

Interviewer: Michelle Busby

Interviewee: Edward Blue

UF 275 AB

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Please note that since both last names begin with the letter B, I used the interviewer's first initial instead of her last.

M: It is April 20, 1995. I am Michelle Busby. I am interviewing Edward G. Blue [Assistant Director of Development, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences] for the Oral History Program at the University of Florida. We are in a conference room at the Reitz Union. You go by Ed generally?

B: Yes.

M: Could you go ahead and give your full name, including your middle name.

B: Edward Gene Blue.

M: Why do we not start off with you telling me when and where you were born?

B: December 1, 1954 at Pompano Beach, Florida. I do not know which hospital and I do not know the time. It amazes me that people know the exact time when they were born, but I do not know that. It is Pompano Beach, where I grew up. My family is still located in Pompano Beach. I am one of nine children-four brothers and four sisters. I am the fourth oldest, not quite in the middle, but almost in the middle. We are all basically in Florida. I did have a brother in North Carolina but he is now visiting my parents down in south Florida, and may return to south Florida.

M: You had mentioned on the phone that you were interested in doing a family history.

Do you have any background you can use?

B: Unfortunately, we do not. In fact, I saw my mother last Thursday. We had dinner. I

mentioned to her that one of my volunteers in Jacksonville [upon] the first time meeting this gentleman was curious about my last name. In fact, there was an article in the Jacksonville newspaper, The Florida Times-Union, about a Blue family--Christopher Blue. This Christopher Blue had written a book about his family who was primarily in the south Jacksonville area. It talks about the family being involved in lumber, being part of Indian tribe, and is fairly comprehensive. So this contact thought that there must be some relationship because the name was spelled the same. It is a very unusual name. I took the article and through information in Jacksonville, got a number for this Christopher Blue. I called him to see if there is in fact a connection. I have not heard from him. The book is like \$49 or \$50, and I wanted to be sure it was worth the \$50 to shell out to see if indeed [it is true]. I mentioned to my mother, and she did not recognize the Christopher Blue. We both kind of agreed that because [of where] my father and his family are located (my father was born in Sanderson, Florida between Lake City and Jacksonville) that there likely would be some connection because of the proximity. I am curious about it because as it true with a lot of families, there is no written history. You only get it through your relatives, grandparents, aunts, and uncles talking about it. People try to remember what happened. My father is dead. He died back in 1981. I currently have one more uncle on my father's side and also an aunt.

M: Why did his family move to Pompano?

B: That is a good question. My father and two of his brothers started a taxi business in south Florida and ran it there for many years. In fact, my uncle, who is still living, I think he still has a part of the company which is still in operation. As far as I knew, that is one of the things that my father did. My father was also very interested in working in landscape design and architecture. He worked for a nursery for some years in south Florida. He finished that and became involved

with his brother in the business. I do not know what prompted them to move from north Florida to south Florida.

M: Maybe economic opportunities.

B: Very likely. South Florida is an interesting mixture of people who have relocated from the northeast and the midwest to get away from the cold. They come down for maybe a vacation and then decide this is really great--let us stay. We now often tease each other about the fact that south Florida really is not the south. It is more the northeast if anything. North Florida is in fact more southern and has more southern traditions and what people tend to think about the south. It was interesting growing up in high school because a lot of my friends and classmates were exactly transplants. Their families were transplants from up north. We really did not get a sense of the south until we traveled up to north Florida when I relocated here. I started coming in contact with it regularly.

M: Was your mother from Pompano?

B: No, my mother is from a place called Ocilla, Georgia.

M: Where is that?

B: It is south of Atlanta. I guess the closest city that most people would recognize would be Macon, I think. It is a very small community. I remember going to visit my grandfather in Ocilla, or just outside of Ocilla. It was a late night. We had been driving all day long. I just remember going into the house. There was a very tall man with lots of hair. I do not remember how old I was. I just remember that image. It was the first time we had really left Pompano in search of relatives. We drove all the way up to Ocilla. I do not know if we got any farther north than that. It was really interesting.

M: Growing up in Pompano was not a southern experience.

B: Right.

M: Did you have a happy childhood? [You grew up in a] huge family.

B: Yes, a very large family. We all became very independent, but at the same time dependent. The older kids basically helped the younger kids grow up.

M: Were you classified as the older or the younger? Were you the helper or the helpee?

B: I was always in the middle. I was kind of like the helpee, to use your phrase. I was always still very much independent. We all had responsibilities that we either took on or that were assigned to us. We just basically ran the household. Both my parents worked. As I mentioned my father worked for the company. My mother made work out on the beach for a while. Then as we grew older, she got a job working for the Board of Education for Broward County. I was still in high school. So that changed that and improved it a little bit. Growing up was a lot of fun. It was extremely crazy because there was all of us there at various ages. We were very close knit. My mother was very protective as is the case with a lot of African American mothers back then. We had curfews. We were disciplined very severely for problems and getting into trouble, so we avoided those things. I think it is interesting because there are two basic generations among my brothers and sisters. My eldest brother is fifty or fifty-one. My youngest sister is in her late twenties. We saw the different way that they were brought up by my parents. It was extremely the opposite of what we were. In other words, we were much more disciplined and much more structured in our attitude about school, people, older folks, respect, and all of that. With my younger brothers and sisters, there was a lot more leniency. As a result, they got into a lot more trouble than we did. I would say overall I had a good childhood. My parents instilled in us the idea of education early on.

M: I was going to ask about that. You know your mother and father had their hands full with each of them working and nine children. What were they able to do? You have obviously come to the University of Florida and have been successful. How

were they able to manage all that?

