

Interview with Roz Boyd.

23A BST

F: How many black instructors?

B: The majority of them were black, I think. My senior year there were ten white instructors out of a faculty of about forty.

F: Where else had you thought of going besides here?

B: Well, this was the only predominately white university that I had thought of going to. I had thought of places like Morris Brown in Atlanta, Georgia, and Johnson C. Smith in North Carolina.

F: How did you hear about the University of Florida?

B: I had a teacher who had gone to school here. However, she thought that she had gone here but she had gone to Florida State. She was a white instructor. She was telling me to apply to the University of Florida and thinking that it was Florida State because she said that it was very easy to get financial aid here, and it was a good school.

F: All the time she had Florida State in mind?

B: She was thinking of Florida State. I applied here and I got accepted and I got financial aid. Also, for going to a predominately white school I got another scholarship from an outside fund the Herbert ^{Linger} ~~Lee~~ Fund.

F: What is that?

B: Herbert Linger was a black man in education and he set up this foundation for black students who want to go to predominately white schools in the South or white students who want to go to predominately black schools and who are not financially able to do this. They give aid up to \$1,200 a year.

F: How much are you getting now?

B: I get between \$700 and \$800 a year.

F: A year from both?

B: That is just from the Linger Foundation. From Florida, I get about \$400 a quarter. No, not from Florida, I get about \$350 a quarter but I get the total of \$700 at the beginning of the year from Linger.

F: I see. So, how much financial aid is that all together?

B: Well, it is not enough. I can tell you that much. I have to pay the out of state fee and that is \$450. At fall quarter I really do not have to worry about it because I have the other Fund but then in the Spring with housing, food and books they run you a lot. At the end of the year, I do not have anything to pay Spring tuition with. Florida breaks up their financial aid into National Defense and Educational Opportunity. From National Defense I only get \$190 which is not enough to pay tuition and I have to get \$260 from somewhere else just to pay my fees.

F: Is National Defense in addition?

B: National Defense is a loan. When you get National Defense then they entitle you to get a grant the same amount of the loan. Also, you can work after your second year here. My first year here I got, I figured up my expenses and it came to about \$2400.

F: For three quarters?

B: That is right.

F: You must live pretty high.

B: I do not. That is just it. I have not bought a new dress in ages. I do not have money to spend on things like that, just food and books and paying tuition. Last year, I just broke even. My mother is not financially able to send me any money. My mother and father are divorced and I get child support from him. But, he is supposed to give a certain amount every month which he is supposed to send to me for my schooling. If he does not sent he money, I can not get it but still he can put it on his tax return. It is really a hassle. Last year I just broke even. This year I have had to borrow about \$400 off of insurances that mother had on me that she is going to have to pay

back. I have talked to the financial aid office and there is nothing that they can do.

F: Had you heard anything about this Univeristy besides from that teacher?

B: Not a thing. I did not even know anybody in the state of Florida.

F: It seems odd that you would choose to come here.

B: It was but my intentions were someplace where I did not have any friends.

I did not want ~~to~~ be with any of my class mates. I am the type of person

who makes friends easily but when somebody is around I know that I will not study. I did not study in high-school.

F: Were you a good student?

B: Yes

F: You got good grades but you did ~~not~~ have to study?

B: I did not have to for high-school work. You know, it cmae easy to me. I guess that is why I could go on about my business. Then too, I was cautioned that college life was nothing but parties. If you partied too much, then you would be home in a couple of months. I did not want to go to any place where I owuld get into this type of atmosphere. I thought that by going to a white university that I would not have that many friends that I would have to go out with all of the time, and fraternities and sororities. It was true for the first two weeks that I was here. I did not go anywhere. I did not see a black person for four days.

F: Lliterally?

B: Literally, I did not see one.

F: When did you decide that you had written to the wrong University?

B: I did not find out about it until I had finished my first year here. She said, "Rosalyn, how do you like Florida State?" I said, "Florida State, I am going to the University of Florida." Then she got it straightened out. She mentioned that it had a circus and I knew that Florida did not have a circus.

F: That is one of the strangest stories that I have ever heard.

