember feeling a sense of pride that we were able to do it on the St. Petersburg campus and finish that degree here. It wasn't always certain from semester to semester in the sequence of courses if it would work to our benefit because we were such a small group. The professors became very assertive and asked for those courses to reach a wider audience than just Tampa, and they did. Now, when you come back to take Ph.D. courses or upper level courses in graduate school, it's very difficult to find them, which I find intriguing. It's almost an inverse proportion or ratio to what happened. I continue to connect to this campus because I really consider it my home campus. Because of the activities that were offered to the community, I had friends that would come here and finish their degrees. [They would] come back, we would attend forums, lectures, and participate in the alumni association activities. There was always something that connected the school to the community. My children would participate in the family activities. I don't want to say the Easter Bunny Festival, but that's what we called it. When Marine Quest started, we always came to that until the children told me they were too old. I was a member of the USF St. Petersburg Singers. We traveled to the nursing homes, and we sang for the older people. That's still going on. My youngest child who is sixteen has just finished his volunteer stint with the USF St. Petersburg Singers. I don't know how old they are, but I do know my first child, who is thirty-three, was carried in at one of the shows. My youngest child who is sixteen just finished volunteering with their last St. Patrick's Day Marathon in the nursing homes in St. Petersburg. I find that remarkable, and I think that's what

keeps me connected to the campus. I would like - this is my dream, but I'm not sure if I'll be able to mentally achieve it – to earn a Ph.D. that was based on this campus, if not in English, in a study area that could be related to English so I could use it as I teach. That would be such a personal accomplishment if that would be possible, and I don't know if it will. I don't know if it will. My fondest dream would be if Sudsy and I could go through that curriculum together, but finding a curriculum that would suit both of us in our geezer years and our crabby stage of life - I'm just not sure that's possible. Maybe Florida history would be it; I don't know. That's what a personal goal would be. I'm trying to remember some of the earlier stories. We had a coffee house on campus. It was kind of a strange little place. It looked like a cave with giant mushrooms painted all over it. Sudsy would sing and play her guitar in the coffee house, but it was always dark because she didn't like the lights on. Students who heard about it would come in, and we would have food, but it was very odd food. It was food that didn't match anything else. [They were] kind of leftovers, a little bit of this, a little bit of that. Never meat, always vegetarian food. [There was] incense burning. Again, that would be on the weekend to try and get students to stay on campus and not leave. I can't remember how long we had the coffee house. I think over a year and a half. That evolved into musical concerts on campus to get students to come in. That was kind of fun because I remember – this is again revealing my age – Dion being one of Sudsy's greater coos. He was able to come to a spring fest and perform. We were all very excited about that. It was in the 1970's and Dion was

here on campus performing. There's a little bit of everything in the history of the Bayboro campus. Nothing strange, though, I don't think.

J: Speakers?

L: I don't remember. They'll have to edit all this coughing out, I'm hoping. Did Sudsy talk about speakers?

J: I remember Russell Means was one of them.

L: I do remember the Writer's Conference began down in the barracks in the old, old marine science building. At that time there were very few people. You'd be in a room with ten or twelve people, and I had heard that there was a real poet that was going to appear on campus, but I hadn't seen any names. As an English major, you just automatically went to the Writer's Conference. When I got here, I looked at the program and Nikki Giovanni was here. I could not believe that we had been fortunate enough to have her on our campus. I went to the workshop. There she was; there I was, one of eight people in a classroom with Nikki Giovanni. It was like being in heaven. I could not believe it. She was so gracious and so good. We spent two hours with her just alone, us, undergraduates with Nikki Giovanni. At that point, she talked about the craft, and she talked about her life as a poet and how hard it had been for her as a black woman to achieve this status. I have never been able to sit with a writer like that in that kind of personal arena except on this campus, and primarily in the Suncoast Writer's Conference. She was one of the first major writers that we had on campus that I remember being just completely captivated by. I don't remember.... Well, I do remember this one unbelievable teacher that I had. Because I was going to teach,