B: They basically just really taught us or really hammered into us the value of an education that in this day and age, in order to be successful as an individual or a person, you have got to have an education. You have got to go through the educational process. That is from the beginning all the way up through high school certainly, but college was also very essential. I became very active in high school. I had always been a good student because when you got your report card, the report card was immediately given to your parents. If you got bad grades, you were punished. It was not like oh well, let us try and do better next time. You were punished if you did not do well. So we had an incentive to do well in school. I did. I was a very good student I would say 95 percent of the time. The time that was difficult for me was the transition between going from eighth grade to ninth grade because that was back in the late 1960s (1968 and 1969) when desegregation took effect or was actually implemented. They phased out the high school that we had all grown up with and had looked forward to and getting our degrees from. It was a tremendous tradition. When they closed that school and bused us to Deerfield Beach, about fifteen miles from our home and neighborhood, there was a difficult transition time. Up until that point, I had good grades. I was always on the dean's list the majority of the time. It is no less than the honor roll. I was in advanced classes. Moving to Deerfield Beach and just making that adjustment **[[please finish thought]]**. The one area that has always been and is still an area that I have not excelled in was the math. That was a very difficult road to try and get beyond. I did. I managed to get through that. My tenth grade year was better. In eleven and twelve, I was very successful. I was very active. I was president of both my junior class and senior class. I was involved with student government.

Once the desegregation plan took effect, the administrators, the adults if you will, finally realized that the problems that we were having were not being addressed because they were not involving the students and not asking the students to give their ideas or inputs on how could we make this thing work. It is here. We have got to deal with it. How can we make it work? They developed human relations committees that were comprised of students from different communities and different interests.

M: That you set up?

B: I was involved with that. I was involved with it in my high school. I became involved with it on a county-wide level. It was called the Youth Advisory Council. It was comprised of students from all the counties--Broward, Dade, and Monroe. [It] was basically the south Florida area. The goal was to involve the students in this process of how we could make relations between the races better, relations between students, faculty, and administrators. At that point, we all said, "If we could have done this before, we could have avoided some of the problems." The basic fault of desegregation was every day, you bus the students from their neighborhoods to another neighborhood. They are in that high school for four or five hours. Then you bus them back to their communities. There is no interaction after that point. That is where the fault was. There really was not an opportunity during the school time to really get to learn about other people and other things because you have got your structured classroom setting. There were always the extracurricular activities which we were very successful at getting a cross section of students involved in sports, music, drama, and all of those. We made it very clear that you just cannot take students, put them together for five hours, and expect for them to be the perfect citizens, they love each other, and they have this warm and fuzzy feeling about each other. That is a ridiculous expectation. Through the Youth Advisory Council and the human

relations committees at each of the different high schools, we saw a little bit better relationship but never 100 percent. Unfortunately, a lot of my friends in responding to desegregation really became rebellious. They rebelled against the system. A lot of them developed really serious discipline problems. They dropped out. They just really turned their back on the system. I had decided early on that I had a very real interest in education. I wanted to further my education. I wanted to go to college. In order to do that, you had to do certain things. You had to do your homework. You had to perform. You had to come to class. You had to do those things within the confines of the system. As a result of that, I would say that not so much being shunned, but I was isolated on some levels because I was not following the norm. I was not following what the majority of my friends were doing. I still was not part of the other community as well. They had their group and their situation. By the time I got to the twelfth grade, some of that had changed. Some of the students started to realize this is important and I need to get my act together.

M: Apparently, you were well respected if you were student body president two years in a row.

B: Yes, two years in a row. I represented a balance.

M: Did you enjoy that role or was it like why me, I am only seventeen?

B: It was a combination of [things]. I saw a need for it and I saw a real need for dialogue, discussion, and for people coming together and just talking. There was so many misconceptions about who we are. We all are different but we all are very similar. You will not know that unless you take the time to talk to someone or be involved with a person in a project or whatever. I was a very strong advocate for discussion and meeting. Let us talk about this and come to some harmonious ground. It was difficult because there were people who just did not see it the same way that I did. I had some of the white students who would just

not have anything to do with me because of what I was trying to do--bring the races together. I had some of the black students who said, "This is not going to work. We do not want any part of it." I was never called an Uncle Tom. I forget what it was that they called you.

M: Oreo?

B: That was a term. That was hard. That was difficult.

M: Especially at your age. You were a kid.

B: In addition to that, there was no support. The administration was almost on the same level that we were, the students, in trying to come to terms with that as well. They had the same situation with black administrators, teachers, and so forth. Everybody was trying to deal with this race issue on so many different levels. I think the consistency and persistence that I demonstrated by being involved with student activities, being involved in the county, being visible, and being successful really helped. I think it helped other students. I think it helped other students see that you can get above all the nonsense and achieve the goals that you set for yourself or what you think you can go after. There was very little support. Having decided I was going to go to college, I knew that I had to do certain things. My family could not afford it first, so what was the alternative? Financial aid, scholarships, and the like. I was very lucky because I did get a couple of scholarships from the high school. I was able to get a Florida Student Assistant Grant, and in other words a full financial aid package from the University of Florida. In fact, that was the deciding factor to come to Gainesville. I applied to Morehouse and to Clarke, both in Atlanta, and Morris Browne. I had been in touch with all of them. Florida was the only one that offered me a full financial aid package that consisted of the Florida Student Assistant Grant, National Direct Student Loan. I am surprised I can remember all of these. It was such an important part of my life and career. I am not surprised in a way. That

was the beginning. I was fairly unique in that sense because the guidance counselor in the high school, like everybody else, were overworked. They did not have enough staff. They were poorly lacking. If the student did not have the ambition and some sense of what they wanted to do, how they were going to achieve, where they were going to go, and interest in the process, then the guidance counselor was really trying to help them get through high school. Let us take this one step at a time. In actuality, if you are going to college, that process starts in actually the ninth grade with all the pretesting.

