

FNP 49

Interviewee: Charles Edward AEd@ Barber

Interviewer: Ralph Lowenstein

Date: March 9, 2000

L: I am interviewing Ed Barber at the *Alligator* offices in Gainesville, Florida, near the University of Florida campus, on March 9, 2000. Ed, would you state your full name, please?

B: My full name is Charles Edward Barber.

L: And where do you live?

B: I live at 4205 N. W. 21st Terrace, Gainesville, 32605.

L: And give me the business address.

B: 1105 W. University Avenue, Gainesville, 32601.

L: And your business telephone?

B: (352) 376-4446.

L: Ed, what we are going to do now is talk about your history with the *Alligator*. You are now the general manager of the *Alligator*, or business manager?

B: The title is general manager. Actually, I wear more than one hat.

L: Give me all the hats that you wear.

B: Okay. The *Alligator* is owned and published by a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) educational organization. Of that organization, I am the president, the secretary and treasurer. Then, the *Alligator*, of course, is the division of that organization, and I am the general manager of the *Alligator*.

L: And what about the *High Springs Herald*? Do you have some position there?

B: Yes. We own the Herald Publishing Company, of which I am the president, and it [is] published as a wholly-owned for-profit subsidiary of Campus Communications. It publishes the *High Springs Herald*, of which I am the publisher.

L: Are those all the business enterprises associated with the *Alligator*?

B: Well, we do operate under some other names. For example, we have the

Independent Florida Alligator Xtra which the initials spell out the *Independent FAX* and that is a fax newsletter we sent out every morning to those who wish to receive it. We also have *alligator.org*, which is the umbrella that includes the *Alligator Online*, just published on that website.

L: And that is a daily electronic newspaper?

B: That is correct.

L: Let's go back a little bit into your history. Where were you born?

B: I was born in Miami, Florida. October 30, 1939. The day before Halloween. As a matter of fact, I used to think that people were celebrating my birthday a day late. I was born at Victoria Hospital. At that time, my parents lived in a section of Miami called Allapattah, which is kind of a village within Miami.

L: And what did your father do?

B: He was a bus driver for the local Miami transit company, and my mother was a homemaker.

L: And what high school did you go to?

B: When I was nine, my parents bought some land out at the edge of the Everglades, and we hand-cleared that this is for real and built a home and moved out there. So, eventually, I went Hialeah Junior High and then Hialeah High School.

L: You lived there until you graduated high school?

B: Yes, and afterward. I graduated in 1957. We were the first graduating class of that high school.

L: How did you happen to get to the University of Florida?

B: When I was nine, prior to moving out to the edge of the wilderness, I started a little neighborhood newspaper that lasted two issues. I did also other odd jobs, like I sold vegetables off the back of a truck. So, I did a lot of odd jobs. Anyway, I got interested in that, but the realities of a nine-year-old publishing a newspaper in those days was not as realistic as it might be today, say, on the [World Wide] Web. At any rate, in high school then, I joined the newspaper staff [of the] the *Hialeah High Record*. I had an excellent advisor. Hard as nails. She was really tough.

L: What was her name?

B: Her name was Alfreda Miller, and she was really, really good, but tough. That is why she was so good. So, eventually, in my senior year, I became editor and joined Quill and Scroll [journalism honor society]. So, I was very interested in journalism. However, also in my senior, the fall of the senior, I met the love of my life. I loved her a lot more than I loved journalism at that time. Her name was Judy. Still the love of my life. So, in those days this was 1956 among my social circle, college was not anything in the cards at all. I mean, the thing then was to get a job, marry, eventually own a home and raise a family, that sort of thing. So, that is the direction in which I went, and I went to work for a bank.

L: Right out of high school.

B: Well, I first worked for a florist and then went to work for a bank, but I had joined the Reserves. So I knew I was going to be shipped out.

L: The Army Reserves?

B: No, this was the U. S. Coast Guard. So, I knew I was going to be shipped out for basic training, and I was, in November of 1957.

L: Why did you join the Reserves, since it was not wartime?

B: There was the draft, so I preferred to put in eight years of part-time duty than two or four years of full-time duty. So, when I came back, I went back to work for the Hialeah-Miami Springs Bank.

L: What did you do there?

B: I started as a records clerk, filing canceled checks, and became the chief records clerk, and then I became the inventory room manager.

L: You went into the Coast Guard, for how long a duty?

B: That was for six months, of active duty for training, in 1957.

L: So, you graduated high school in 1956?

B: No, in 1957. I am sorry. I graduated in June of 1957, and in the fall in 1957, I went away for active duty.

L: So, by 1958, you were back at the bank.

B: I was back at the bank by 1958.

L: So, how long did you work at the bank altogether?

B: Until I left for school, which was 1962.

L: So, for about four years, you worked for the bank?

B: Yes, including part-time, or temporary, I should say.

L: What was the epiphany that sent you up to the University of Florida?

B: I moved along in the ranks. I became a teller, an outside auto-teller, and business teller and the front-line teller. I took banking courses that are offered through the banking institute. But, I saw that the bank officers, the next thing after you became, say, head teller, your next move would to become, say, a platform officer. Somehow I cannot remember how, I guess it was employee gossip I found out that these people were not making but about \$20 a week more than I was, after about fifteen years on the job.

L: The bank tries to keep that a secret from everybody, right?

B: I tell you, I do not know what it is like today, but in those days, you had to dress extremely well and were very poorly paid compared to the general public. Judy and I discussed it for some time. By this time, we had a child. We got married May 28, 1960, and our daughter was born the following year, in 1961. Judy had an aunt and uncle who lived in Waldo, so we came up on a long Thanksgiving weekend. I came over to look at enrolling at UF [in] November, 1962. and she went to see about employment opportunities, and she was hired. She had to start in a couple of weeks at the university. So, that made up our minds very quickly.

L: What really made up your mind was finding out what the higher-paid people were being paid at the bank?

B: Well, that was, as you said, the epiphany.

L: That was the catalyst.

B: Yes, right. So, I thought, what do I want to do? We talked about that. What can I do? So I decided that I might get a degree in English, not journalism, and I might teach school or something like that. In those days, I was not particularly enamored of the shoe-leather journalism, you know, that would take me away from my family at two o'clock in the morning as a beginning reporter since I was already sort of settled, you might say, with a wife and kids and I wanted to be

with them. So, although journalism was still my first love, I thought I would do something else. At any rate, we beat a hasty retreat to Miami, and Judy got stuff together and came back up and started working and lived with her aunt and uncle in Waldo for about three weeks while I pulled loose-ends together. We had an old car, and I had it so full that the only place in it that I could sit was right behind the wheel. Everything else was crammed full, plus a full trailer that I was pulling behind. So, I left Miami, and I could only do about forty-five miles an hour, to come up here. In the meantime, the university had misplaced our application for on-campus living, so we had to store our furniture and move in with her aunt and uncle for a while until we could get over and move into Flavet III. That was a godsend, Flavet III.

L: Did you have to wait a semester before you could do that?

B: Yes. As a matter of fact, they had lost the whole package, including my application, so I could not even get enrolled until the summer session of 1963, where I was originally going to enroll in the earlier session of 1963. I think they were on a quarter system.

L: So what did you do?

B: Just worked part-time. I actually got enrolled in the summer of 1963. I somehow tested out [of] honors English, and I aced that. I was very proud of that, and I thought, boy, this was English; you know, English was going to be my field. At the same time, I was getting interested in the *Alligator* because I was reading it, of course, every time it came out, as a student. I was also trying to find part-time work. In those days, it was very difficult to be a student in Gainesville, in lots of ways. For example, in Flavet, to put in a phone, even though I had a phone in Miami—we had our own apartment and everything—and I was a member of the Reserves and had been a father and was over twenty-one, because I was a student, I had to have my father co-sign the installation of the phone. Merchants would not take checks from students, even though at that time the university was so *in loco parentis* that they would withhold your grades if you had some debt to the community, not the university but the community. Even with that fail-safe, merchants were just anti-student, unless you had cash. It was just incredible.

L: How long did you live in Flavet? Did you live there the whole time you were an undergraduate?

B: No, we lived there until 1966.

L: You started school in . . .

B: Summer session of 1963. I was going along with my undergraduate [program]. It

was the University College at that time, and you took all these undergraduate courses and so forth. Since my track was English, I was taking English courses as my electives. I ran into a course which was taught by a professor whom I will not name . . .

L: Why not?

B: Because.

L: Is he still around?

B: No, and why sully his name when he cannot defend himself? I want to be fair. Anyway, it was classical literature, and I had a really tough time with it. I mean, I had made straight A=s in English and had not done badly in my other courses, either. But I ran up against this. He lectured from papers that were actually brown, his lecture notes. I mean, they were crinkled and fraying at the edges, they were so old. Well, it was classical literature, you know. Classical literature does not change. But, I was having a lot of trouble, because there had been big gaps in my high school education. I had never dreamed I would be going to college. Therefore, I skated through. I cut classes, especially to work on the newspaper. So, college, of course, was very different. I was having a lot of trouble with this course. So, during his office hours, I went to see him. I knocked on the door. He asked me to come in, and I went in. I explained to him that I was having problems, and he said, well, you either get it or you do not, Mr. Barber. And I thought, you know, this guy is high-up in the faculty of the English department and I am going to run into him several times over the course of the years, so I am going to think about switching majors.

L: Were you still a freshman at that point?

B: My first year of school, right. I think it was the second semester, maybe. No, it must have been the third semester, because I took...

L: Quarter system, so it could be the first year.

B: Yes. So, I started thinking about changing my major. Again, Judy and I talked about it, and I decided that I would try journalism. I took intro-to-mass-communication, and at the same time, I went to the *Alligator* and saw the excitement and so forth, although it was a little too much excitement at the time. In the early fall of 1963, I went down to the basement of the Florida Union, which is now the Manning Dauer building. At that time, of course, it was called the living room of campus, and it was the union building. The Reitz Union had not been built yet. That is where the *Alligator* was located, along with the yearbook, the *Seminole*.

- L: In the basement of what is now the Dauer building?
- B: That is correct. It was called the Florida Union. So, I went in and talked with some people, and while we were talking and so forth, there was a big commotion of people yelling and screaming. That is not all that unusual, except that they were really kind of vicious. [This is] fall of 1963. So, I did a couple of little stories over the weeks. I was trying to find work in town and, of course, also doing studies. At any rate, I finally said, this is too chaotic. I might come back, but I am resigning. So, I let them know, and I left. Ironically, of course, that was the semester that JFK was assassinated, and so they had, probably, their biggest news story, maybe, of the century. They put out an extra for it and so forth, and by this time, I was gone. I was not a part of that.
- L: You were, by this time, a second-year student?
- B: No, I was still a first-year. This was the fall of 1963.
- L: You were majoring in English for a year, and then you changed your major.
- B: Yes, but I was interested in the *Alligator* and trying to get on the staff before I switched my major. So, after a while, I got some part-time work, so I did not go back to the *Alligator* until the summer of 1964.
- L: That is about the time you decided to change your major.
- B: Exactly. John Askins was the summer editor. Oh, I remember now what the system was; it was two longer semesters and a short semester for the summer. During the summer, it came out weekly, and it was very different because, of course, it was a weekly, and they had a separate editor. They would have the same editor for the fall and spring, and in the summer, it would be a different editor. Then, in the fall, Walker Lundy came back as editor, and I worked under him on a daily basis. I did general assignment for a while and then took the administration route and the Tigert-beat, which was, of course, the UF administration. So, I had an opportunity to then have a lot of interviews with the then-president, J. Wayne Reitz.
- L: How did you find him? What was his attitude toward the press?
- B: Well, mixed. I think for small things and things that he might do or say personally, he was understanding. If there was a mistake made, a misquote or something--not that I ever did it [an ironic statement]--he was very understanding about it, but [not] if it became an outside issue. For example, there was an incident I will talk about later that involved upsetting a legislator, who was also an alum, I believe, and some things that upset Florida Blue Key and student government, and that

ultimated in, frankly, a suppression, a harsh suppression, of the *Alligator*.