B: It is true though. Now that I am here I like it. It is pretty nice. There are a lot of my friends that went to predominately black colleges who are now home going to junior colleges or working. They had transferred to the black colleges and they just could not hack the continuous partying. The work was not quite as strenuous and they could always bribe a teacher or get into classes where you had good teachers and the ones that do not require as much work. Now they are getting stricter so I have heard. That is why a lot of them are home.

F: You mean that has been the image of black colleges for black students?

B: Yes, but it has changed now. I would say that 20% of my graduating class that went to college in North Carolina are home now and going to school there. They just did not make the grades. It is changing because of the calibre of the instructors. They are getting some good teachers now. Then too they have to compete with the white schools. They have to upgrade their standards so to speak.

F: SO, how has life here been for you?

B: At first, I wanted to go home. I had never been away from home and I had never been away from home this long. I have never been in a situation where I have been surrounded by whites. I have always lived in a black neighborhood, with black school and everything. The only contact that I had with whites was in the downtown area or with those few white teachers that I had the last two years of school. It was a completely new situation and I did not know how to handle it. It use to make me angry to see how they would treat me. I have never been treated like that. It was the type of situation where you live with a girl every day in a dormitory and then you see her out on the street and she does not speak to you. She looks at you like you are part of the scenery. Then when you are back in the dormitory she is real buddy-buddy. This use to get on my nerves. Luckily, I had a nice roommate what I will call a nice white girl. After living with her I got a better understanding of white

people but ~~o~~ she was unique. SHE did not fake anything with me. I mean, if she disagreed with me she would tell me, and if I disagreed with her I would tell her. Now, I have come to look at her as a normal human being and not just as a white person. I think that it was a true learning experience for me.

F: Do you live in the dorm still?

B: No.

F: You live with the crew.

B: Yes, I live with Gwen and Kathy.

F: Did you have two different white roommates?

B: I had only one.

F: You actually did come closer together with that one who did not speak to you?

B: Oh, she lived across the hall. She was not exactly my roommate. There was a whole bunch of them like that I was just using one for an example. Like this one instance, you know how they get together and go out to dinner and one drives. I was sitting in the backseat with Claire who was my roommate from last year. There were three in the front and three in the back. THERE was this black guy who passed by and he had this huge Afro and to me he looked real good. I did not say anything because I was use to seeing this. He was riding on a bicycle and this particular girl said, "Look at that boy," Then she just cut it off and kind of slid down in the seat. It tickled me and in a little while she told my roommate to tell me that she was sorry that she had hurt my feelings. So, I told my roommate to tell her that I did not care how she felt about that guy and that was her feelings. ^{Some} ~~so~~ of her people I do not like the way that they look. But as long as you are not feeding me and clothing me I do not care what you think. So, after dinner she came to me and apologized and I told her that there was not a need to apologize because I could not help the way that she thinks. I said that your tastes are different from mine and

I can not change that. So, she finally understood. I think that they learned a lot from me as well as I learned a lot from them. You tend to think that they are suppose to understand right from the start. I could not see any way in the world that those girls could understand my feelings just right off the bat like I had expected. They learned, and I learned too.

F: What have you learned?

B: Well, I learned that they could not change their feelings overnight. I think that the problem too was that they were never in contact with blacks on an equal level with them. They were use to blacks in there home cooking and cleaning and so to speak. They were not use to blacks going to school with them and this was a new thing. Also, to know that blacks were just as intelligent as they were maybe not literally but be on the same level. They did not know how to treat me. They did not know to treat me with respect or what. I think this is what they learned how to get along with another black girl. Of course, you treat persons differently because they are individuals both black and white. They learned that black people too have feelings and they have their thoughts and they have their interests. We were talking about music and they like the Beatles and all that other junk and I like soul music. I gained an appreciation for their kind of music like Janis Joplin and Jody Miller. You know, certain songs I liked. Some of it I did gain an interest for. In turn, they learned to like some of the soul music. We learned to kind of accept the other one's culture. That is what I think that we learned.

F: How is the social life here for you?

B: Well, some of my friends would say that it is nothing. It depends on what you want to get out of college. You could go to say FLorida A & M and have a great social life because there are more blacks there.