Anyway, I got the information and I followed through on it. The guidance counselors were of minimal help. They helped me in the direction. My point is that for other students who did not have that kind of direction, you can imagine how lost they were and really did not take advantage of some opportunities that were available to them.

M: They probably did not even know about them.

B: They did not know. They did not know to ask the questions.

M: I am going to take you back to the ninth grade. You said that was a troubled year, a year of transition. Did you develop personal coping skills that kind of carried you through the rest of your high school years? What did you have to do personally to deal with this situation?

B: I think mostly I would retreat. I would become the recluse depending on the circumstances. At the same time, I was very active in chorus. I was the tenor in the concert chorus. We did a lot of performances. We did a lot of traveling. That was a great way to get away. That was a great release. I got along with that group of students very well. So that was a fun release and a fun getaway. I basically just would either retreat within myself and just focus on my education, focus on studying and on what was at hand. There were a few friends who were

like mine who felt the same way. We would get together and do things. There was some support. It got better as time went on and as more students showed an interest in really wanting to make things work. I became friends with a lot of the white students. We kind of created a little niche, a little group. The group expanded as time went on. In the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth, it was so much. I was so active and so involved trying to get into college. I had a lot of things to distract me from some of the negative things that were happening.

M: What were your mom and dad counseling?

B: It was interesting. My parents really thought I really did not confide in them in some of the petty things. I would handle it so well that they really did not know of any real emotional problems. I do not think there really were any because I handled it so well. I did not really talk to them about somebody called me an oreo. I never talked to them about that. I was very lucky because I very early on got a reputation for being a very good student, and not being a problem child. My parents never had to come on campus and discipline me or come to a teacher's meeting and be overwhelmed with all the problems. I was lucky in that sense. I could really just do my thing, just continue as I had always continued and not really attract any attention. I think that helped me cope because it gave me an opportunity to deal with the problem to come up with the solution on whether to confront somebody or not to confront somebody. I just really concentrated on the things that I became involved with very actively. After that is an interesting transition. Having been so involved in high school and having to deal with all of those problems and solutions that a lot of times no one would really take you seriously or implement them, I decided that once I was accepted to the University of Florida, I was going to concentrate on that. I would not get involved in any kind of student activities at that point.

M: How long did that last?

B: Well, that lasted through the freshman year anyway. It was interesting. I loved coming to Gainesville. I came to Gainesville in the summer of 1973. It was an early admission program. It was for minority students who did well on tests and so forth and so on. The idea was to bring them up during that summer term when it is not as crazy and hectic, and see how successful they would be. I was again very lucky and fortunate that I came up and just got into it. I just learned the system. I had pretty much decided that my area would be public relations, journalism, communications--in that vein because it seemed to be an area that I could do well in. I already had a goal when I first started. It was not like I will try this, I will try that, or I will try this. I had a really clear direction. I immediately learned the system. I learned the drop/add business. I learned the financial aid pickup. I was very proud of myself. After that first semester, I did not stand in lines.

M: That is quite a feat.

B: I did not stand in lines. I did early registration, preregistration. If the financial aid was due, I would make calls to the Financial Aid Office and manage to get to the right person to see what is the best way or is the money here. Do I go here? I really was interested in learning the process. I saw the long lines, and I stood in them. I am not saying I did not stand in them. I did in the learning process. When I found out how you cannot stand in line, it was a piece of cake. It was nothing that I did. It was the system, and my learning and understanding how it worked. As a result of that, I am a big advocate of new freshman [coming to summer term]. If you can come to summer term, that is your best bet. You can learn the simplest thing as where my classroom [is].

M: I came here as a freshman and I was totally overwhelmed.

B: Yes. The campus is gigantic and it is getting larger because they are always building. New buildings are popping up everywhere. So the simple logistics of

classrooms, financial aid, the libraries, how you go to the library and do research--those very basic things that you can learn during a summer term. Generally it is a quieter term. You take a few hours or you can take a full load, but you can get to things. There are not the masses that you have to get through. That was another reason why I wanted to concentrate on that and not get involved with student government. I really did not get involved in any student programming on campus until probably late in my sophomore and junior years.

M: Did you just thoroughly enjoy your anonymity?

B: Exactly. That is exactly what was that first term. It was anonymity in the sense that I can just retreat into the sense of why I was here. I was involved too. I have to say we were party animals too like everybody else in Gainesville at the University of Florida. In fact, it was the demise of a lot of students because we partied quite heavily. We were located in Tolbert and Weaver. Is it Weaver?

M: Weaver and then there is South Hall.

B: Yes, South Hall. We were in that area. Of course, the women's dorm was separate from the men, so we were still segregated at that point. We would always go to the women's dorm in the basement and we would have little parties and jams. It was every night. Frequently, people would show up as long as people stayed. Again, I had a very clear mission in my mind. I did my studying and all that and so was successful that summer term. I became involved with Sunland. My roommate at the time...

M: Tell me about Sunland.

B: It is now called Tahachalee on Waldo Road. It is the mental health services organization. I am not quite sure how my roommate at the time got involved with it. One of his colleagues in information systems at the time were involved. She was a psychologist. They got involved. What we did was we would go out [there and say], "We are University of Florida students. We would like to volunteer to

help out and do whatever we can." We were assigned a house, a residence. We would go on the weekend and have picnics, or do barbecues. We would cook. We would buy all this food, cook, and prepare it and take it out to Sunland. The kids would come out. We would go to a certain pavilion. We did that throughout the summer.