L: This is probably about 1965, you were on the Tigert-beat?

B: I think it was, yes.

L: Parallel to this, you were in what was then called the School of Journalism?

B: Well, I was still in University College.

L: You were a sophomore by then.

B: Right, but I was taking journalism classes.

L: Were you happy with your journalism classes?

B: Oh yes, very much so.

L: Had you had anybody that we know, like Buddy Davis?

B: Buddy Davis [and] Hugh Cunningham.

L: Did they make an impression on you?

B: Oh yes. They made an impression on everyone.

L: To the extent that it inspired you and encouraged you to go into the field?

B: Oh yes, very much so, but the pragmatic of hands-on, working on the *Alligator*, frankly, inspired me just as much. But, there was no denying that the instruction at the college was vital to being able to move ahead in journalism, because one cannot teach oneself. I mean, you have got to have some good professional instruction to be able to avoid mistakes as much as possible and to craft stories in the way they should be crafted and all the things that go with that.

L: It is interesting that you mention that, because people who go to Ivy League schools, where there is no journalism taught, go to work directly for the daily campus newspaper, and a lot of people in journalism believe they have learned just as well as a person who goes to a professional school. What is your view on that?

B: Well, I disagree. Of course, I do not have their experience. I can see where someone might think that, from the standpoint of the broad exposure in the Ivy League situation to classical literature and other things. But the College of

Journalism and its requirements of education outside the college does the same thing.

- L: But as general manager and business manager and overall adult supervisor of the *Alligator*, you have had an opportunity to see students who have gone to the College of Journalism, and there are plenty of students who have worked for the *Alligator*, have even become editors, who are English majors or history majors. Have you detected any difference?
- B: It is a little hard for me to say because I have not been in their daily budget meeting, and I do not know the influences that someone who has been in the college has had in their hammering-out story ideas and ethical questions.
- L: By budget, incidentally, you do not mean monetary budget.
- B: No, news budget.
- L: The news stories that they are designing to go in there.
- B: Right. So, we may have had an excellent editor who was not a journalism major, but they may have been highly influenced by people who were [journalism majors], who were on the staff at the time.
- L: That is true.
- B: Plus, many times, people in the college have acted as unofficial advisors, all the time, where they will call a faculty member and say, what do you think of this? Then, they will call alumni who have been in the field for a while, who were editors and they knew them then, and they give their perspective. They do not do that on every story, of course. It is just those things that are tough decisions. But it is completely up to them whether or not they do it. They have the freedom to ignore everyone, if they wish.
- L: As a sophomore working on the *Alligator*, you are obviously quite different than most of the other staff members. First of all, you were at least four years older, you had some military experience, and you had a family. Did that make your position any different, really, *vis-a-vis* the other students?
- B: Only that I did not go out drinking afterward, and I did not party with them. I was not a member of a fraternity like some of them were. Those kinds of things. I was not able to go to a lot of the sports games, although, at that time, if you were a fee-paying student, you got in free to the football games. But it would have cost us five dollars for Judy to join me, plus getting a babysitter, and we just could not afford to go, even though it was free for me, and I would not go without her. I

would not like that.

L: In those days, were you paid to work on the *Alligator*?

B: Yes, a small stipend, and I cannot remember what it was.

L: Let=s go back, to your experience. You were a Tigert Hall correspondent, and you covered Tigert Hall in your sophomore year. Then what was your association?

B: I think I became editorial-page editor in the spring of 1965. That was what they called the opinions editor then. So, I wrote a lot of editorials and laid out the pages. At the same time, they had an opening over in what was called the paste-up lab, which was created when the *Alligator* went daily and stopped being printed at the *Gainesville Sun*.

L: When you came aboard, it was a daily by then.

B: Right.

L: And where was the paper actually printed?

B: It was printed in Leesburg, Florida, believe it or not. It was driven down every night and driven back up. The negatives were driven down. I know that for a fact because I did it several times.

L: That is seventy miles each way.

B: Right, and I did it several times because they had an opening in paste-up which paid by the hour. I think it was \$1 an hour. So, after I got through with doing the editorial page and I was always busting deadline then I went over and pasted-up. Then, after I pasted-up, then we had our own production camera. We shot the flats and made them into negatives, and then they had to be opaqued to take out all the mistakes, the little pieces of dirt and so forth that showed up on the film. Then the actual delivery to the printer and the delivery to the various locations of the circulation was done on subcontract, so the subcontract driver would come by and pick up the negatives. By this time, it would be about one in the morning. So, I would get the negatives over to that person, and they would drive it and that would be the last of it. But, sometimes, that person did not show up and everybody else was gone, so I would call the subcontractor and he would say, would you mind taking it down? Well, what choice did I have? So, I would drive it down to Leesburg, wait until it was printed and help burn the plates and take the copies off the press.

L: That is an all-nighter, right?

B: All-nighter, and then drive it back.

L: Roughly, what was the circulation in those days?

B: I think it was around 15,000 or 16,000. But that was not a common occurrence. One time later on, after I had left the editorial side, I had come in at eight o'clock in the morning. After working until two o'clock that morning, I came back at eight. And worked all day and then had to work around the clock to come back. Coming back, I woke up driving down the side of the road heading for a culvert. Once I got back on the road and got back to Gainesville, I went to the office, after delivering the papers. I went back to the office, and now it was about seven-thirty in the morning and I was totally exhausted.

L: More than twenty-four hours of no sleep.

B: Right. Of course, I was haggard, dirty, grimy, had ink all over me and stubble. The business manager came in and he said, Barber, I do not want to see you coming to work looking like that ever again. I let him have it. I said, I am never doing this again, ever; do not ever ask me; if the guy does not show up, then the subcontractor is going to have to take it; that is all there is to it; I am not going to do it again. And I never did. But I was a patsy.

L: 15,000 copies of the paper in your car--was there any room for anything else? That is a lot of papers.

B: There must have been a truck that I used, but I cannot remember. It was not my own car, because we only had a little Volkswagen Beetle. It must have been the subcontractor's truck. I must have had to go over to his place and pick it up, but I cannot remember.

L: Were you going to school at this point?

B: At this time, I was no longer going to school.

L: We are up to 1964, right?

B: Right, and my grades started to suffer, as you can imagine, because I was trying to work both the editorial side and production at night, to make some money. I became the executive editor. This was not the editor-in-chief. What they called executive editor was kind of [a] mix, kind of like an assistant managing editor/new editor combination.

L: Are we into 1965 by now?

- B: Must be 1965. But this editor was very political. This was some time after Lundy.
- L: We have to know the names of the editors that you worked under, really. I mean, we are getting a history of the *Alligator*, too, so it does not really make any sense not to have a name.
- B: Let=s say that my perception of this person, and his name was Ernie Litz...
- L: Is he the one who succeeded Walker, or was there somebody else in between?
- B: I think there was someone in between.
- L: Well, that is okay. Ernie Litz was then the editor.
- B: Right.
- L: And you were the executive editor by this point.
- B: Right, and I think Steve Vaughn was the managing editor, [although] I am not sure. But my perception was that Ernie was too involved with student government, with the actual helping with the campaign, while he was editor of the *Alligator*. So, I gave notice and resigned and then worked only on the production side. Then, the next editor was Steve Vaughn, but by this time, I was more heavily involved in the production side because I was making a lot more money over there. I was still going to school, but I was not on the editorial side any more. I hated it because I was in the midst of a huge story that I had been working on for weeks and weeks about the infirmary, and I was not able to complete it. It was turned over to another reporter whose name I cannot even remember now, and she never completed it. I thought it was a good story. It involved a lot of stuff. As a result, even though the story never saw the light of day, the interviews with J. Wayne Reitz, in asking him questions about the infirmary and so forth, I am sure helped him make a decision, because soon after the interviews and before the story was to be published, although it was never published, he switched the control of the infirmary from what was then the College of Physical Education to be under Shands.
- L: Was there some kind of scandal going on or just inefficiency?
- B: First of all, the infirmary started as a first aid station for intramural sports and people playing sports. You had to be in the ROTC [Reserve Officer Training Corps] or you had to take physical education as a student, as a requirement, unless you were a veteran. It grew from that to serving the general populace, and part of what was going on is that at that time, and they still exist today for all I

know, doctors who were not licensed by the state of Florida could practice in the infirmary. People who had lost their license could practice. But I think this was throughout the state. In other words, I think this is where they got doctors to work in mental hospitals and prisons. So, in state institutions, you could get a quickie medical degree in the Bahamas and...

L: If you could not administer to real people, then you could administer to criminals and students?

B: Right. Same class, right? But, there were some interesting things going on, and later, a part of that story broke concerning a psychiatrist who operated over there.

L: So, you moved off into production completely.

B: Right.

L: And is that the last time you ever worked on the editorial side of the *Alligator*?

B: Yes.

L: Let's talk about what happened with school at this point. This is still about 1965?

B: Yes, late 1965.

L: Because you were in Flavet until 1966.

B: Right.

L: So, you would have had to have been a student.

B: Exactly. So, I got into grade trouble, and I dropped out.

L: So, by 1966, you dropped out of school.

B: Right.

L: But continued to work for the *Alligator*, in production?

B: Right, because in 1966, a career staff position opened in the production lab, as the assistant production manager under Don Addis, who was the production manager at that time.

L: Don Addis was the production manager, full-time?

B: Full-time.

L: And this is the second full-time job, then?

B: Right.

L: Were there any other adult supervisors at that time?

B: Yes. I am trying to think of a sequence. When I first went to the *Alligator*, there was what they called the executive secretary, and his name was John Epperheimer.

L: And that was a full-time job for the university, supervising the *Alligator*? He did not have any other student activities?

B: Well, the *Alligator* and the *Seminole*.

L: All the student publications, executive secretary of the student publications.

B: Right, and there was a woman who was kind of a receptionist/bookkeeper/secretary.

L: So, essentially, there were three full-time jobs until your job opened, and you became the fourth full-time person?

B: Yes.

L: That was the executive secretary, a secretary to the executive secretary, production manager, and then the fourth full-time job became yours, which was assistant production manager.

B: Right.

L: How much college had you completed by the time you dropped out?

B: I was in the latter stages of my sophomore year. Epperheimer left, and he was replaced by a fellow who had been a student, a business manager for the *Alligator*, and his name was Gary Burke.

L: Is that still 1965?

B: 1965.