F: What is your major?

B: ~~Sociology~~ ^{Sociology} It is all right for me here. If it gets dull, I can always go home.

But when I go home all I do is go out to a club or go out to a party which is just the same thing that we do here. It is just that the people at home they know how to party. The kids here are college students and they are here to get something out of school and they know that they can not continuously party. In order to finish school you can not do that. You have to hit the books six days at least.

F: At least six.

B: That is right. You can take off Friday and Saturday nights and make it. You can not continuously party say like you can at a black campus.

F: DO they continuously party at black campuses?

B: Yes, not continuously but it would be like a white kid on this university. Fraternity parties and sorority parties and outings you know, there is always something on this campus for a white person to do. There is always a dance or something like that. They have say a dance every week-end at the Union where they have a band. Well, this band is usually a white band and blacks can not really have a good time because they can not dance to the music. I guess that I would say up until this year my social life was kind of limited because I did not know anyone in the Gainesville community. But this year I have met a lot of people and it has increased some just by my meeting other people.

F: Do you date mainly in the community?

B: Well, no, I do not date people in the community. I have a steady. I usually date one guy at the time. You know, how a lot of girls will say that they are going with him tonight and will go with another one the next night. I usually date a guy until we get to know each other pretty well. I am basically a one guy girl. I have friends in the community, guys that I am friendly with but as far as going out with them to the movies or to a club no.

F: If you are going with one guy then you are in a different situation but never-

theless you know the people.

B: Yes

F: What is that situation basically?

B: I do not know whether you are aware. The college girls going with the guys in the neighborhood and they say that they are going to get them a Florida co-ed. Or the guys say that they are going to go out into the community and see what they are going to catch there. At home, it was the thing to get a guy who went to college. Can you understand what I am talking about?

F: Yes

B: I think that is the way it is here. Then too the possibility of dates on this campus is very limited. There are not very many people here. People tend to say that everybody knows what everybody else is doing so I better go somewhere else so that I can keep my business quiet. There is a lot of dating going on off campus.

F: You would say a majority?

B: Yes, a majority on the males part more so than females. It is kind of difficult for females to get off campus because of transportation in order to meet these perspective dates.

F: Well, do the guys have cars?

B: No, but it looks better for a guy to be walking on Fifth Avenue than it does for a girl.

F: Yes, I see what you mean.

B: I think that most of the boys on campus have access to a car more so than the girls do.

F: I thought that very few people have cars.

B: Very few do but the guys can get access to one easier than a girl can. It is pretty hard. I think that too is why my first year here I did not have any contact with people off campus was because of this transportation problem. The only time that I saw any black people was when I went to a store downtown

or out to the Mall. And too the people off campus tend to think that the black kids at Florida are uppity and do not want to be bothered with us. They think that we have gotten whitewashed because we did not associate with them, I think that idea is changing now because we are getting off campus more so then before.

F: Why is it that black guys on this campus say the black girls on campus will not go out with them?

B: Well, that is a long story. First of all, I will tell you my opinion, a lot of guys on this campus do not even interest me, you know. It is just a personal thing with me. They just are not my type. When you turn them down, it is like all heaven, she does not want to go out with me well who does she think that she is. A lot of guys on campus it is just like anyplace else it is a conquest to get the girl to go out with them. Sex is all that they are looking for sometimes. Most girls are on their guard against this and that is why they will not go out with them.

F: Do the guys in the community treat you any different?

B: No, they are after the same thing. Well, maybe this is just my opinion. I have heard the guys say that once you go out with a girl on campus then she belongs to you. That is because that there are so few of us that when you do see someone with someone else you do automatically assume that they are going together. This is what has been happening and I guess that is why I do not like to go out with guys on campus. They assume automatically that they are dating each other.

F: Do most black girls on campus go out enough?

B: I think that it depends on the quarter. Fall quarter there were a lot of parties and you could see people out every day at the Union either bowling or playing pool. This quarter I hardly get to see any of them. I do not see them at the Union and I do not see them on campus. Sometimes when we have meetings I do not even see them at the meetings. It makes you wonder what

happened to them.