M: You keep saying we. Are these new friends, old friends, or both?

B: These are new friends. These are friends that I met here in Gainesville. My roommate, who actually was from Ft. Lauderdale, and his friends from Miami and Lauderdale. We all became a very close, tight, little group. We were totally alienated from the campus. It was not anything deliberate, but we were just separate. We had our own little community. We worked at Sunland. We did volunteer work. We did not do it to get any recognition. We thought it was a good thing. A lot of these kids did not have family, so it was nice thing. They really loved it. So that was fun. I am trying to remember. I do not know the exact time frame or the year. As I moved through my program, I was admitted into journalism and communications. Once I started getting involved in public relations, I got involved with the Public Relations Student Society of America. The offshoot of that was involvement with the national, professional group the Public Relations Society of America. They had a chapter in Jacksonville. I went to many conferences sponsored by PRSSA chapters throughout the southeast. We had conferences here and workshops. I really started getting involved with that. That was where my energy was focused, right within the college and specifically in public relations. I was a historian one year for the program, for the group. I also joined a service fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega. We ran the information booth on campus. That attracted me because it was a service fraternity, not a social fraternity. We did a lot of community work. We did the information booth on campus. That was an interesting experience because you

have a group of guys working together really doing community work, really doing work to support the University of Florida as opposed to the social fraternities. I had a bias towards the social fraternities and the Athletic Association. I thought from what I could see and what I remember experiencing, the social fraternities were good for individuals that needed that kind of cultivating or attention because the campus is so huge. It was huge then. There is a tendency for students to get lost, and as a result, not really be as productive and get as much out of it as they can. I remember maybe one African American in a fraternity. That said something to me. I even actually went through RUSH one time with a friend of mine. We were just curious. We went to a couple of the RUSH parties. We went to Alpha Phi Omega and liked what we saw and heard. I think there was still always that race relation question. Even now in the 1990s, we still have that as you can clearly see in the media and so forth. Those were my initial activities. The Public Relations Society of America and being involved with public relations I really went into full steam.

M: Did you find race relations a little bit more smooth outside the social fraternities?

B: Not necessarily. In fact, it was almost very similar to high school in that you had friends in both races or a variety of friends. On the campus as a whole, the blacks still hung together and had their parties and activities. The whites did their thing. Of course you had the majority, the fraternity group, and then the non-fraternity or sorority group. Everybody found their niche within the limitations of campus. There was a lot of discussion during my undergraduate time about needing more minorities, not only just students, but faculty. We need administrators. We need role models. We need to see people involved in other areas other than physical plant. There are indeed people out there like us who can achieve and are successful and who can come to the University of Florida. I think that was very true then. We saw some changes. We saw new faces. I

think now it may be in the reverse. The numbers are declining. You see that there is more of a Hispanic presence now as one of the minority groups. Outside of the University, the Gainesville community itself is another area.

M: Is it ever.

B: You were either accepted there or you were not. I think one of the things I did in my quest for anonymity was I just withdrew from everything. I was not even interested in the outside community and had a very limited interest in the campus community. I am still trying to figure out exactly what I want to do and what is necessary for me to do that. I have to admit that it was difficult when I finished my bachelors degree. I interviewed like everybody else. I sent out resumes. It was a very difficult time. There were not positions coming from the interviews that I had. It was very frustrating even with the involvement with the PRSSA and having an internship. Ultimately all of that does help and it did help. Right at that point, when you are graduating and you have got your resumes out there, it just did not seem to be coming. I do not know if that necessarily has anything to do with race, but I think it is part of the whole educational process--getting the degree and then applying for a job that is going to let you apply that degree to what you are doing. I do not want to ramble.

M: I am going to ask you a specific question. I do not even know if I am imposing my own view here. You were talking about being at the University of Florida and sometimes fading in and out. You were kind of grappling with this issue of race. Do you ever resent that you have to fight for your own state supported school? Did you ever have feelings of resentment?

B: I have never really thought of it in terms of resentment, but I guess I did. I did for a long time because here you have done all the right things, just to be very encompassing. You have gotten a degree which says that you have achieved more than just the minimum requirements to get that degree, which qualifies you

for this, that, and the other. You would think that having done that, that when you are in a job market, there should be some support and something that comes from that. I remember being very frustrated even with the Career Resource Center here. Going through that process was less than productive. It was informative, but it was less than productive. I do not think the center at that time was really serious about employment for students after they finished their degree. They were for certain students. They were for the engineers.

M: Who were going to find a job anyway.

B: The accountants. There were certain niches that worked for the Career Resource Center. The companies that came on campus were very successful at recruiting those students. [For] a student with a public relations degree or a liberal arts and sciences degree, it was going to be very difficult. There were few listings for job openings that would say beginning entry level public relations job or entry level history major or whatever. I think now that is changing and almost to a disadvantage. They have become so broad and vague that depending on your interview skills and your people relations skills, you could fit into it through the interview process, and then get into the position, hopefully grow, and find yourself, which would benefit the company. Back then, I remember everywhere you looked there were engineers and accountants. I am going what is the monopoly here. There was a tremendous amount of frustration having done all the right things, followed the process, and still finding the difficulty in getting a job. I guess the resentment falls in my mind on the counseling and the advising that we did or did not get. I just assumed, I am sure a lot of students assumed that if you are involved with a professional group or professional society like the PRSSA, and you are involved in those activities and making those contacts, something will come from that. I have to admit that they did open some opportunities for interviews and contact that I would not have gotten otherwise. It

really did not produce a job. I am resentful in that fact. We spent all the time, energy, and money going through and getting a college degree. Now what?