- B: And then Don Addis left, and they hired a fellow by the name of **Jim Moorhead** as production manager.
- L: You were not eligible to move up at that point?
- B: I had just started. I was there a few weeks. And Jim was a former editor of the *Alligator* and had worked for the *Ocala Star-Banner*, I believe.
- L: You dropped out of school to become an assistant production manager of the *Alligator*. Let=s wrap up the rest of your educational career at the University of Florida.
- B: That was it for a while. Unfortunately, at that time, there were very few courses offered at night.
- L: We are at 1965?
- B: Right, at the university, and I was, frankly, so busy during that day that I just could not get away to go to class. Eventually, I started night classes at Santa Fe Community College and got my associate=s [degree] through there. Then, in 1971, I believe, I started back part-time in the College of Journalism, but, again, never completed coursework. I may have taken three or four courses, so I guess I was a very lower-level junior.
- L: When you disconnected completely.
- B: Yes.
- L: Back to 1965, as assistant production manager. What did that job consist of?
- B: First thing in the morning, we would tear apart the flats from the newspaper of the night before. We would tear apart the negatives and store them.
- L: Were you still using hot-type?
- B: No, we were [using] cold-type.
- L: Offset.
- B: Right. We would take ads off the flats and file them and those kinds of things and start, then, on the ads for the next day=s issue. Then, late afternoon, editorial copy would start coming in, and we would paste all that down with the headlines. We would typeset the stories and the headlines. Then, of course, it would come

through the evening, and we would make corrections, you know, various proofing functions and alterations. So, then, toward the end of the evening, I would go into the camera room and start making half-tones of photographs that the editorial department had sized and cropped. I would make half-tones of those, and, then, as the pages were finished, I would shoot those pages. Then, when all these dried, I would strip the half-tones into the pages and opaque them, get them ready for the subcontractor.

L: Right, and that was still going down to Leesburg?

B: Yes.

L: And what was it, the Leesburg newspaper?

B: It was a daily. The *Leesburg Commercial*.

L: Who owned that paper?

B: At that time, it was part of the Perry chain.

L: So it became a *New York Times* paper later.

B: Right. Of course, this was bid on an annual basis, but the publisher there was Paul Brooks, who is now deceased. He moved to the *Ocala Star-Banner*.

A nice fellow. We always got along very well. When he moved to *Ocala Star-Banner*, he bid against the *Commercial* and won it, so we were able to get closer to home, which was wonderful for us.

L: Now, what are some of the interesting things that have happened to the *Alligator* over the years? You started really working full-time for the *Alligator* in 1965, so you have really worked full time for the *Alligator* for the last thirty-five years.

B: But there was a hiatus of three years. I was gone for three years.

L: You will get to that in due time. So, start telling some of the interesting and unusual things that happened with the *Alligator* from the time you really joined them in 1965.

B: One of the things that happened on the editorial side was that there was an off-campus magazine called the *Charlatan*. It originally started, I think, in Texas, and the publisher moved here. At any rate, he had some friends who worked at the *Alligator*. Some of them worked at both places, both the off-campus humor magazine and at the *Alligator*. But, to back up a

little bit, some problems started between the *Alligator* staff and student government and Florida Blue Key [honor society]. Actually, they had not started; they continued, but they came to a fevered pitch.

L: Who was the editor?

B: Benny Cason. A fine editor.

L: That was around 1965 to 1966, I take it?

B: Somewhere around there. He later became an assistant, I think assistant managing editor for the *Washington Post* and, in fact, was involved in the Watergate stories. Later, he became the executive editor of UPI [United Press International]. He left there and went to the *Journal Papers*, a string of weeklies around D.C. Now, I think he publishes a weekly in Ohio. At any rate, Blue Key was a bastion of all male dominance of student politics and other things on campus. They had secret tapping ceremonies where they would tap some people and blackball others, and your future in Florida politics was largely decided on whether or not you got into Blue Key because all the alumni would rally to your cause. They sent a reporter, a very dynamic reporter, who happened to be female, to burst into this secret meeting,. This so outraged them when I say they, [I mean] the various officers or members they decided they would retaliate. So, the board of student publications called Benny Cason early one evening and said, we are having a meeting.

L: The board of student publications was the board that oversaw the *Alligator*, since the *Alligator* was really owned and run by the university.

B: Correct.

L: To back up, were you a university employee?

B: Yes. This was during the time when, by one person, I think, it was a faculty-dominated board. It was a presidential-appointed committee. There were students on it, but they were not students involved with the *Alligator*. They were political appointments.

L: Politicians-Blue Key-student-government students.

B: Exactly. So, when he walked into the room, not only was the board of student publications there but a bunch of Blue Key and student government leaders also, the chancellor of the honor court, president of the student body, treasurer of the student body, the whole works. So, I do not know how this worked. I do not know if there was a break or if he asked for a break or whatever, but he called Buddy

Davis [professor, College of Journalism] and asked him if he would come down. He said, you know, this is a kangaroo court; they are going to crucify me. So he did come down to speak before the board. Another professor was the chair of the board of student publications. As a matter of fact, he was assistant dean, John V. Webb. They proceeded to bring these charges against Benny.

- L: For sending the reporter to interrupt the Blue Key [meeting].
- B: Yes, and what they considered inaccurate reporting and negative press and all kinds of things of that nature. One of the witnesses to this meeting was the personal assistant although I am sure that was not his title to J. Wayne Reitz. He must have sat close to the chair. Of course, I got this secondhand, because I was working to get the paper out. I could not be at the meeting. But he was getting instructions, evidently, now and again from Tigert Hall, the president himself. I am talking about the assistant. The assistant would then pass on these instructions to the chair. We know for a fact that there was a time when a note was passed to a chair that said, well, I will tell you what it said in a minute. They voted to remove [Cason] as editor. It amazes me how some people do not understand the intellect of college students. They think they are really idiots sometimes.
- L: Now, the chairman was John Webb who was a professor of journalism and assistant dean.
- B: So, when they were through with the meeting, they just wadded up the note and threw it in the trash. Well, someone went over and picked it up and an enterprising journalism student and it said, cut the discussion and vote, and that is when they voted to . . .
- L: And that was the message from J. Wayne Reitz.
- B: Right, through his assistant. So they voted to remove Benny Cason. Well, the only other person that anyone could remember and, indeed, no one I have ever talked to or anything I have read about the *Alligator* who had been removed as editor was Dave Lawrence.
- L: That was before your time.
- B: Yes, just before my time. At any rate, the managing editor happened to be the woman who tried to get into the meeting--Yvette Cardozo. Well, ordinarily, when the editor is removed, the managing editor moves up. She became editor that night and was removed the next morning.
- L: So they had another meeting to remove her?

B: I do not think they even had a meeting. But, whatever happened, she was no longer the editor. The fellow who was executive secretary at that time, Gary Burke, came back from the meeting extremely upset over the way this had all been handled and everything that had happened. He said at that time that he was going to resign, and, in fact, soon he was gone. He resigned.

L: Who became editor after Yvette?

B: I believe they had an acting editor named Drex Dobson. He had been on the staff but evidently was more politically-correct at that time or something. I do not know. This was just before the end of the term, so it was like just two issues.

L: Probably the spring of 1966 or something like that.

B: Probably. The university board of student publications decided that the students at the *Alligator* needed not only business direction but they needed an editorial advisor. So, instead of hiring one person to replace Burke, they would hire two.

L: Who decided this?

B: I imagine it was the administration, and the board carried it out. I do not know, but, at any rate, they hired an executive secretary, full-time, who was to be just like the other executive secretary. He would be secretary to the board and overall supervisor but also act as editorial advisor. To work with him, they created a position called business manager, another full-time position.

L: And do you know who filled those positions?

B: Yes. The one who was hired as the executive secretary was a graduate student in the College [of Journalism] named King White. I do not know if he ever finished his degree or what. I do not know what happened in that regard. Later he went to work for the University of Oklahoma. The business manager was

B. G. Myking, who passed away this past November. Mr. Myking had no experience in journalism, but he was going to do the business side. We found that he was an ex-Marine colonel, and so we thought, oh boy, man oh man, they are really bringing in the hammer. He had gotten a degree in business administration at the University of Florida. Evidently, he had some degree-work before he went into the Marines or while he was in the Marines and then finished it up here. We thought, boy, this is going to be just horrible. He was excellent to work with. What we, in our immature minds, had forgotten is that he had worked with young people his whole career, in a really quite different fashion, like, live-or-die kind of situations, and, therefore, was very understanding, very empathetic.

He was very, very good. The people at the *Charlatan*, I mentioned before, and some people on the *Alligator* staff decided they would have some fun. Oh, by the way, as an aside, the girlfriend of the publisher of the *Charlatan* was named Pam Brewer.

L: Oh, Pam Brewer, who now is a famous figure?

B: Right, that Pam Brewer. That was the magazine. They ran the famous nude photo of her, and, since she was a co-ed, the university brought charges against her.

L: But it was an off-campus magazine.

B: It was an off-campus magazine. It did not matter in those days. But, when they had the administrative hearings, for the first time, it was decided that off-campus conduct, as long as it was legal, had no bearing on on campus situations. It completely shattered the *in loco parentis* rule up until that day.

L: When it came to, what, a court trial?

B: I do not recall what it was. It was some sort of court trial, but I do not know if it was before an arbitrator or if was an actual court of law.

L: They tried to bring on-campus charges against her . . .

B: Right, tried to expel her from school.

L: As I remember the photo, it was not very revealing.

B: Especially in the light of today.

L: There was no frontal nudity, and what you saw was probably a side-view cover-up on a bearskin rug, or something like that.

B: Yes, right. But, at any rate, it was quite precedent-setting. I do not know if it was before or after that issue they devoted almost a whole issue to blasting King White, who was the executive secretary on the board of student publications.

L: Why?

B: He was trying to act as editorial advisor, and, of course, the students who were on the *Alligator* rankled at that. Who knows? Maybe he was too heavy-handed. Maybe he was not good enough. Whatever reason, they grew to despise him.

L: And they worked for the *Charlatan*.

B: They did not do it in the *Alligator*. They did it in the *Charlatan*.

L: I get it. How often did the *Charlatan* come out?

B: Irregularly, I believe. Maybe once a quarter, if that. But, one of the interesting things about it was that they had (of course, as an off-campus humor magazine) a lot of jokes in it, and most of them were off-color. But a lot of the off-color jokes used King White, used his name as the participant in the joke, and they just had joke after joke after joke after joke with his name in them. One, in particular, involved him, his wife, and me, implying that I had a relationship with his wife. That went too far as far as he was concerned and most of the faculty members in the College of Journalism, because they took up a fund and he sued him. In fact, I was a witness.

L: White sued . . . ?

B: Bill Killeen.

L: The publisher of the [*Charlatan*]. Did he live in Gainesville?

B: Yes. He sued him for libel, and it went to trial. I was one of the witnesses because, of course, they had to ask me, did I have a relationship with Mrs. White? Was it false or not? And, of course, no, I did not. So, he got a judgement against him. Like I said, a lot of the faculty members kicked in donations to pay for the attorney fees. Essentially, because he could not fulfill the judgement, it put the magazine out of business. Part of the problem, though, for White was, his effectiveness was essentially destroyed, because he was the butt of these jokes. Even recovering in court meant little. I doubt if he ever saw a dime. And so what, if he had recovered? So, he went on. He went on to, I said, the University of Oklahoma, but it may have been Oklahoma State. B.G. Myking became the executive secretary. They did away with the two-headed running of the department, and he was no longer expected to be an editorial advisor, just the business manager, and he was called the general manager.