F: Why do you think that there is that difference?

B: I think that they tend to realize that it goes back to this partying business. By winter quarter they realize that they can not do as much as they thought that they could and they have to slack down some to pick up that grade point average again. Then too all of them here that after this quarter they are going home and they do not have to party as much.

F: You do not think that it is true then that black girls on this campus are snobbish to black guys on campus?

B: Well, I would say that there are certain ones that I would say are snobbish. Then too it is the type of black people that this university attracts. The real studious type and the upper 10% of the class that was the type of people that they were attracting. These people do not tend to usually go out and party.

F: YOU mean the girls.

B: Yes, the girls. Once the guys come here they go through this great change. It is a big new thing and they can do almost anything that they want. It is a change from being home. The guys have more freedom than the girls anyway. I think that this change with girls is more gradual. I think that my first couple of weeks here I stayed in my books. I had to realize that that was not all there was to college life. There was a social life too. I think that the girls who were more studious than I have had this change to be more gradual.

F: Do black girls date white guys?

B: Some.

F: Very many.

B: I would not say very many. They keep it very quiet. I think that a few do. There was a time when the guys would come down on you so hard if you dated a

white guy. Because they thought that you did not want to date them. It was really a personal choice.

F: What about black guys dating white girls?

B: It is very prevalent.

F: Like what percentage?

B: Like about 60%?

F: 60%

B: Yes, have dated or date.

F: How do the black girls feel about that?

B: Well, because they got down on them for dating white guys then they got down on them for dating white girls. I think that now nobody cares. It is up to you.

F: You think that things have relaxed some?

B: Yes, they have.

F: Why do not black girls date more white fellows?

B: It is my personal opinion that I do not date white guys because I just like black guys. There are a few white guys on campus that I would consider dating and some that I have. It is just no big thing to me. If he is a nice guy and I want to date him then I would. There is a trouble with communication. I found that out when I dated a white guy. I had problems just trying to converse with him on certain things because his interest were so different from mine.

F: Like what?

B: Like movies. He watched a lot of philosophical films and new things like underground. I could not see anything like that. I just sat there and agreed. I enjoyed it and it was interesting. It was just that I could not come back with a statement.

F: What do you talk about on your dates?

B: With blacks we talk about other blacks and things that are happening to black people. If I went out on a date now, what do you talk about. It is just a

continual jive. If you are very close to the person that you are going out with then you may talk with them about something serious like what you intend to get out of marriage or life or something like that. Other than that you sit down and talk about the music or that girls dress or something like that. Things like styles and records and clothes, and things like that. This guy that I dated he talked about philosophical things. I was just lost because I am not a very philosophical person.

F: How do you get along with most students on this campus?

B: Pretty good I think.

F: Do you?

B: I like the students on this campus. They are pretty nice people. I guess that I feel this way because I did not know anybody here and they did not reject me at all as an outsider as someone out-of-state.

F: Are you talking about black students?

B: Yes, black students. It is like one big family and it just keeps getting larger and larger. It makes me feel good to see how well they get along together.

F: Who do you go with?

B: James Teate. Well, there are a few that I get along with very well. You meet all types like in my classes there are some that are really nice to me. They do not go out of their way to be extra nice which I hate. They speak to me like anybody else. We talk sometimes. Then there are the ones that say oh, Roselyn, this and oh, Roselyn, that and it just gets on my nerves. It makes me feel that they are setting me apart just because of my color. It makes me feel that they have to be extra nice to me just because of my color. I do not want that. Then there are the ones that are down right rednecked and sneer at you. That makes me laugh because it is really stupid. You know, what am I doing to him. It makes me feel good that he thinks that I am so important that

he has to sneer at me. I have met all types. I have gotten to be very close friends with a few whites.

F: What about professors?

B: Well, I like the majority of my professors. I really have had some nice instructors. There was one that I had that agreed with everything I said. I could say something totally wrong and he would completely agree with me. I think that Miss Boyd is right and we should take her opinion. He would continue to think of things to substantiate my opinion.

F: What course was this.

B: This was Comprehensive English.