M: So graduate school. Was that intended or was that why do I not give myself a couple more years?

B: It was intended, but it also fell into that same category as well. Give myself some more time to develop my academic background and also give me a chance to learn what I should have learned early on in my undergraduate. You start thinking about employment your freshman year.

M: I think you are right.

B: You really start early on because by your junior and senior year, you are so overwhelmed by what is required those two years that anything else is a distraction. You are not going to be as successful with it. I think the students should make some decision their freshman year and move toward that decision. If they need to change, that is fine too. Change it, but keep your perspective intact. The closer you get to a degree, you do not do an internship during your senior year.

M: You should not.

B: It is too late almost by then.

M: I think you are right.

B: I think you do it as soon as you get an opportunity to do it. The earlier the better.

M: That is why people have job dissatisfaction and get out.

B: Absolutely. That is one of the things I experienced so I have a very clear idea of how to change it and how a student can be successful. I did not know that early on. I knew it going through the process my senior year and junior being in the job market. I took some time off. I lived in California for a few months and worked for a company for a friend of mine.

M: What part of California?

B: Santa Monica. A friend of mine owned a travel agency. I helped her with that. They were going through a transition from manual reservations to computer. So I helped during that transition but kept my sights on Florida and Gainesville. [I] decided I would come back and pursue a masters degree. Mickie Edwardson [Mickie N. Edwardson, Distinguished Service Professor of Journalism and Communications] was my committee chair. I was very attracted to Mickie. My interest started to go into broadcast. It has to do with race relations again. My idea was do people perceive different newscasters differently. Do people perceive a black newscaster less credible than a white newscaster and the information that they deliver. If I say such and such, you would believe me more than my colleague who is white. I went about researching that and getting it down to a research concept. Mickie was very instrumental in helping me do that. I wanted to find out if race did have an impact on the newscaster ability to communicate with his audience. The results indicated that there is no difference. The perceptions are almost the same. We defined it further by saying what about does age, race, or sex make a difference. We did a semantic differential. We pulled several words and then had a range of I agree or do not agree with the word [to look at] credibility, believability, accurateness, and so forth. So that was a very interesting experience. I have to admit that working on a masters degree was the most rewarding and satisfying [experience]. [I had] less stress. It was great. It was really wonderful. You were the person in charge. It is your project.

During my masters degree, I was offered a position as a graduate research assistant in the graduate school. It sponsored research at the time. I accepted [it]. I worked for the first black assistant dean for the graduate school for the University of Florida.

M: The name?

B: Her name is Mildred Hill-Lubin [Associate Professor of English]. Mildred is an English professor. We were interested in recruiting minority graduate and professional students to Florida, again trying to increase the numbers and bring about a balance. My specific task was to travel throughout the southeast and visit colleges all over the southeast. AT&T up in Greenville, University of North Carolina, the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, the Hampton Institute. Just all over. Wherever we identified black students working toward a professional, graduate degree. We applied for a grant through the Department of Higher Education in Washington, and got the grant that was geared toward increasing the number of graduate professionals and minority students. In fact, at the time, it was called the Graduate Professional Organization--Graduate Professional Opportunity Program, GPOP. It has now since been reincarnated to something current. I do not know what the name of it is. It was a grant that we applied for and got. This was back in 1979 and 1980. That was the time frame. I finished my masters degree in 1981. That was again a learning experience because we found what we knew to be true. There were a lot of black students out there who have tremendous potential and capability of pursuing graduate professional degrees at the University of Florida. If we just give them an incentive, the financial aid, support system, then it will work. We were successful. I remember one summer we brought in some graduate professional students from across the southeast and enrolled them in different programs across campus. We were basically the clearing house for the manual support system.

M: So you were not just funding graduate students fraternally, or within fraternities on campus.

B: No, it was for all colleges.

M: It was campus-wide. Okay.

B: It was for all colleges and all programs--IFAS, the medical school. Those were the two most visible, and journalism. They were the two most visible colleges that had really talked about wanting to have more minority students and would support them. That was a real easy sell in a lot of cases. What happened in some cases, as you can anticipate the problem, the financial aid becomes a real issue. Even though we were getting the money from the government and from other sources on campus, it is always not enough. You need supplements. The departments are always grappling with that. How can we give them more? How can we help give them that extra boost? Some departments were successful with it and some were not. Again, that was an interesting relationship and experience with the University of Florida within the context of African Americans on campus, and the University being active in pursuing African Americans both on the professional and graduate level. I could see a commitment in one sense from the University toward this goal, but I also experienced some of the problems and shortcomings in some of the problem areas that were facing the University and the students.

M: Who were your greatest supporters and detractors for this program?

B: I guess I would say from a higher level, the president. The president was very supportive of it. The detractors (I really would not say detractors), but the problems became very individualistic when you got to the department level. The departments, by the nature of the department, had limited funding. When the issue came up, we had already allocated our funds for this. So there are no more funds for student support scholarships, etc. There were no more assistantships. That created a problem for a student who needed one. I do not think it was necessarily an individual or a group. I think it was just the system itself and the way it was designed. There was so much inflexibility in a lot of cases, that when a student had a specific need, if the monies were not there,

then the department could not do anything about that. I know enough now that some departments have greater flexibility with their funds, but they can go to another fund that has nothing to do with student support scholarship and take those dollars and give them to the students for support. When a department did that and we were aware of it, that is an obvious commitment to us that we thought was very visible and very strong. When a department would not support the student, which meant that they were following the letter of the law in terms of financial aid, budgeting, and so forth, then we would go to the president, the Affirmative Action Office, or some of our resources to try and get support for the students. The other issue, as far as financial aid is concerned, is if the student was a good student, successful, and on track, then chances are 99 percent of the time the department would find funding for that student because that is an asset to the department. If the student was marginal, there is less of that support. We found ourselves in a few situations on that level, that a student was not doing well. How do you convince a department to continue to support the student? Again, it is interesting to have been on both sides of the fence, to see the workings as a student and to then go and see the workings as an administrator.