L: So, who really oversaw the editorial product?

B: No one.

L: It was just left totally up to the students?

B: Right.

L: The board of student publications was still there, though.

- B: Yes. Of course, through the years, the people change.
- L: So, that led up to what next big incident? Was anything else big before the *Alligator* got kicked off campus? All this would have happened in the late 1960s, well, 1966, 1967, 1968.
- B: They built the new J. Wayne Reitz Union, and we moved over there. Interestingly enough, we were on the third floor, right across the lobby from student government, which made for some very interesting times.
- L: Were you still assistant production manager?
- B: No, I was production manager by this time.
- L: That means that Jim Moorhead left.
- B: He left and went to work for AP [Associated Press] in Miami and then for the *St. Pete Independent*, before it folded.
- L: So, in 1966, you became production manager, which was, by this time, the second-ranking full-time job at the newspaper. Myking had become the business manager.
- B: I guess so. I just did not think about it in those terms. Then, later, I became the operations manager.
- L: What did that mean?
- B: That meant that I had the responsibility not only for production but also circulation and advertising.
- L: And what year was that, do you remember?
- B: 1968, maybe. Like I said, I had a responsibility for advertising, production and circulation then. One of the things that is kind of humorous in a way, but it still bothers me that someone would be that irresponsible, there was a local watering hole called the Bench and Bar. It was named that because it was owned and operated by a law student, and a lot of law students went there. It was located on West University Avenue between 12th and 13th Streets, on the north side of the street. She ran ads in the *Alligator*. Well, she ran an ad advertising free movies to be shown some night, and it was in all caps, two words, in Futura [font], which, as you know, does not vary in its type width or does not have seraphs or anything, so the letters all look very much alike. Very block letters. Well, some

student in production, when he was opaquing the page, took an Exacto [knife] and scratched out the little minuscule black part of the negative between the L and the I. FREE FLICKS. If you remove the space between the L and the I, it becomes a U, and it was published that way. Naturally, she was very upset.

L: And did they know what student did it?

B: There was only one person handling the negatives, but someone could have walked in while he was out of the room or something.

L: He denied doing it, right?

B: Oh sure, but that was quite irresponsible. She had huge business that night, mostly people coming in to get a drink and to tease her, of course. She threatened to sue but never did. Some year, and I cannot tell you when, we had the decision by the board of student publications, to hire a full-time editorial advisor. His name was Norm Going.

L: So, they did actually hire a person in addition to Myking.

B: To the general manager, right. He stayed there for a while and then was replaced with a fellow by the name of Allen Whiteleather. He changed his name several years ago because he got tired of being teased about being Indian or something. I cannot remember his new name.

L: Was he a Native American?

B: I do not think so, but he was the editorial advisor during the time that Ron Sachs was editor.

L: So he moved up around the time that the *Alligator* got booted off campus?

B: Right, just before. This was around 1971, now. There are a lot of other things that happened. If I could look at headlines of the *Alligator*, I could tell you a lot of the things behind the stories.

L: Why don't we get to the events, as you saw them, to the *Alligator* being removed as a campus organization. By this time, Ron Sachs became editor, in the early 1970s.

B: Correct, and the managing editor was Gary Grunder [in] 1971. Ron was an excellent investigative reporter, and, as editor, he essentially turned over the running of the newsroom to Grunder because this was an era of excellent in-depth and/or investigative reporting that he supervised. It was not like he did it all

personally, but this was his best thing. He did it very well. They were doing an in-depth series on women students at the University of Florida and their particular needs, part of which, of course, was problems of health that were particular to women. A part of that was the question of pregnancies and the alternative of choosing to have an abortion. This was prior to *Roe v. Wade*, and at that time, abortions were still back-alley, except, I think, in Manhattan and maybe a part of New Jersey or something. It was very limited. So, unless you could afford to fly to these remote areas, that was a problem for some women. Even until that time, abortions were illegal in Florida, if I remember correctly. There was a law on the books from the 1890s where there was a law against abortion, but there was also a law against the distribution of any printed material that revealed how one could get an abortion. Patently unconstitutional, but it was a Florida statute. Ron did not realize this at the time until they started thinking about running this list of legal abortion clinics outside the state.

L: By this time, Stephen C. O=Connell was now the president [of UF, 1967-1973].

B: Right. National magazines, *Newsweek*, I think I remember, at least some national magazines that distributed all over the country, including Florida, including Gainesville, had ads for legal abortion clinics in other parts of the country, but supposedly that was illegal to distribute. Ron felt that this was integral to the story, and, of course, it was a challenge to the *Alligator*, and the *Alligator* likes to rise to challenges. He called the president and told him what he was going to do because the president was, at least, *de facto* publisher.

L: The president, incidentally, was also a Catholic.

B: Yes. He asked for a meeting of the board of student publications, and he brought it before the board. For the first time anyone could remember, ever, it was a complete faculty-student split, the students being for the publication and the faculty being against it. I cannot remember how the vote came down, but I do remember that they approved the publication.

L: Did the faculty still dominate the board?

B: Well, I think one faculty member was the chair and did not have voting rights, so as far as the membership . . . I think it was a complete faculty-student split, but, voting, the students had a one vote edge, if I remember correctly. At any rate, we started the process of getting it printed. By this time, the *Ocala Star-Banner* (the printer) had been bought by Cowles [Communications Company], and they had stopped job work, printing any outside work, and some of the people they had laid off from that division formed a private company and that is where we were being printed. Since anyone who had anything to do with disseminating, including the printing, could be held liable, the printer said, I will not print it, even though

the board had approved it and we were going ahead with it. Ron said, what are we going to do? I said, well, we can print an insert, and when it comes back to campus, we will just put it in the paper. Before that occurred, we got word through the president's assistant—the president was out of town and was speaking through his assistant—that they were overruling the board of student publications. At that time, I said, I cannot be a party to this; I work for the university, and the university says you cannot do this. They went ahead and went to a local fraternity house, and a faculty member of the College of Journalism and her husband at that time, Jean Chance, were very cooperative in advising the students. How much hands-on and so forth, I cannot say.

L: I think they mimeographed the list.

B: Right. Student government was also involved in helping get this done. They may have even used one of their machines. I do not know, and I did not know this was going on. When it came back, the staff then took these and went around campus.

L: They inserted, by hand, this mimeograph sheet into each copy of the *Alligator*.

B: Not every copy but a significant number. For whatever reason, the state attorney decided to go ahead with arresting Ron Sachs. I guess it was some symbol or something, maybe some political advantage to arresting him. He was released the same day. The attorney was not then but now [Judge] Chuck Chance.

L: Who is now a local judge and was then the husband of Jean Chance, the faculty member at the College of Journalism and Communications.

B: That is correct. Everyone involved in journalism felt that this was so patently clear that it was unconstitutional, that it was just an antiquated law that was just ludicrous. The president did not see it that way because he felt that it was a law on the books in the state of Florida, [and he was] the former chief justice of the Florida Supreme Court.

L: And also, really, officially the publisher of the *Alligator*.

B: Well, that had not been determined yet.

L: But he felt that he was.

B: Exactly, and certainly acted, and every president had acted. So, in *de facto*, he was.

L: So, in a sense, he felt that he would be responsible for these actions.

- B: Of course, there were, and still are, I think, rules on the official code book of the University of Florida that, as a student, you have to do what the president says. I mean, you really have to obey the president of the university. So, Ron Sachs could have been charged with student misconduct. He could have gone to jail, I suppose. I suppose he could have been subject to some legal manipulation of some sort. But President O=Connell and Ron had a joint press conference. Ron explained why he did what he did, and the president explained his position, that civil disobedience was a choice that every American could make to protest what they considered unjust law but he felt very strongly that university monies could not be used for those purposes, and the fact was, if he was indeed the publisher, then people who were under his supervision needed to follow his lead like any publisher. So he sought the opinion of the attorney general of the state of Florida, which is where the university is supposed to go for an opinion. As an aside, there is an old joke. As a matter of fact, Judge Robert Shevin, who was the attorney general at that time, told it to me at the recent conference of the Askew Institute. I had heard it before, but it was funny to hear it, especially from him, because I was thanking him for his decision at that time. He laughed and he said, well, you know, Ed, if a state agency goes to the attorney general and the opinion is issued in their favor, then they consider it the law of the land. And, he said, if it goes against them, they consider it just another attorney=s opinion.
- L: And his opinion was?
- B: After many months, finally, the opinion came down that the president of the university was responsible for everything that occurred on campus, including being the publisher of every publication issued on campus, including student publications, so he could not escape the responsibility. However, he was a public official, also, and being a public official, the constitution held sway over free press actions.
- L: Free prior censorship could not be committed.
- B: Right, so he had the responsibility, as publisher, but he did not have the authority to act as a private publisher would. Well, the president considered this a position that no one in their right mind would accept. He accepted it as the opinion that had to fall. So he felt that this put him in a position that no one could accept. At the time, I likened it to academic freedom, that this student press freedom was much like academic freedom. The president was responsible for the actions of the faculty, but there was no way he could censor their speech in the classroom or in any other way. They [the administration] did not see it that way. This began a long, arduous, drawn-out, agonizing process that finally resulted in the *Alligator* becoming independent.
- L: They had to separate the *Alligator* from the university so the president was no

longer the publisher.

B: Correct, and it took several different forms. First of all, the president asked the board of student publications to come up with a plan that would change the structure so that the *Alligator* would not be under his control. One of the corrections I would like to make because it is germane to this part of the story. When King White left, B. G. Myking was not named general manager immediately. Jack Detweiler was named the acting director of student publications.

L: Jack was also a faculty member at the College of Journalism.

B: Right. At this time, however, he was not able to teach because he was seeking a degree in the College of Education. So, he became the acting director of student publications. Years before as a student in the university, he had been on the staff of the *Alligator*. After he left, then B.G. Myking, was the general manager and director of student publications during this time.

L: So, Jack Detweiler had succeeded...

B: King White.

L: As executive secretary.

B: Well, now they called it the director of student publications and executive secretary to the board.

L: Then, after a year or so, when he left, then B. G. Myking then moved up. What was his title when he succeeded Jack Detweiler?

B: He was the director of student publications, executive secretary to the board of student publications, and the general manager of operations. The reason this is important is that by this time [during the abortion issue], Jack had come on the board of student publications, was its chair. So, Jack had been a student, the director of publications, and now was chair of the board of student publications.

L: So he was no longer executive secretary. He was now a faculty member and was appointed chair of the board of student publications.

B: Right. So, Jack tried his best to negotiate peace with the university president, representing the board, because when the president asked the board to change the structure of the *Alligator*, the board essentially said, we like it the way it is and we do not see a need for the change. Of course, that was communicated in a much less harsh manner. Then, essentially, the president said, perhaps you did not understand me the first time; it cannot stay this way; you have to come up

with some plan of change. Again, they said, this is something that you need to be able to live with. So, essentially, he dissolved the board of student publications and planned to replace it with a new board of student publication, a thirteen-member board, I think. He first asked if some people of the former board would be willing to serve . Some faculty would serve on that board because the faculty board members represented the disciplines of journalism, business and law. Very logical.