I had to take education courses. The courses were the adolescent, how to teach literature to the adolescent, how to write for the adolescent, but then you had to take statistics and research methods. They were not my favorite choices. Then you had to take educational psychology courses. I said, all right, I'll take one. I did not know this teacher. His name was Dr. Walter Musgrove. I thought, all right, I'll take him. I was really, really not a very enthusiastic student at that point because it wasn't English, it wasn't history, it wasn't psychology; it was something in between. I walked in, and here's this crazy looking guy. He has jeans on. He has a little bit of a paunch. He had thongs, rubber sandals with red socks so that he has his socks mashed into the two areas. I thought, oh my goodness, what am I doing in this class? He was a brilliant educational statistician. He also had a streak of mischievousness that never ended. He would play tricks. He would engage you in an argument against a point of view that he knew you held. I was a humanist by that time, and I did not believe in behavior modification. I did not like Skinner, and he would argue until class ended, and then he would force you to experiment and force you to consider another point of view. He would take us to his house and beat us. He was a sailor, and we would go sailing. All the while, you would be learning from this man. There was no end to it. You didn't know you were learning because a lot of it was arguing and debating, and he would exhaust you. You'd be standing on campus not knowing he was lurking about in his red socks. He never stopped wearing red socks; summer, winter, it didn't matter – he had red socks on. He would come behind you, and you would be on campus just talking or whatever, and he would

suddenly start talking from in back of you, quizzing you on whatever the last class presented. It wouldn't matter. You would be with another professor or another student, he would just have to know that you had paid attention and learned from the last class. He was a remarkable instructor. You were always on point with Dr. Musgrove because he expected the very best out of you. I remember that he had cancer in the final years of his teaching career, and I would come down and see him. At that point, I was teaching at Tyrone Middle, seventh grade English, and I wanted to get out. I was very tired of teaching 150 seventh graders every day. We would argue. Even as sick as he was, he would say, don't get out; the only way to change the system is from within. I would say, no, you become a part of the system when you do that. He would quote studies, and he would bring up examples, even in the final stages of his cancer when he was on heavy, heavy doses of chemo. I miss him. I miss him a lot because he always challenged the status quo. He was rigorous in wanting his students to be the absolute best scholars they could be. He was an exception to many perceptions that people had about the College of Education. He was phenomenal. We missed him when he died. I think that's one of the hardest things. If you stay on the campus or are connected to a campus as I have, some of your professors who you value so much, when they begin to move on, move out, it's very painful. That kind of transition is very painful. This is one of the few campuses I've seen that when there is a funeral for a professor like Musgrove or Professor Shaleman, not just the geography department attends the funeral, not just the education department attended Musgrove's funeral. There were people standing outside the funeral

home. They could not get in. It was overwhelming, the degree of response from the community and from the community of this campus. That is unique. I can still see Musgrove in his red socks. He would follow you, too. If you wanted to stop talking to him so you would excuse yourself and walk away, he would just keep talking and following you so you'd have this crazy professor with red socks still talking as you're walking down the hall. He was great. He was exceptional. I do miss him a lot. I always think of that quote because he would harp on it every single class about changing the system from within. I'm still not sure I agree, but I still hear him in my head. I don't know. I think that when my oldest son began college, what I hoped for him was the environment that I had had here as an undergraduate and a graduate student. Because he went to a private liberal arts college, he came close, but I don't think my other children will be able to participate in that unless they come back here. I still see, in some departments, not in all departments, but in some departments I still see the nurturing of that environment, that combination of academics and humanity that I feel is necessary for true learning. It's not to sacrifice scholarship. I don't think that's ever been sacrificed on this campus. That's been sustained. Professor Hall and Professor Fowler are still teaching, and I think it frightens them sometimes to see that I'm teaching, too. I've been able to adjunct on this campus, and they always look very shocked to see me. I think they remember me as I appeared in those years, which was as a hippie. Flat out, stereotypically dressed in all of the accoutrements. To me, it's just such a privilege to share the campus with them. I know that they're on phased retirement, and they won't be teaching for much