F: Was it a Black Studies course or regular one?

B: It was a regular course. We did not have Black Studies in my time. They are just doing everything for them but they will not do anything for us who are all ready here. The majority of them were just good teachers and did not care what color I was. Then there were some that I really did like and held courses where you could really talk about problems of the day. Those were the ones like my Humanities class the last two quarters and my sociology class and Institutions class last year. They did not really take the black side all of the time. They discussed it objectively, I thought, and they discussed it in a way to get those people who really had thoughts opposite to mine to get them to voice their opinions. So, then we could talk about it. A lot of teachers that I had would turn off a white redneck because he would come off with this all pro-black view and the student was afraid to say anything. Because he would be contradicting his teacher. They were all right. There was no way for the students to try to get anything out of the course. It would give them not a chance to justify what they thought. Other than that, my teachers have been pretty nice.

F: Do you have any contact with any administrators?

B: Yes, just a couple.

F: Who are they?

B: It is truly in a business line. I got along with them pretty well. A couple that I had contacts with a couple of times they just turned me off real bad.

F: How was that?

B: Like this one guy. I was going to tell him that I was working on Work-Study and I got another job. When I could have worked on Work-Study and worked on the other job too and not told him a thing and just reap all of the profits.

I was going to be nice and tell him that I was working on Work-Study but that I did have another job and that I would not be able to come in at the regular hours. I said that if this would inconvenience you then I will quit. It was only for a month and we would be in school for more than a month and that was the limit of the job. He looks at me and he said, "Where are you working at?" He was just real snappy like that. I told him that I was working in the Registrar's office.

F: What had you been doing?

B: I was a file clerk in admissions. I got a job at the Gainesville High School. That was at \$3 an hour which was better than \$1.50 an hour if it was only for a month.

F: Even if what.

B: Even if it was for just a month. I ~~was~~ ^{told} him where I was working at. He said that yes I would have to quit because I could not work on Work-Study and have another job too. HE said that I could sign my time card out. I said that in case I wanted to come back could I because this other job was only for a month. I said that you had a lot of help in admissions and that it would not matter. I was told that I could work on break and on during the summer on this job. He said that he did not know about that yet and that I would have to come back and check on that. This was not the man that hired me. Maybe he was just

crabby for that day, I do not know. They have problems.

F: What kind of changes would you like to see here?

B: Well, I would like to see more black instructors first of all.

F: More than black students?

B: I would like to see more black students. By bringing in more black students you reach more students, but getting black people on an advisory level to students so that they can see that there are some people teaching us who are black. This relationship is what I think is a problem at this university. There is not enough interaction because there is not enough blacks to go around. Teachers or otherwise, you know. I would like to see more black students. Not mainly for the academic atmosphere but for the social atmosphere. Like living in dorms together, you know. There was this girl who was a complete redneck. At the end of the year she told me that some of her views she still held on to but she began to realize that a black person was a human being. I was really shocked because she strictly can not stand blacks. She would almost walk into the wall when she saw me. She admitted that she was prejudice and that she could not drop it altogether but she was learning. She could like a black person. She felt that it was just because of her parents. She was brought up to think this way. She could not drop it. But she said that she began to realize that it was not so bad. I think that is why I would like some ~~more~~ more black students here. So, that they could interact with whites and we could learn more about whites and the whites could learn more about us. Another thing, the workers around this campus. I would like to see more white workers in laboring jobs. You always see whites ringing cash registers and typing and at an administrative level and blacks are always sweeping the floor, or picking up trash around the yard.

F: Are you saying that you would like to see more blacks in those jobs?

B: More whites in those jobs.