L: The new board or the old board?

B: Well, the old board represented the disciplines, but the new board also did.

L: Would there be students on the new board?

B: Yes. The president asked the deans of those colleges to ask among their faculty for those who would consider serving on that board. The one out of the business college was the one who was a member of the old board of publications, Professor John Champion. The new member from the College of Journalism was Hugh Cunningham. I am sorry I do not remember the one from law.

L: So Detweiler was out.

B: Yes. Now, Mr. Cunningham had long experience with the *Alligator*. When he was a faculty member early on, in earlier years, he was the part-time executive secretary to the board of student publications. That was when they had a full-time position. Professor Buddy Davis had served in the same role also, I do not know if it was before or after. Professor Cunningham, at one time, also served on the board as a faculty member and was chair of the board at one time and, of course, had taught many of the students who worked at the *Alligator* and was an unofficial advisor. So he was obviously an excellent choice.

L: There were only going to be three faculty members?

B: I believe there were only three faculty members, and then the administration had two appointments. One was Jerry Schaffer, the [now-]retiring vice-president for administrative affairs at the university. At that time, he was the assistant to the vice-president, I believe. And myself. I was asked to serve on the board.

L: He was assistant to Bill Elmore, who was the vice president for business affairs.

B: Yes. By this time, Mr. Myking had retired, and I was now the director of student publications and the general manager of the *Alligator* and executive secretary to the board, the old board.

L: So you were now the top career staff member at the *Alligator*.

B: Correct.

L: Was this 1972?

B: Yes. I was asked to serve on the [new] board, and then he asked the student body president to recommend appointments to the board. So we arranged for this big meeting for the initial meeting of the board. It was in the [the Arrendondo Room] across from the restaurant on the top of the Reitz Union. The president met with the board to charge the board. He explained what had occurred to that point and why he was turning the operation of the *Alligator* over to this board to replace the old board of student publications, and part of the charge to the board would be to figure out a way that the president would no longer be involved as publisher of the *Alligator*. Mr. Cunningham raised his hand and said, Mr. President, do you mean that, beginning tomorrow morning, I will be jointly responsible, personally responsible, for what is printed in the *Alligator*, and [O=Connell] said yes.

L: In other words, this new board would now be completely responsible and the president would have no responsibilities.

B: That was the plan.

L: Could he not have taken the old board and done the same thing?

B: I do not know the reasoning behind his actions, but you could see, kind of, a pallor going around the room, and people started murmuring. As a matter of fact, I think Mr. Cunningham said aloud that he was not willing to accept that responsibility, that his personal worth would be on the line, and the president said, well, now you know how I feel. So there was enough discussion and he finally said, okay, raise your hands if you are willing to serve. Well, all the students were willing to serve, Jerry Schaffer was, and I was, and none of the faculty members [were].

L: There were three faculty members?

B: There were probably more than that, but at least three. And, after further discussion, essentially, the board refused to seat itself, so back to square one. So all that was for naught.

L: Had the previous board been dissolved by this time?

B: I do not know what the official action was, but they were no longer in charge at the *Alligator*.

L: So, they had to come up with something else.

B: Right. Well, the board of student publications in those days are the ones who approved things like bids and contracts and so forth. I could not do that on my own. I did not have that authority. We were coming up to the time when we had to bid the printing of the fall *Alligator*, with no process to even submit bids, much less accept them and rule on them. So, I asked the administration through the president's assistant, at that time Special Assistant Ray O. Weimer, the former dean of the College of Journalism, what am I to do? This was still 1972, like mid-summer 1972. Also, somewhere around this time, longtime vice-president for student affairs, Lester L. Hale, retired, and his assistant, Jack Kinzer, who recently passed away, was named the interim vice-president for student affairs. The reason this is important was that the person who was the director of student publications served in student affairs.

L: So the chain of command was to the vice-president for student affairs and then up to the president.

B: Exactly. Anyway, the assistant to the president, Dean Weimer, was very sympathetic. He understood the pragmatics of the situation.

L: And Ray O. Weimer, at that time, was essentially the assistant to the president for communications for public information.

B: Exactly. We were kind of in a limbo situation. Well, I cannot remember the actual sequence of events, but I got a call some weeks later from Mr. Weimer. He asked me to come over to talk to him. So, I went over and he said, Ed, I have a challenge for you, to the effect that the president has decided that the only way that this could operate was if they had a single person as publisher, rather than a committee, and it could not be him. He said, we have gone through a list of people, and I said, and I am at the bottom of it? He said, well, no, but we have been turned down by some people; they felt that they did not want to accept that responsibility; they felt it would be, frankly, too hot to handle. He said, we have one other option besides you, but I would rather that you accept it, rather than the other person, but if you do not, I have to go to the other person. He told me who that person was, and I will not tell who that person was.

L: Why not?

B: It is just not fair. They are not here to defend themselves.

L: What is there to defend?

- B: Well, what I am about to say. This person, I felt, would be so disastrous that even though I had grave misgivings about the whole situation for many reasons, partially ethical and partially logistical, I felt I had no choice. I felt I really had to do it, even though it might ruin my career, essentially. Now, the caveat was it would only be for an interim period, because someone had to be in charge. It could not just be all of us inmates running the asylum. So, he said, you would be the acting publisher; it will be on an interim basis until we can come up with another plan, and even before that, the president would have to get the approval of the Board of Regents.
- L: Which meant that you could go out for bids and do all the other things.
- B: Exactly, and that was what I was happy to hear about. Someone would be in charge so we could do this, so we could publish the newspaper. So I accepted on those terms. Well, I got a call a couple of days later. It was Dean Weimer again and he said, the president has decided, to make things perfectly clear that this acting publisher would have complete control even over editorial content, that we want it to be called publisher and editor-in-chief. I expressed my dismay because I had already spoken to the incoming student editor and told him, do not worry about it; as far as editorial, things will go on just the way they are; this is just for business purposes so we can move on and we can have a paper that you are going to be editor of.
- L: Could you see your job flying out the window?
- B: Oh yes, sure, because I knew that I could never go back. I could never go back to being general manager. I assumed that since this was just an acting position on an interim basis that it would not last, but I probably would not be able to go back.
- L: Why not?
- B: Because my credibility with the students was just destroyed, [which] for years, I had built up. As a matter of fact, I was even at one time also the editorial advisor during two editorial advisors; between Going and Whiteleather, I was the editorial advisor concurrently. I felt I had built a real rapport with students.
- L: And now you were going to be their censor and everything else.
- B: Yes, I mean, everything they abhorred. And that is exactly what happened. My credibility went right down the toilet.
- L: And you agreed to that?

- B: I felt I had no choice. So, I went to explain this to the editor, that even though I had the title, I still had no reason to be in the newsroom, and if they did something that the administration did not like, I would take the heat because it was my responsibility but I was willing to accept it under those conditions.
- L: And what was their reaction?
- B: Yeah, yeah, right.
- L: And who was the editor at that time?
- B: Steve Sauls. The most recently I have heard, which is pretty recent, he is the vice-president for communications at Florida International University.
- L: By that time, Ron Sachs had graduated and moved on?
- B: Yes, right. He was reporting for the *Miami Herald* by that time.
- L: So you are now in the long process of trying to solve the situation.
- B: Right, untie the Gordian knot, and the president was using a sword. The editor-elect was Randy Bellows, who is now a federal prosecutor in Washington. I said to Randy--we are now in the latter part of summer, 1972. I said, if we now have to live with this, let's you and I sit down and work out how we are going to do this, and he said, no, I do not recognize your position at all; if I sat down with you, it would mean that I accepted the position of the president. I said, okay.
- L: Did they sympathize with the position that you had been put into?
- B: No, because I was not telling them all this stuff. I was not saying, well, I felt like I had to, whine, whine, whine. I am only whining today. I mean, I tried to explain it, but I certainly did not reveal all the things behind the scenes at all. Well, it hit the press, of course, as it should have. As a matter of fact, the editors traveled to the various editorial boards throughout the state and explained their position and where they felt the president was trying to do this tremendous harm to the student newspaper and taking over. [Around] this time, the president also made the comment that perhaps the best thing for the *Alligator* was to become, instead of a student newspaper, a university newspaper, of which I would be at least the acting editor-in-chief, publisher . . .
- L: And you could just get students to work for you.
- B: Right, and you can imagine what the product would be like under that system. Well, this had to go before the Board of Regents, even this interim thing. So, of

course, the students were out heavily lobbying, a lot of bad press about me, that I never got a degree. Now I was the target of where O=Connell had been. At any rate, the Regents did not meet in August, so it was delayed until September. Well, in the meantime, I was doing all the bids and delaying the contracts. I was happy as far as all that stuff because all of that was being done. Then, I cannot remember if it was in August that they actually met or if they delayed it until September, but at any rate, whenever they met, one of the members of the Board of Regents was J.J. Daniel of the *Times Union* in Jacksonville.

L: He was a member of the Board of Control. It was called the Board of Control in those days, and his name was Jack A.J. J.@ Daniel. He was actually the publisher of the *Florida Times Union* in Jacksonville.

B: And the *Jacksonville Journal*, I think, which was the afternoon newspaper. I was not at the meeting of course, the students were there but I understand what happened was the president presented the plan and Mr. Daniel more or less said, Mr. President, we would appreciate it if you would reconsider. That is all it took.

L: Jack Daniel was also an attorney, a very good attorney, actually. He had been pulled away from a law firm in Jacksonville to become publisher of the paper.

B: Because at that time it was owned by the Florida East Coast Railroad, and that was . . . ?

L: The Ball family.

B: Well, the DuPont family, and Ed Ball ran the DuPont family interest that owned the railroad and the newspaper. But, at any rate, he was a fine attorney and made a great publisher.

L: And very, very, very honest.

B: Exactly. But, all it took was just the indication. They did not have to say, no, by god, you are not going to do this.

L: They did the right thing.

B: Oh yes.

L: I mean, I think that was the right decision.

B: But, what I mean is the president immediately retreated. He knew it was over. He was very politically astute also, and still is. We continued in the same

management, or we reverted, I should say, to the old management situation, where I was still the director of student publications and general manager of the *Alligator*, rather than the editor/publisher of the *Alligator*. I was, quite frankly, relieved. As a matter of fact, I went across the halls of student government. One of the Reitz Union functions was to make nameplates, so I had a nameplate, just out of cardboard, made for myself that said Former Acting Interim Editor/Publisher. The relationship improved somewhat between the students and myself. Since I was no longer a threat to them, I became more of a non-entity. Like I said, I started trying to rebuild my relationship with the student editorial staff. The next move by the administration was to appoint a student-faculty [committee with] one professional journalist, who was Bob Sharkey, then the owner of the *High Springs Herald*, to find a way to cause the *Alligator* to become an independent publication with the caveat that it would have to be not only completely independent but there would be enough safeguards built in that it would survive. Professor Hugh Cunningham was the chair of that committee, which came to be known as the Cunningham Commission. Although he did not like it

L: What was Sharkey's role?