longer, but it's wonderful. A teacher that used to teach in Tampa for education majors who had to get certified could not come over here as Dr. Herb Carl. He taught media. He was one of the first instructors to use film in the classroom as a tool. We would all have to make movies. I think that was in 1975. We would be out in the community with these wonderful cameras and wonderful equipment that he would just take from the Tampa campus and allow his students as majors to go out, make movies, come back, and we would edit them and show them as how they would be used in a classroom. Now, he has retired but is adjuncting at the junior college. His classroom is right next to mine. He's still as vibrant a teacher as he was then. He also writes texts for adolescents, which have been published and used in the classroom. He was another pretty wild instructor that I had. I better leave it at that. It's fun to be teaching with him in another environment. I don't think he's too nervous about me being out there in the world. There are some things that I can't reveal about those early years. I've been sworn to secrecy. There was an administrator, Winston Bridges, [and] there was an administrator, Wayne Hoffman, and I would not expect administrators to become an immediate part of a campus community. It just seems to me more efficient if they're not, but they were the exceptions. They did become part of the community. They knew students by name; they knew students by major. If they saw you studying, they engaged you in conversation, knowing who you were, knowing what you were doing on campus, that you weren't some random student. There was always that personal connection that extended beyond the classroom,

which I appreciated. That kept me coming back. Who wouldn't, at that point?

You can ask me some questions, Lucy Jones.

J: You're doing excellent on your own. Actually, I'm a little curious as to how you perceive the relationship between USF St. Petersburg and St. Petersburg College.

L: We don't want that on tape, do we? At this moment, or in the past?

J: Has it changed?

L: I think it has.

J: They're both campuses that are changing rapidly.

L: Absolutely. I graduated from high school in 1967 and went to the junior college and graduated from the junior college in 1969 and started here in January of 1970. We were a feeder school. The junior college was a feeder school for USF St. Petersburg and for USF Tampa. Everybody knew the academic requirements, and there was always a smooth transfer of academics. No one questioned the level of academics or the proficiency of your degree. If there was an A.A, there was an A.S. That was understandable. There couldn't have been a smoother transfer, and you just had to pay attention to the correct number of credits and the correct number of academics. You couldn't have an overwhelming amount of electives. I think that's the same. As both schools grew, sadly what I see happening, and I want to say this in a tactful way because growth is wonderful. We now offer so many chances for students to achieve so many degrees, certifications, [and] opportunities, but at the same time when that growth is so vast for the junior college, I think – we are huge now – that something is lost, and I'm not sure if that loss benefits the students. For me, personally, on the St. Petersburg campus,

which is where I attended school, what we have lost now is we are strictly a commuter campus. Our students leave at twelve or one. They come back at five or six. What happens is our students do not have bonds such as a lyceum committee or a lecture series. We have a beautiful music center, and that is kind of holding all of the students. If you enjoy a music event, then that's wonderful. We have no student publications any more. When Sudsy was at the junior college, she was the editor of what we call the campus magazine and the yearbook. Next to us were the editors of the newspaper. This was a wild and crazy time. There were protests on campus, and there was a lot of turmoil, but we were allowed to write and to publish freely. They were truly student publications. We have none at the junior college right now. We are told that there is not enough of a student population to support it. When the students come here, I think they welcome seeing the *Crow's Nest*, seeing that we still have a lecture series here, the Florida Studies Program, that invites speakers. John Hope Franklin was on campus. A man for the humanities course that I taught came in from the Whitney Museum in New York City and presented a slide show. It was as if the students were at the Whitney. I would like to see the junior college become more a part of that, but seemingly, since we're a four-year institution now, it's competitive instead of being a feeder school. We seem to have placed ourselves in a position to compete. I think when you do that in a community like St. Petersburg, you hurt the students. That's my personal opinion that's not related to anything other than what I see students struggling with when they graduate from our institution and want to come here, but we want them to finish at