M: Now was this program the genesis of the program that is now in place at the College of Journalism that Charles Harris [started]?

B: Yes it is Charles Harris [Charlie James Harris Jr., assistant instructor]. No, it is not really. I would not say it is a direct genesis. I would say it had an impact because when I remember when we started recruiting our students, there were several in journalism and communications. Because that was my college, I could go in and do some of the [things] behind the scenes and make sure the student was being recognized as a student in our program or being recruited by our program, and given every opportunity to apply and be accepted. The dean of College of Journalism and Communication early on made the commitment about

increasing the number of minorities in journalism and communication, and has been very successful in getting scholarship support from the Gannett Foundation and other communication, media type organizations across the country, specifically to recruit and support minority students. We were part of that original, campus-wide discussion [about] how to increase minority presence in all of the different colleges. I guess you would say that we were the genesis of a lot of programs because we were the ones doing it actively. I know medicine had a person involved with minority recruitment. Some of the other colleges had offices for minority recruitment. I know there is one for liberal arts and sciences. All of them had had varying degrees of success. Under the umbrella of the graduate school, we had more opportunities and more resources. We had a direct impact on the numbers. It was good to see the growth. As you look at the numbers now, they are declining for whatever reason.

M: There is no theory?

B: I think for the University of Florida, in spite of our efforts we would bring minority people, African Americans, on campus, both students and administrator. Depending on how that student or person develops their relationship with their unit, department, or administrative area that they are working in, it determines the success of that student. We found that a lot of times if a student did excel, or if an administrator was very successful, they eventually would leave or be hired from the University by other groups [with] more money, more prestige, and more opportunity. That happened a lot. The tenure was very brief, a year or two years in a lot of cases. That is good. The opposite is true that if a relationship was bad or negative, the student would still leave because they were not being successful, they were not making the minimum requirements, and would have left anyone or been asked to leave because the program obviously was not working out for them. The bottom line or my theory is that it goes back to

support, both financial support and a feeling of being a part of a welcomingness to being on campus.

M: What kind of mentor program do you have?

B: A mentor program, and we do have those. That have been in existence for a while.

There is success, limited success. I do not know what the overall shortcoming is because we have a lot of opportunities in place. There is the Association of Black Faculty and Staff that I am a member [of] and other faculty and staff are members [of]. That is in essence a support group where we get together and talk about what is happening on campus, how we can make it better, and how we can really get the most of our opportunities here. The students have their support groups--the Black Student Union and the Affirmative Action Office. It is there for support. When you look at it closely I think each area has shortcomings in the overall success. It only seems that or appears that certain individuals take advantage of it. There are a lot of people who are very confident and satisfied with what they are doing and the way they are doing it. So they may not need a support system per say. Those are individuals that we never hear [from], never see, and never know about really. There are people who want to be a part, who want to be role models if you will. So you get their involvement. You also have students who are very successful, independent, and adventurous who do not see a need for that kind of support. They have their goal and their mission, and they just follow it. I think the University as a whole has made a commitment to increasing minority presence, both faculty, staff, and student levels. When you start to apply that commitment, it varies in each area that they go to. I think very strongly it varies depending on the financial commitment. Philosophically, yes we want this to happen. We want to have this diversity to use a buzz word. I even have questions about that. There is a philosophical commitment. **[[end of this side]]**.

M: As you were saying.

B: A department's support was again very clear. You look at the numbers, and the numbers were there. Their people were there, productive, producing, and so forth. There are some areas that were not in any way near the potential, but I know presently, currently whenever we (I am coming to the present time) were working for the University of Florida Foundation, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, we do searches for positions. The minority issue is a very real issue, and is one that is taken very seriously. It is advertised. We advertise in all of our standard publications, plus we advertise in black, African American publications making sure that minorities know that there are opportunities. We do get minority candidates in the applicant pool. There is that canvas opportunity out there, if you will, where we are doing all the right things. We are putting the face forward. What happens in the final process is that each area will be different depending on the candidate, the applicant pool, and so forth. On the faculty level, the committee may be very clearly reduced to financial again. Am I getting a salary commensurate with my skills, abilities, tenure, and what my colleagues are also getting. If not, will the University be willing to improve or make good on that? You find faculty who are being courted by other institutions and a counter offer situation comes into play. I know of only a few situations where a black faculty was being recruited, the University made a counter offer, and the faculty member accepted it.

M: You have this program that you were involved in as a graduate student. It must have laid a foundation for your thinking in these terms. Then there was about six or seven years in which you were out of the university system completely. Maybe you could talk about that and tell me what you learned in these jobs as account executive.

B: At the same time I was finishing up my graduate degree, I was working with the graduate school. The graduate school was going through some transition. Dean Hill-Lubin decided to pursue her teaching career again. She was writing a book. The dean of the graduate school changed. So there was a lot of transition. I had asked to stay on board to continue some of the minority recruitment work, but they decided to go a different direction. They hired somebody else. Actually, I do not think they hired someone to replace me, but they hired another dean who came in and did some work, and really turned the program around to a positive level. So at that point I was back in the job market again. Having gone through the market before, I knew what to expect and I knew the time frame. It would take a long time.