B: Sharkey was a member of the committee. Then there were other students on the committee, and I forgotten, frankly, right now who they were. It was a very small committee, maybe five people, and they were charged with coming up with a plan. They met for several weeks, months maybe, although it could not have been too many months, and then they said they did not feel like they could come up with a plan, that they needed to ask the public to come up with plans to submit to them. So, they had a deadline, of course, by which to submit the plans. Subsequently, three plans were submitted. One was submitted to structure as a for-profit corporation, and that was submitted by a fellow by the name of K.B. Merlott. Coincidentally, he was the first full-time executive secretary to the *Alligator* and was the one who was replaced by John Epperheimer, who was at the *Alligator* when I came.

L: He had preceded Epperheimer

B: Right, and he had been hired by the board of student publications, which, at that time, Hugh Cunningham was the chair of. Merlott subsequently went to IFAS and did a great job in the publication work for IFAS. So, he presented a plan, I presented a plan, and the editor, Randy Bellows, asked my permission first. He was very ethical about it and submitted my plan, but he changed the structure of the board of directors to have more students on it from the newsroom. That was the only difference. This plan was supposed to be all the financial planning, all the business plan, showing how it would survive. It was to show who would actually people the positions, not only to name the positions that this new

structure might have, including the board of directors, but the people who would actually agree to serve in those positions.

L: Had there been research done at other universities?

B: Yes, they had checked with other student newspapers and so forth.

L: That had gone independent.

B: Right, and the various structures and so forth. They had all that before they even asked for a local submission. I had used state time, my own time while I was on the payroll, state facilities, equipment, state personnel in the office of student publications, all this stuff to produce these materials for the plan, and they selected my plan. They later modified it somewhat. One of the parts of my plan was that the new corporation would be able to purchase from the university certain assets, and they would be transferred, the cash reserve that we had built up, somewhere around \$93,000 if I remember. As an aside, I need to tell you about the cash reserve. Just before this, it had been discovered that the student government had built this huge cash reserve and they probably were not the only ones and the president issued a memo saying, you are not supposed to be hoarding this money; it is supposed to be spent on programs and activities to the benefit of students.

L: This \$93,000 was a reserve by the *Alligator*?

B: Right.

L: Was it a reserve to buy equipment and stuff like that?

B: I will explain that. So, we had been able to build up a reserve also, so, naturally, I was supposed to report it. His instructions in his memo [involved] any unencumbered monies. And the university auditors had told us several years before that we needed to build a reserve to cover the career staff positions= salaries for at least one year, so following their instructions, we did things like, we did not travel as much as we could have, we did not buy some equipment, to build this reserve.

L: The income, up to this time that we are talking about, came from sale of advertising and some percentage of student fee money. Is that right?

B: Yes, and the student fee money amounted to \$90,000 a year at that time, because it was [a certain amount] per fee-paying student,. So, the more students there were, the more fees we received. At that time, it was \$90,000. So, we did not have any extra reserves. One day on the elevator in the Reitz Union, the

president was coming down from the Arredondo Room or the president=s dining room or something, and I got on at the third floor. There were other people around, and I greeted everyone and he said hello. And, he says, Ed? I said, yes, sir? He said, you told me that you did not have any money in reserves, and you have \$93,000. He did not say, you know, you lied to me, but it was a heavy implication. I said, well, sir, I can explain that. I said, those are not additional reserves. He said, you have money in reserves; that is all I wanted to know. You know, he was kind of like, you have had it, boy. He did not say that. I do not know if you have ever seen him angry, but it was quite visible on his face. So as soon as I could, I went back to the office and I dug up that memo and sent a copy of it to him, saying, this was not our idea; this was the university auditors. Anyway, that is an aside. But, anyone, of course, would realize that you needed start-up capital, cash, so that was my suggestion. Also, I suggested that there would be a transitional period.

L: But did you suggest that you would be given this capital with the idea that you would repay it?

B: Oh yes, all of this would be repaid, because it was all...

L: And you suggested the equipment, as you paid for that over a period of time...

B: And cash-receivables and supply-inventory and the whole works, right. Eventually, they rejected the cash. As a matter of fact, that cash went to form the college councils throughout the university, the various college councils that were formed. That is where that money came from. At any rate, they adopted my plan. Well, as far as they were concerned, there was one flaw in it, and that flaw was that the general manager was not named. So, they came to me and said, why did you not name a general manager? I said, well, I would rather you choose a general manager and it cannot be me. They said, why? I said, because I would, in effect, be creating with state money a position for myself in a private industry; if it was the president of the university doing that or the director of the Athletic Association, everyone would scream bloody murder, but you people do not seem to agree that that is the case here. One of the members of the committee said to me, do you think your plan has the best chance of success? I said, yes, obviously, that is the reason I submitted it. Do you think you would be the best person in the job? Yes. Do you care about the future of the *Alligator* and its survival? Yes. Well, obviously, you do not, since you will not submit to being named the general manager of the *Alligator*. I said, if that is the way you want to look at it. And they really put the pressure on me. I said, I am sorry that you do not understand my ethical position, but that is the way I feel; I feel very strongly about it; in effect, I would be stealing state money. So, they went away. I do not know how much they searched, but they named a person who was then the assistant manager of the bookstore. No journalism experience. No experience in

- dealing with any aspects of a newspaper.
- L: So you refused to be a candidate?
- B: Yes, I refused to be a candidate, and it was not a ploy on my part saying, instead of me naming it, I want you to name me. Because they wanted to name me.
- L: Yes, but did you think about your future? What were you going to do? Did you have anything else in the offing?
- B: No, but that did not matter.
- L: Was Judy still working for the university?
- B: No, I do not think she was working at that time, because what had occurred was, seven years after our daughter was born, our son was born. In the fall of 1972, just before all the other stuff broke, we bought our first house, so I had this mortgage for the first time facing me. We were just moving in. As a matter of fact, as we were moving in, a *Gainesville Sun* reporter came to me, while I was carrying furniture in, to interview me about being appointed the editor/publisher of the *Alligator*.
- L: So the other guy was named. Do you remember his name?
- B: Yes. As a matter of fact, he is still in town. Tony Kendizor.
- L: So, he was named the first general manager? Was that the title then?
- B: General manager of *The Independent Florida Alligator*, right.
- L: And that was in 1972 still, late 1972?
- B: No, that was actually February of 1973. Of course, he was named a little bit earlier than that, and they signed the papers February of 1973. When it went independent, I was still retained as the director of student publications because there was still the *Seminole* yearbook and the literary magazine, the *Florida Quarterly*. They were going to determine what was going to happen to them and so forth. Part of my responsibility, then, was to...
- L: So, you stayed in the state job, essentially?
- B: Right, on a temporary basis.
- L: But as director of student publications, of those that were left.

- B: Right. This was only until they came out. The *Seminole* was due to come out that summer. The *Florida Quarterly*, I do not know.
- L: So, the idea was that they were to become independent also?
- B: No, but the superstructure of the overhead was borne by the *Alligator* for those publications, so they were just about doomed. At any rate, I moved out of my office and moved back in the back of the suite to be available to Mr. Kendzor if he wanted to ask any questions. Then I worked with the student who was the business manager of Campus Communications and the university auditor to go through the inventory so the corporation would have the choice. In other words, instead of, say, dumping x dollars worth of junk, as well as good stuff . . .
- L: Because you had to pay for it. You only wanted the stuff that you thought you really needed.
- B: Exactly. We did the same thing, we went through account by account, through all accounts-receivable. Something that looked like it might turn out to be bad money was retained by the university. If it looked like it would be good and the corporation wanted it, it would go to the corporation.
- L: If the money was owed, you got that money to come in, so that was a benefit. At least you got something to tide you over, anyway.
- B: Right, as it came in. Of course, a lot of people reneged. A lot of people, well, it is no longer the university, then I do not owe you anymore. That was something we had not thought of. But, from February through July, which was the end of the university's fiscal year, and I had asked for a longer transitional period...
- L: What do you mean by transitional?
- B: Well, they stayed in the Reitz Union. As a matter of fact, I think they even gave them an extension until August 1 to be able to find space off-campus. It had to stay as close as possible to campus, and that is always much higher-priced and much rarer to find. So, they found space in the kitchen area behind what was the old College Inn and renovated that themselves. It faced First Avenue, right, just east of the St. Augustine Student Center. Now, it is called the something-Mullet, which is behind the Purple Porpoise. I think it is owned by the same people, but I am not sure. The front part was still a cafeteria-type place, or a restaurant. At any rate, this way, the sales after February, all of that money would accrue to the new corporation. The monies that came in from the receivables would, of course, be received by them. The overhead expenses--rental of the space, lights, janitorial, phone--all of that would accrue as a payable but we wouldn't have to pay it out, except with the total debt. So from February until they moved off campus, those

expenses of overhead at the Reitz Union accrued as a payable for the corporation to the university. All of this debt added up, the transfer of assets, the overhead expenses, as a payable, came to \$90,000. That debt was to be paid back through advertising by the university of the *University Digest* at normal rates.

L: So, they agreed to run the *University Digest* in the *Independent Alligator*, up to \$90,000 worth. They agreed to give you \$90,000 worth of advertising, right?

B: That is correct.

L: Of course, you had to still pay for the paper and the printing of that. You were not just giving them \$90,000 worth because there was some cost associated with that, too.

B: Absolutely, just like all the rest of advertising.

L: But they guaranteed you a \$90,000 advertising income for how long a time?

B: I believe it was for five years.

L: So approximately \$15,000 worth of advertising a year.

B: Something of that nature, yes. Now, in the interim period of time before I came back, first of all, I need to explain how I structured the board and where I made a huge mistake. For years at the *Alligator*, I had seen the board of student publications and how it operated. I felt that because they were not involved in the day-to-day operations, they sometimes made mistakes. I am sure it was unintentional on their part. There was no malice, I am sure. But, nevertheless, I thought there were some really big mistakes made, because of just the force of argument of someone before them and they did not know the whole story or whatever. This troubled me and I felt, well, here is a chance to correct that. So, the board of directors was made up of the editor, the managing editor, I think the news editor, but also the general manager, the advertising manager, and the business manager, to protect business interests, and then a couple of outside faculty members and then a whole bunch of outside students and a professional journalist. That way, those people would be on the board, who not only had the most knowledge about a particular situation coming before the board of directors but they would be the most vitally interested in protecting the *Alligator* and its success. Well, the reason it was a huge mistake was, what occurred in actual practice was that those things that should have been handled on a managerial level—say, someone on the business management side speaking to someone on the editorial management side and working it out—they would take things to the board, and then it would be a big corporate scrap. So, the board became a very

hands-on entity, instead of a policy-making entity which is what it was supposed to be.

L: An inside rather than an outside board. Corporations have the same problem.

B: Even though there were outside members, it just became an awful mess. It was a big mistake. Now, in my defense, the board could have restructured itself anytime it wanted but, of course, who wanted to? Who would give up the power? Well, the other things that they discovered legally was that, let's say that the general manager had a beef with the advertising manager and wanted to fire the advertising manager, they could fire the person from the position but they could not remove them from the board. They were still legally a member of the board. The editor had the same problem. The managing editor was a member of the board. It just became very chaotic. In fact, I was asked to become a member of the board later on, and I became a member, and it was such a mess that I resigned. I just said, folks, this is not working the way it was supposed to work or the way it was planned to work and I cannot be a part of this. It was just awful. At any rate, that was my big mistake. In the meantime, after I was through with the transition period and they moved off-campus and decided that the students would finish out the *Seminole* and the *Florida Quarterly*, which was already under the Department of English, they would just transfer all of it under them, and the editorial supervision and advisory and so forth was under the Department of English. They would just transfer it all to that, so I really did not have a job.