- F: You mean to replace the blacks that have the jobs now?
- B: Not to replace them but to see just as many. I would like to see blacks ring cash registers.
- F: The problem there is that we need a hundred ditch-diggers. You are right that there is a disproportioned number of blacks. If you do not need any more than a hundred then how do you do it?
- B: These peoples that they are hiring for these jobs as ditch-diggers and maids could take jobs on an upper level which the whites have now. Some of them are capable. Yesterday, I went to one of the cafeteria and this white lady could not even give me my change correctly. A black girl came up and the lady seemed to be in her fifties and the girl was about my age and she told her to give me a dime. It cost \$2.16.
- F: This was for yourself?
- B: No, it was for someone else and I was just paying for it. It was \$2.16 and I gave her \$2.26 and she just could not figure out why I gave her that penny. Then she gave me a dime. Why was this girl serving food when she was capable of doing something else? If you portion out the jobs more not only for blacks. But let whites serve in positions like that too. When HEW was here you saw the white ditch-diggers and more blacks standing up with their arms folded.
- F: You think that they told them to do that that day?
- B: I really do.
- F: Why did the blacks do it? Obviously, they understood what was happening.
- B: Yes, but the blacks on this campus that work here have a fear of their jobs. This one man that I talked to who works over in Norman. He said that he has been working here for 15 years. He had not received a raise and did not have any workman's compensation.
- F: Had not received a raise in 15 years?

- B: In fifteen years, he was making the same thing that he was then. I did not want to question him because we were just talking. He was telling me about how he had a daughter my age and she looked something like me. I was just talking to him and this came out that he had been working fifteen years. He said that they had started working on the minimum wage level. I said that was nice. If you tell them that they should be doing this and you should be doing that, they will say that you are not working and do not have a family to support. It is true, you know.
- F: You think that they are in fear of losing their jobs?
- B: Yes.
- F: Can you think of any other changes? How come you have such a reputation of being such a militant?
- B: Well, that is just it. I required it and I really did not think that I came on as that militant.
- F: You have heard that people refer to you that way?
- B: Yes, mainly because of that paper the opposition paper that I read to the Black Student Union during the time that the guys were arrested for the Tolbert incident. I think that was mainly the reason why they pegged me as a militant. I did not write that. I agreed with what it said. I did not write it.
- F: How come that you read it?
- B: I was Minister of Communication for the BSU. I was standing right by the guy that wrote it.
- F: Who was that?
- B: Larry Jordon. I can not say that I did not project my thoughts into it like certain points. I said that Larry, why do you not include this and you remember this certain incident. The main thing of the paper was Larry's.
- F: Do you feel badly that you have that reputation?
- B: To tell the truth, I do not care. I do not care what they think of me. As long

as you are not affecting me in any way, I do not care.

F: Why only whites? I am talking about blacks. I heard it mostly from black students.

B: You are kidding.

F: I do not know any whites that know you.

B: I have heard of a few that think I am real militant. I had a phone call right after that and the lady said, "Is this Rozalyn Boyd?" I said, "Yes." She asked, "Are you the girl that caused all of the ruckus on campus?" I said, "No." She said, "Are you colored?" I said, "No." I hung up the phone. Then I received a letter that said why do you and all of the black monkeys leave? It was funny.

F: You got a racial letter like that?

B: Yes, he put his name on it but he did not put on his return address. He mailed it from St. Petersburg. I published it in the Alligator. I said that I would like the nigger to come and pick up his mail. I said that I was sorry that I had read it but it had my name on the envelope. When I read the salutation it said Dear Nigger and I knew that was not me. So, they laughed about it a while. Then things just cooled off. If I feel some way about something then I say what I feel. My mother says that is going to be my downfall because I talk too much.

F: Do you have a copy of that letter?

B: There is a copy at the BSU office and I think that I can find a copy for you.

F: I would appreciate it.

B: I do not have the paper that it came on. If I think that something is being done wrong I do not care who it is, I am going to say something. A lot of things that were going on on this campus I just did not like.

F: Do you go along with most of the black student leaders here?

B: With their main ideas, yes.

F: Who do you consider leaders?

B: I consider maybe Mitch Dasher and well there is a faction that goes along with what he says. Then there is a guy named Emerson Thompson. I admire him because he really thinks before he does something. He has a mind that will not only help him but others too. Sam Taylor, I think that a lot of blacks are influenced by him. Up until one time, David Horne, but he is now at Santa Fe. He does not influence the kids here too much. That is about all. There are some people that get up and say things occasionally that will incite the crowd. But as far as being a leader, you know, with the goal of the group in mind there are just a few people.

End of tape.