M: Were you dreading it?

B: I was dreading it, absolutely. I had made some contacts. I was more mature. I knew the process better. I knew that you use your network. In fact, I made contact with the director of personnel. So I made a little bit more savvy moves in that direction. However, it still did not produce anything. In the meantime, I was getting anxious at that point. I cannot afford to be out of work for six, nine, or twelve months. In the process of following up and going to the interviews, I decided to move to Houston because the opportunities seemed greater and they were greater. So I moved to Houston. My idea was to get experience in marketing and sales and promotion in television because I had just finished that area of broadcasting. It was really fascinating to me. I was thinking of going in that direction, in other words going into television but going in as director of marketing and promotion.

M: Did you know anyone in Houston or did you move there alone?

B: I had a very good friend who lived in Houston, who I lived with for a few months. I then went through the application process again. That was also very grueling

because as far as the television market was concerned, at that point it was the twelfth largest market in the country. The competition was going to be severe. I knew that. I was very persistent. I made the rounds. I even made the rounds at the University of Houston. This friend of mine suggested I apply or audition for a television program that was being produced. It was very similar to what we have here with UFT and public broadcasting. I thought that would be a good match. I did an audition, but it was an in-house candidate who got the position. It was a fun audition because it was a program where it was a community issues, community affairs program for Houston. You had a live audience. You had your guest speakers or panelists. You talk about some topic that was very important or controversial at the time. It was fun to do that. I had done some other television work as part of my internship with Information and Publication Services, which is now called the Division of Information and Public Affairs. So I had some familiarity with television.

To move forward, I applied for a position at all the t.v. stations, and had gone to some interviews. In most cases, they were not hiring. They were hiring engineers.

M: And accountants.

B: I would have thought at that point that I should have become an accountant or an engineer. Nothing was coming from my interviews. I hung in there. I was very persistent, which is always the way to be. Finally, I had got an interview with a television station, KRIB, which was at the time owned by Metromedia, a John **Klugey** enterprise. It was an independent station. It was one of six television stations and one of three independent [stations] in the market. I applied and interviewed. They were looking for a log editor, and entry level position. That person's responsibilities were to take the log from the television station, a twenty-four hour log, make sure that the commercials were played or aired as they

should be, and public service announcements all had to total [to a] twenty-four hour cycle. If Rhode's Furniture had a sixty second spot scheduled for 8: 28 a.m., I had to make sure that it was included on the log and that it was available for air and so forth. In other words, it was a very entry level, very basic position for someone with a masters degree. The thing I did to counter that was during the interview process, I explained to the supervisor that I really was interested in marketing and sales, and if an opportunity became available within the station, I would like to pursue it. I just wanted to be sure you understood that and what your feelings are. The person was very supportive and said go for it. Within a three month time frame, an opportunity became available in sales. I got that position as a sales trainee, and then moved up to an account executive and became a full time account executive, which is a sales person who will go out in the community, meet with clients, advertising agencies, and talk about airing commercial time on our television network. I was able to go through the process.

M: And this was new. You had done nothing like this before.

B: This was new. It was a very large step. In fact, I was ten of ten. Harry was the last on the totem poll, which actually prompted my decision to come back to Gainesville, in that even though I was very successful, established my own accounts, and really made the mark, it would be a long time coming before I would get the kind of advertising and agency accounts that I wanted, and could produce from. I was there for about almost two years (I think it was nineteen months) with KRIB. I decided that I wanted to do something different. I decided to come back to Gainesville, my love. Gainesville is really my home. [I wanted to] try again and see what opportunities there were in Gainesville. I was able to reestablish some of my contacts on campus, namely Dr. Pisani [Joseph R. Pisani, Professor of Journalism and Communications, Chair] who is chairman of the advertising department for the college. I met with him on several occasions.

He understood my employment situation. In fact, if I would think of a mentor for the college, Dr. Pisani would be that. As I said, we talked a lot. He knew what my background was. I then started thinking about teaching. He had an advertising sales course that was being taught by adjuncts, people in the community. He offered me that opportunity to be an adjunct professor, and I did.

It was very satisfying and rewarding. All of my sales experience from Houston was a perfect tie-in. I explained to him that they way I would run the course would be both academic but also more professional. Instead of me regurgitating my experiences, why not bring in the professionals, and look at each media. For the two semesters I taught, I would have the advertising director/manager from TV20 come and talk about television advertising and some of the things the students can be doing now to prepare for that. The advertising director from the Gainesville Sun [came]. I brought in someone from Peterson's Billboard, that is another major area for advertising. The guy who owns Harmon's Photo is nice. His background is very extensive in photography with Kodak and some of the major companies and projects. That was very important to have. I took a more practical approach. It was a two hour class. The first hour we had a guest lecturer. The second hour I would talk about specific advertising goals and objectives. That gave me an opportunity to think about teaching. However, the problem with teaching is in order to realistically pursue a teacher degree or career, one has to have a Ph.D in Gainesville anyway or at the University of Florida. I only had a masters, so the dilemma was do I go back and get a Ph.D.

M: Did you even want to?