L: Why did they not move it to journalism? Journalism did not want it?

B: I have no idea. It was a literary magazine, though.

L: But you also said the *Seminole*, which is a yearbook.

B: I do not know why they did that, or did not do that. I guess they tried to retain it as a student publication. Eventually, as you probably remember, it died, and they resurrected it as the *Tower*, which is another whole story. At any rate, a position opened as the acting director of publications for the university. As you know, certain elements of campus have their publications department, engineering, IFAS and so forth. Other departments, like English, do not have anything like that, or did not at that time. So, if they needed a brochure made up, they were out of luck. So, that is what the division of publications did, those kinds of things, produced things for the president's office. Ironically, this division started producing the *University Digest* for the *Alligator*, so I was one of the first editors of the *University Digest*, if not the first.

L: By the time they became independent, then, it was August of 1973?

- B: Corporately, it became independent in February of 1973. It actually separated from campus in August of 1973.
- L: Which is when, we could say, the beginning of the new era.
- B: Exactly. After a while, and I cannot remember how long, Dean Weimer stepped down. They had appointed a search committee, of course, that had been working for some time before he actually vacated his office. He was forced to because of his age, because they had a rule at that time I do not know if they still do that you could only go to a certain age as a chief administrator or something.
- L: Right, sixty-five as an administrator, so I guess he reached the age of sixty-five.
- B: And he went on to a lot of other great things in the community.
- L: He died at ninety-five, so that would have been around a thirty-year period. That is right, he would have been sixty-five about that time.
- B: So they had a committee, that Mr. Cunningham was a member of, to search for Weimer's replacement.
- L: Which was, what, assistant to the president for communications.
- B: Right. In the meantime, a story that has been told to me I do not know that it is first-hand but the way I remember it and it was told to me was that the school of journalism was going to become a college of journalism, and because of that, they had to have certain departments. For the first time, they would have a department of journalism. The faculty met about who should be the chair among themselves. Two professors, who had been known for decades of never agreeing on anything, agreed on one point, that one of them should be the chair, although each one felt it was themselves. Neither one was appointed.
- L: The head of the journalism department.
- B: Right, and that became a point of great estrangement between Professor Cunningham and his feelings toward the College of Journalism, so he applied for the position and was chosen. That is when he left the college. So he was my immediate supervisor. I worked in that position for about a year.
- L: Give me the title that you had.
- B: I was the acting director of publications for the university, as opposed to student publications. There were two divisions under the president's office that dealt with communications. One was information services, and one was publications. The

fellow who was the head of information services was replaced by Mr. Cunningham with K.B. Merlott.

L: Cunningham brought in Merlott?

B: Right, from IFAS. Merlott, who was first hired as the first full-time executive secretary, by Mr. Cunningham, was board chairman. They decided, while I was on vacation, to combine the departments so it would be the division of information and publication services.

L: That is usually the best time to make a decision like that, when somebody is gone.

B: When I came back, Mr. Merlott informed me that I would be reporting to him now instead of Mr. Cunningham and that I needed to think about my position because they were going to go very heavily electronic, and in looking at my background, I did not have any background in electronics. This was 1974.

L: One year after the *Alligator* left.

B: Right. So, of course, I had to be an idiot not to know what that meant. By the way, I must say that Mr. Merlott and I never did see eye-to-eye a great deal. He was the subcontractor that I used to have to fill in for with the delivery of the *Alligator*. Anyway, when it was combined, I knew what was going to happen, but when he said that, of course, I knew that I was going to be out of a job. There was a position open as the production manager of the University of Florida Press, the scholarly book publishing arm of the university, so I went there. It was not like it was my choice, you know, that I could just name it. But, I was lucky enough to be hired there. While I was there, a couple student editors came to see me there at the University Press, and said, we have a problem I have to be careful with what I say with the current structure of the *Alligator*.

L: Now, who was the first general manager, did you say?

B: I am not saying they had a problem with him.

L: No, but who was the first one?

B: Tony Kendizor. He is now a very successful investment banker in Gainesville. But they had trouble with the structure of the *Alligator* and wanted to know, if they had a change in structure, would I be willing to come back to the *Alligator* in some capacity. I said, I am never going to answer that question in a million years; I am going to be over here on the sidelines and part of some sort of conspiracy that you may cook up and say, well, you know, we always had Ed to bring back if

we do this or that or the other. I said, if you guys do something, you do it on your own, even though I did miss the newspaper a great deal. Do not get me wrong, I was dying to be back. I explained why I was not there to begin with. I went through the whole ethical thing and so forth. It came about that Mr. Kendzor had other opportunities, so he decided to resign and they had this opening. They had a student business manager who was a CPA [Certified Public Accountant] about to get his law degree, so he was very competent as the acting general manager. For some reason, in January of [1976], they asked me to consult for them on an hourly part-time basis. So, before I went to work with the Press, of course, I filed with the university to get their permission. You know the form that you have to go through, to make sure there is no conflict of interests and so forth. They gave me the go-ahead, so early in the morning, I would get there at six in the morning and worked until just before eight, and then I would go down to the press. Then, after five, or if I was later than that, I would go back to the *Alligator* and work at night, until ten, eleven, twelve o'clock at night.

L: Doing what?

B: Going over the books.

L: At that time, they had no full-time general manager? They just had a student.

B: Right, and he was in law school, so he did not have a whole lot of time. He was fine in what he was doing, but he just could not spare the time to look at the whole structure.

L: Your role as a consultant was to do a lot of the duties of the general manager?

B: Well, at this time, it was not. Now, in June, they asked me to become acting general manager on a part-time, interim basis, which made me think, gee, what does this sound like? Acting interim? It seems like I have heard that title before.

L: Could you still stay at the Press and do that?

B: Yes. Again, it was filed with the university, my immediate supervisor first, and then filed all the paperwork and so forth. Again, it was still the same kind of hours. It was not like I now spent my regular daytime hours there or anything like that. I spent some weekends doing it. But, with this new role, I was looking at personnel relationships, interviewing people, asking them to come and tell me how they viewed the structure and what they thought would be good. I just brought ideas together. It was nothing I did personally. I guess for some reason, they felt that I was a neutral-enough party that they could open up and I would listen to them without any bias or anything. At any rate, they asked me to do that while they searched for a permanent general manager. So, they began the

searchBand I had nothing to do with the search; this was done by the board of directorsBand they asked me if I would be willing to apply for the position. I thought about it. I consulted with Judy and I consulted with friends about, okay, I had this ethical constraint; should that still be in place after someone else has had a shot at it? So, people said, everyone said, yes, you have done your duty and you took your lumps; it is okay now to apply, and if they should choose you, it is ethical to serve. So, I did apply. I do not know how far they searched. I know they did search nationally. I do not know who they interviewed or who else was considered, but I was fortunate to be chosen. I started October 1, 1976, after giving notice to the university.

L: We both came in at the same time. I came in on August 1, 1976, and I remember meeting you.

B: Yes, I remember it, too. You came over to the newsroom. I met you over at the *Alligator*. You remember what our newsroom looked like, too.

L: Right. Let me see, you go through the back door and get to a bar. I know that. I think it was actually more like a restaurant, where they could go and get drinks. It was not really a bar.

B: You could get drinks, but it was a restaurant.

L: You could get pizza and beer and . . .

B: Yes, hamburgers and that kind of stuff. A light fare and beer. As a matter of fact, I think they called it the Old College Inn, even though it was not the old Old College Inn. No, they called it the New College Inn. That is what it was. Then, later, they replaced that restaurant and reverted back to the Old College Inn name.

L: In fact, you had to sort of look for the door. It was not even clear where the *Alligator* was. Bageland was right next door and then the church was on the other side, and there was only this door there.

B: You had to know where it was, and sometimes I think that was for effect. But, you know, angry readers found it a hard place to storm.

L: An advantage was that it was very close to the College of Journalism. That was nice. And close to the campus, essentially.

B: Right. The finances were not in too good shape, and I am not blaming management at that time or anything.

- L: By this time, now, they had been independent for almost three years. What was it like? I mean, were they on the rocks or could you see light? Were they losing money or what?
- B: It was losing money. I always cringe when I hear students at the *Alligator* who were not here at the time talking about how the *Alligator* was kicked off campus, that the university kicked us off and we survived and we showed them and all of that. The university was extremely helpful, extremely cooperative. Like I said, we did not get everything I originally asked for, like the cash transfer, but, still, there was a transitional period and there was a time before I came back and I cannot tell you how long or when that time was, but I know it for a fact from reading memos and so forth when the university suspended the repayment of the debt and actually paid cash for their advertising for a while. That was at the recommendation of Mr. Cunningham and the approval of Dr. [Robert Q.] Marston, who was president [of UF] at that time.
- L: I was given to understand that you got the equipment at a favorable price. They did not transfer this equipment to you at the highest possible price. They gave you a pretty good deal on the equipment, did they not?
- B: Well, no, but it was a fair deal. In other words, it was not the purchase price. It was the market . . .
- L: They got an appraisal of what the shared market value was.
- B: Exactly, and they could have done otherwise. They could have gouged us. They could have made us take all the receivables, even what obviously turned out to be bad debts. They could have forced us at that time, then to take all the furniture even though they did not have room for all of it, could not use all of it. There were a lot of things that the university did, they certainly wanted to give us the opportunity to make ourselves a success, and that is all anyone can hope for. No one can guarantee, nor should they guarantee, that we will be a success, even today.
- L: It is an unknown story that they suspended repayment and paid you cash for the university. If they really wanted you to go broke, they could have said, you have to give us these pages free, and we are not going to give you a dime.
- B: Right, but that all occurred before I went back. Also, I understand that student government voted to actually give some money to the *Alligator*. By this time, I was consulting, and I saw that they had done that but I never saw any money. So I do not know if they actually did give the *Alligator* any money or not.
- L: My understanding was that the *Florida Alligator* was one of the first to become

independent, off-campus, and it became a model. Didn't a lot of people come down to see how you operated from other campuses that had university-owned papers and student government-owned papers?

B: Yes, and, later, I was asked to consult for the University of Georgia, when they took the *Red and Black* independent. I was asked to go out to Nebraska. They did not go independent, but we restructured their operation. I was asked to go to Florida International University. Unlike pregnancy, independence can be [to] a matter of degree. There have been some college newspapers like [the] *Harvard Crimson*, which has been independent for probably 100 years and they are supported by an alumni association of the *Crimson*, not the university. If I remember correctly, the University of Texas at Austin has been incorporated since, like, 1928 as a private corporation. On the other hand, they are located on campus, and the corporation is owned by the Board of Regents of the University System.

L: The *Michigan Daily*, which my daughter was the faculty advisor to for a number of years, is very independent but they occupy university space.

B: Right, so who am I to judge what is truly independent, so to speak? For one thing, although it is the best in retrospect in getting to the point we are today through all the turmoil of the early 1970s and the sacrifices of the early crews when it first went independent and even a little while after, where we are today, we would never want it to be any other way. It works best for us, but I would never go to the University of South Florida and say, you have got to be completely off-campus, receive no subsidy, etc., etc., because in their particular market, their particular tradition, their particular campus—they are a commuter campus—that makes a difference.