our institution. I no longer think that smooth feeder process academically that we had before exists any more. I think it puts students in a precarious position sometimes. Many students don't want to go to Tampa. They just don't want to make the drive. It has nothing to do with curriculum or teachers. It's that drive. Having made that drive, I understand perfectly what they're talking about. Some are forced to just to get what they need. I don't know, Lucy, if that will heal itself, go full circle, and return to that beneficial relationship for both. I would like to see that happen, but it seems we're still headed for more and more areas of competition for students. I don't feel that that serves the students well.

J: Would there be enough students around?

L: No. Exactly. Exactly. For example, on our bulletin digitized sign, as I drove down here to meet you, I saw that we are now offering education degrees on the St. Petersburg campus. I had no idea we were doing that. This is a four-year bachelor's in education. Well, we offer that here, so immediately you're putting students in a position where they have to choose, where they can't use both schools to achieve. They have to choose; they have to select. I don't know if that's always good. I wish the administration in both areas could have created a more cooperative plan rather than pit one school against the other, which is what I see happening for undergraduate's, bachelor's degrees. I think that's an excellent question. I just hope it's a temporary adjustment to growth, rather than a permanent academic situation. I think that would be terrible for students. They should benefit from both environments. But I'm biased as you can probably tell.

J: I think that I can guess what you would say to this, but I'm curious as to your thoughts on the growth of the USF St. Petersburg campus, which has been an issue over the past year or so.

L: I'm not as knowledgeable as I should be about the areas of growth. I can tell you what I've seen. Personally, again I hate to harp on this, but I want upper-level courses in English here. I don't want to have to drive to Tampa to take them. I find it odd that as the campus expands physically, and we have the Research Institute for All Children's, and marine science is now not just a division, but it's an entire college, as it should have been, that my courses – I'm very selfish – but my courses for English are nonexistent on this campus. You cannot find a 7000 level English course on this campus. I think, why is that? With the growth, shouldn't we approach the curriculum across the board instead of still trying to carve out these pieces? I do think that the staff on this campus and the administration that preceded this sustained the connection to the students. I don't see that as being diminished. I think the current faculty in history, and these are the ones I know. The faculty in psychology is struggling, but Fowler is still there. They are still dedicated to the student first. I don't know about the new faculty because I don't know many of them. I know Dr. Carl's wife, Lucy Carl in art history, art, and graphic arts is a new faculty but still as dedicated to her students as my teachers were. I would hope that in the hiring of faculty that is a priority because we still have the *Crow's Nest*. It's better than ever. It's now a newspaper. The journalism department is phenomenal. They do wonderful things. They might have a Ph.D. program. That would be great. I think that

that's been sustained. I don't think the student connection has had to suffer for the physical growth of the campus from what I can see from my perspective. I have students that come back to me after they graduate from the junior college. They come here, and then they graduate with a bachelor's. They seek me out, and they tell me how wonderful an experience it was, both to go from junior college to here, and to be able to have both campuses. That's why I think the ultimate success would be to sustain that cooperation, not to compete or send students into a competitive environment. That's what I base my responses to, what my students tell me. I think they are the most honest of all the voices you can listen to. I would always listen to the students first. That's my answer to that very good question. It was a good question.

J: Thanks.

L: That's why you're in charge.

J: You've actually covered a lot of the questions that I come to interviews with.

L: Thank goodness. Thank goodness. That's what happens when I'm nervous. I just talk and talk and talk and hopefully they can edit out the coughing and all the other stuff.

J: That's fine. You've pretty much been telling me things that you've been thinking of. Obviously you've thought about this before you came in. Let me just scan through my list real quick.