L: At what point did the *Alligator* come completely solvent? In what year would you say they were out of debt and breaking even?

B: 1978, and we repaid the loan.

L: Five complete years after independence. They repaid the loan. The university still pays for the *University Digest* page. Obviously, they are paying cash for that now.

B: Yes, but that is not guaranteed. In other words, they could pull it. And they decide how many pages they run or how often or any of that. We not only have no circulation guarantee on campus, but we have even had battles with the university about where we could put our racks and so forth.

L: What is the circulation?

B: 35,000.

L: And how many of those are on campus, how many at Sante Fe Community College, and how many in town itself? Just roughly, do you have any idea?

B: I am sorry. I really could not even give you an estimate.

L: I guess that is difficult to do because some of the racks are not on campus but adjacent to the campus.

B: Right, and some of the racks, although they are off campus, they are obviously directed towards students because they are at a student apartment complex. You know, you do not have to be a student there, but 99.99 percent of the people there are students.

L: There is a lot of print competition in this town, is there not?

B: Oh yes, always. Heavy competition.

L: There is another newspaper that has come in the last year, a weekly newspaper that purports to compete directly with the *Alligator*.

B: Yes, and it does, as far as the advertising dollars. Journalistically, it tries to. It started in the beginning of the fall term of 1999.

L: Are there any other highlights or controversies that have occurred since since you came back that stand out in your mind as being unusual?

B: Well, I do not know how controversial this is, but I would like to clear up one point. When I came back to interview for the job as general manager, I confessed my sin to the current board that was structured the way I had said it should be and what I felt was wrong about it. I said, one of the things you need to do is remove all the *Alligator* business people off the board. That will do two things. As long as anyone from business is on the board, even if there was a *de facto* influence over editorial, even if it is limited to just selection of the next editor, because you would have that one vote from business . . . there should be a firewall between editorial and business, and that is what we built.

L: So, they did change that.

B: They changed that. I said, keep the editor and managing editor on the board so that the board can never meet without the editor and managing editor knowing what is going on. You try to protect their editorial integrity.

L: So do you think the board is structured correctly now?

B: It is beautiful. It works.

L: So, that made the change, and you have two members of the news staff who are on the board?

B: Now, we have three because the board created the position of managing editor of *Alligator Online*, so he is on the board also.

L: So, how many non-news people are on the board? How large is the board?

B: The board is seven members, the three editorial members, a student member at large, a graduate student with some sort of journalism background, and then two non-students. One is a community-member at-large, who happens to be Gary Grunter, the managing editor under Ron Sachs, and he has served now for twenty years. He is an attorney in High Springs. The other one is a faculty member of the College of Journalism.

L: John Rosenraad was the chairman for years.

B: Yes, he was a member and chairman for several years.

L: Who is the faculty member now?

B: Lawrence Alexander, and he is an excellent one. I need to say that, although that is a connection with the university, this is not something the university put in place and required of us. This is the corporation recognizing the value of that person=s experience and connection with the fine college.

L: The turmoil that was generated between Ron Sachs, who is now a PR man in Tallahassee . . .

B: I think he would call himself a director of communications.

L: And Stephen C. O=Connell, who is now retired, of course.

B: Also in Tallahassee.

L: But there was turmoil generated by those two individuals acting in their own capacities, one as president and one as editor, that did a favor to the *Alligator* in the long run?

- B: In the long run, yes, and caused a lot of anguish, of course.
- L: Not necessarily that either one of them planned this in the future, because they did not know what would happen, but the outcome has made for a much stronger publication over the long run, has it not?
- B: I think so. Do not get me wrong, there were a lot of great things that Ron Sachs did before the abortion-list controversy. There was a lot of great journalism before independence, so I am not putting down any former editors, like Dave Lawrence or Walker Lundy or Benny Cason, any number of great editors, Eddie Sears, now at the *Palm Beach Post* . . .
- L: You have spent, virtually your entire adult career, with the exception of a few years, at the *Alligator*. That is almost forty years.
- B: Yes, and I am sure that is way too long for most of the people involved here.
- L: Other than the structural change itself, what really is different about the *Alligator* now than it was forty years ago? Is there any difference in the atmosphere at the *Alligator* than, say, thirty or thirty-five years ago?
- B: Yes. I think the big difference is, when the student editors and reporters and writers and photographers were on campus, they did their job journalistically. The editors now still do that and do it very well, but they also have to work on coming up with an annual budget. I am talking about dollars here. In other words, they have to plan how they are going to spend their money. They have to issue a payroll request, so they have to plan who they are going to put where and how much they are going to pay them. They have to watch their budget line items. By the way, the editors, as being members of the board of directors, not only come up with their editorial division budget but they vote on the overall budget. They vote on it also, so they are doubly-protected, because on campus, the editors were given a figure which said this is what you can afford to spend this year.
- L: So, there is an entrepreneurial atmosphere which exists now that did not exist before.
- B: That is an excellent way of putting it. You know, they are involved in all the major decisions. In other words, business and editorial meet, and there is a firewall as far as influence. The editor cannot pull an ad. They have nothing to do with advertising. Advertising cannot affect editorial either. So, that content firewall exists, but as far as cooperation, it is magnificent.
- L: But they sit on the board of directors. If they objected to some of the kind of advertising that you were running, as the board of directors, they really could make a policy decision about that.

B: They would have to fire me.

L: Suppose you, as the general manager, decided you wanted to run gun advertising, and they decided that as a matter of policy, the board of directors did not want the *Alligator* running gun advertising. Do you mean to say that if you felt that was a philosophical thing, you could run it, or they could not keep you from running you, or they would have to fire you, or what?

B: Yes. Now I might agree with them. They might present a case to me where I would say, well, okay, I do not have a strong objection. If it did have a strong objection to it, they would have to fire me.

L: But I always had the impression, especially because of your self-effacing nature—and I say that in a very complimentary sense—that you always let it be known that you work for the board of directors, that you are not running the *Alligator*; you run the business side of it, but this enterprise is run by students and that you take your orders from them, and that is why you are not on the board. You are an employee of the students, in a sense.

B: Absolutely.

L: That is why I do not get the business of the advertising itself. If that is true, then you are really not taking orders from the students.

B: Oh yes. Do the flip-side: if the board said to the editor, you cannot run that sports column, and the editor said I am going to run it, then the only way the board could not have that column run would be to fire the editor. They could not reach down into the business of that division and say, you will do this.

L: Let's put it another way, because the students are the majority and the news people are almost the majority, so they would be giving orders to themselves, whereas the business side is not represented on the board. So, they could say, look, we would rather not run gun advertising and you would probably listen to them, but if you did not want to, they would have to fire you.

B: Right.

L: But you still feel that you work for the board.

B: Of course, that is the reason they have the right to fire me.

L: But you are not really the publisher.

B: Oh no. If I was the publisher, I would be over editorial also.

L: Exactly. You are the general manager.

B: Exactly.

L: During your tenure, the *Alligator* bought the *High Springs Herald*.

B: Right.

L: It is very unusual for a non-profit student newspaper to own a weekly newspaper. How did that happen?

B: How or why?

L: Both.

B: The College of Journalism has an excellent program of journalism, magazine journalism and journalism in general, besides all the broadcast. I am talking about just print right now. Many daily newspapers offer internships so that students can go and get practical experience at a metro-daily. The *Alligator* acts as a microcosm of a metro-daily. There is no sequence and there is very little internship opportunity for community newspapering. Most weeklies cannot afford to have interns, because for an internship, especially on a very broad basis, the student has to travel miles to be at the *Miami Herald*, and living expenses have to be covered while they are there. A weekly in Miami cannot afford to pay those expenses for someone to come and learn community journalism. We felt, therefore, that there was a tiny hole in the opportunities for journalism students in Gainesville. So when the opportunity came for us to purchase the newspaper, we purchased it with the direct idea of having interns be able to work at a weekly newspaper. We have had several, and they have loved it, because it really is different.

L: You have professionals up there, too, right?

B: Oh yes, and that is the reason it is separated. It is a different philosophy, see. It is separated from the *Alligator*.

L: But you did not go out and decide one day that, hey, there is not a full opportunity at the College of Journalism; let's look for a weekly newspaper so we can help them. There had to be other things that happened.

B: Right. We had that idea for a long time, and then the opportunity arose that we could purchase it and so we did.

L: Is that not-for-profit also?

B: No, it is for-profit.

L: A not-for-profit can own a for-profit.

B: Sure. Poynter [Institution] owns the *St. Pete Times*.

L: Right. Is that paper profitable?

B: Yes, and any profits from that paper comes back to Campus Communications which, in turn, is used for non-profit programs.

L: Is there any feedback from there that the people in High Springs object to their weekly being owned by students?

B: Not that I have been aware of. For one thing, it is so arm=s-distance.

L: What year did that happen?

B: In 1990. The ultimate goal, as a matter of fact, we had gotten to the point that we had gotten the approval of the chairman of the department of journalism and the tentative agreement by the dean of the college that it would be a class situation. We hired an editor who had a master=s degree, because that was a requirement for teaching it, and who had experience in teaching at the junior college level journalism and scholastic journalism, and an advantage to me from a news standpoint is that he had worked at the southwest Florida water district. The reason that was an advantage is that I am convinced that water is going to be a really big news item of the future and a continuing one, especially in that area where people are going to try to come in and take it away from that area with pipes and so forth. At any rate, he agreed to all the plans, and the then chairman of the department Lawrence Alexander, at that time. And he needed a syllabus from the editor.

L: Was Lawrence the chairman in 1990?

B: No, this was after. We did not begin this movement until after 1995.

L: Which movement are you talking about?

B: To move toward the ultimate goal of teaching a class with the newspaper.

L: Pardon me. I thought you were still going back to the formation. This is 1995 when you actually moved the *High Springs Herald* into a teaching instrument.

- B: Yes, [the news editor] and he kept putting off getting the syllabus out and getting to the point where the textbooks had to be ordered and so forth; finally, after nine months the editor resigned, even though he had promised me he would be here two years. So that has now been put on hold.
- L: That still has not happened yet?
- B: No.
- L: So, in other words, the idea was that the *High Springs Herald* would become a teaching laboratory, like the *Missourian* or something like that. It would have been wonderful.
- B: Except we were going to come from the other direction. The editor would be the teacher, rather than a teacher becoming the editor.
- L: Yes, well, it is the same thing. I mean, at the *Missourian*, _____ is a hired professional. It is not like a faculty member.
- B: I see. Then it would be the same thing.
- L: Yes. It is a wonderful idea, and I would fully have supported that. I think that is almost the ideal, that it avoids the stuff like _____.
- B: But our current editor is getting his master=s.
- L: So, the idea is that you move in a direction where not the *Alligator* but peripheral things at the *Alligator* can really become teaching tools at the College of Journalism.
- B: Exactly.
- L: Ed, I enjoyed talking to you today, and we will have to pick it up again and bring it up through the other twenty-five-year history.
- B: You are a glutton for punishment.
- L: I think there has been really some important stuff here today, and I appreciate your giving me the time.
- B: Not at all. My pleasure.
- L: Thanks very much.

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B: Thank you.
[End of the interview.]