L: I haven't told you any Bob Hall stories because I assume Sudsy has. No?

J: We can always hear them from another source, another point of view.

L: He's never going to hear this tape, I hope. He could rescind my degree. There are many, many Bob Hall stories. We had quarter systems initially so you would go for ten weeks, I think, is a quarter. There were four segments to a school year or an academic year. Professor Hall decided that we would learn about Irish literature, but even more exciting, we would learn about James Joyce in a quarter. We signed up for it. It was a full class. Most of his classes completely fill up, and they still do. Being naïve, I thought that would be fine. Professor Hall thought, not only should we learn about James Joyce, we should read *Ulysses*, *Portrait of the Artist*, *Dubliners*, and start a little bit of *Finnegan's Wake* in a quarter. This is a scholar, who demands that you come to class, and you come to class having read everything and taking notes, being ready. I always sat in the last seat in the back row. It's just a familiar place for me. No matter what class I'm in, that's where I sit. I don't raise my hand because I do not like speaking out loud. Every single class, he would call on me. I would not be raising my hand, I would be looking down at the desk, and for ten weeks, we read. *Ulysses* has 800 pages. *Portrait*, I don't know. *Dubliners*, I don't know, but we knew that text so well. He's such a phenomenal teacher that it was almost like being in Ireland at the end of that class. When we were done, we all had to write a major paper. I think that was in 1983, maybe 1984. I wrote a paper on *Ulysses* and Leopold Bloom's wife. I had always struggled with Professor Hall to get the grade that I wanted. Friends of mine would seemingly always get the grade that I struggled for. On that paper, which seemed to be preceded by a great deal of insomnia, wringing of the hands, and screaming and yelling, I received the highest grade

I've ever received, with a note on the back saying, think about publishing this paper. I still have that paper, and that was 1983. He just extracted by hook or by crook, trial by fire – that's the best way I can describe his courses – he extracted the very best from his students or you left. If you did not want to do that, you would leave and find another class. That was probably one of the best things I've ever written in my life. After that semester, motivated by masochism or whatever, Sudsy and I, who was also in the course, left for Ireland to participate in the James Joyce centennial in Dublin at Trinity College. We felt, after ten weeks of Bob Hall, it was amazing that we could handle this. There we were. He was so excited that we were going. Pretty much, this was a conference for scholars on Joyce. We were two students, and they loved it that we were there. We were with Richard Ellman. We were with Marilyn French, who became a popular author but first was a Joyce scholar. All of these people that we had read the scholarship on with Bob were there, in the flesh, in Dublin at Trinity College. We just sat with them and listened to them. If it hadn't been for him, I don't think I would have taken scholarship to that degree. It was remarkable. I wish he had come with us, but he had to continue teaching. I lugged all my books from that course through Dublin, thinking I needed every single book that I had purchased for Bob Hall. So here I am, this goofy graduate student in Dublin. That's how wonderful of an instructor he is. I would never have gotten on that plane for Ireland without that course. Thinking I could do and listen to anything, and pretty much I did. People were so gracious to us. We were the only two students in that whole conference. That was great. There are more Bob Hall stories. I worked at

a doughnut shop as an undergraduate, and I had the drunk shift, which was twelve to five. After the bars closed the people would come in. He would show up with a copy of Perceval, and we would go over the reading at two in the morning with drunks sitting at the coffee machine waiting, because he was worried I wouldn't be able to finish the course. That's the kind of instructor he is. He would always say, are you working tonight? Are you going to be able to finish the reading? I'd say, I'll read at work. Usually on one of those nights, he'd stop in. He still is a remarkable teacher. That's it. I'm done.

J: All right. Thank you.

L: Thank you, Lucy Jones, extraordinary interviewing student and scholar, I might add.

J: Completely unsolicited.

L: That's right. Truly unsolicited.

J: Thanks.

End of Interview