B: At the time, I did not want to because my mind was not geared towards academics at that point. I had spent too much time in the professional community that the idea of studying for exams, taking the GRE, and all of that was not very appealing. Again, I was persistent in looking for a position. This time more focused again in

marketing and promotion. That seemed to work out well because I managed to get a position with CableRep. **[[correct name--verified in phone book]]** Advertising which is the part of Cox Cable. It is the advertising for Cox Cable. I worked there. Again, I was selling air time on the cable networks for the Gainesville market. That was successful, but still not really what I wanted to do. I wanted to not sell specifically. I liked the idea and the concepts and dealing with that, rather than making appointments and meeting with clients. I did that for a time. I also got involved with production. How do you produce commercials? It was a process of getting them on the different networks. So that was another learning experience for me. In the meantime, I had been approached by the Education Credit Union. The president of the credit union was looking to hire a marketing director. Apparently this was a new position that he was creating and needed to get approval from the board. So it took some time for that to come through. I was still with CableRep during that process. Finally, I did get a call that the position was approved, and he wanted to hire me. He hired me for that position. So now I am director of marketing for a financial institution. The marketing was great because the credit union had done a lot of television and cable advertising. They had a commercial. There were a lot of opportunities to apply what I had learned for the credit union for promotion and enhancing the image of the credit union in the community. During my time as the director, we changed the name and the logo. We did a lot of things to change the credit union, from not just an educational credit union but to a community credit union. The membership was no longer restricted. Companies could apply and be granted membership, and take advantage of the services. There were a lot of new things that were being implemented during my tenure as a director that the president had wanted to implement. Things were going well. I guess that always in the back of my mind **[[please finish thought]]**. You know you have a certain

salary that you think is appropriate for your level of education and experience, a certain type of responsibility that is commensurate with what you are really capable of doing. A friend of mine said, "The Foundation is looking. They are hiring," and encouraged me to submit a resume and cover letter, which I did. I got an interview with the vice president at the time.

M: What was his name?

B: His name was Bob Lindgren. He was the vice president for the Office of Development and Alumni Affairs. He is no longer here. He is resigned and is now working at Johns Hopkins. We had an initial meeting and conversation. It took almost a year from that initial conversation to get from that to the application to the real interview and then the hiring process. Again, this is something I learned early on. It could take a long time to finally get what you were looking for and to be happy with it. If you have the patience and persistence, then it will work for you.

M: And another job.

B: And another job. It is always helpful when you are employed. That worked out. I was just ecstatic. Number one, Gainesville is my home. I love Gainesville. It means so much to be in Gainesville and working for the University of Florida. It had such a tremendous impact on my life as an undergraduate and graduate. Understanding what the Foundation is about, which is fund raising for the University and also alumni affairs for the University. So here is an opportunity to become involved with an institution that has such a tremendous impact on your life and to be an employee to promote the University and talk about the University to its alumni, friends, and supporters and now fund raisers, to actually go out and ask people to give money to support the University of Florida. It was a wonderful and incredible opportunity. I have no regrets in six years now. In fact, it is the longest career time frame I have to date, as you can see from my

resume. It has been wonderful. Again, I am seeing it from a different perspective. The University of Florida is an incredible institution because the resources are so vast and the support is so vast. We have had only one serious fund raising campaign that ended in 1991.

M: This was with Criser [Marshall M. Criser, president, University of Florida, 1985-1989] at the helm.

B: Correct. Criser was the president at the time. It was his campaign. It was the first campaign the University had ever undertaken.

M: Why it that?

B: That is a good question. No one really knows the right answer. There had been fund raising all along through the annual fund. The law school had a fund. Each department and each area had some level of fund raising, but this was the first time that the University as a complete, comprehensive unit brought all of the colleges, departments, and centers together and put together a fund raising campaign that would find or solicit monies that would then be distributed to the different units based on their budgets and what their wish lists ended up being.

M: Could you just for the sake of the tape talk about Criser's role in that? We spoke about that before and I turned it off.

B: I was not here when the whole program was developed. I came in at the end when the program was ending. At that point, Criser was no longer president, but still very active and involved with the campaign. I came in at the tail end of the campaign, but the success of the campaign is very clear. The original goal was for \$200 million. This was for a five year period. They raised it. They increased it to \$250 million. We ended up raising \$392.8 million. This is for a public, land grant institution. It was totally unexpected. It was overwhelming. It gave us national rankings in terms of a public institution raising the funds that we did, which increases our endowment, which is another ranking. It was a tremendous

boom for the University of Florida. We were able to successfully go out and sell the story about the University of Florida. These are the reasons why we are a member of the AAU, ranked in the top ten in caliber of students by way of the Merit Scholars that we have on campus, the research dollars that we bring in to the tune of over \$200 million every year from research that our faculty are undertaking and submitting to NIH (National Institute of Health), DOD (Department of Defense), and many others. It really started to open the eyes of our alumni and the nation as a whole actually. Again, there was this tremendous story that was being kind of kept quiet in Gainesville. Through the campaign, we were able to get out there and talk about it, and bring people on campus, let them tour the different facilities, and say, "This is very impressive, and I would like to support it." Criser basically was the engineer of all that. Lombardi [John Lombardi, University of Florida, president, 1990-present] came in 1989 and 1990, and took over. I started saying around the time...

M: He wanted to spend the money.

B: He got to spend the money.

M: Was it earmarked for buildings?

B: The way the budget or goal was established [was that] each college dean submitted to the president and the vice president their budget or their wish lists, which covered scholarships, research, buildings, or professorships. Those are the key areas that everybody focused on. Of course, there were other areas that were included. Those were the key areas that everybody had a focus on and submitted their ideas to the president and vice president. From that, the budgets were adjusted, changed, and brought into more realistic parameters. We went out, and we got corporate support. We got a lot of pledges. We got a lot of requests. We got some cash. It is interesting. You have to really understand the process because you can say very clearly, "We raised \$392.8 million for the

University of Florida." Someone on the street [might] say, "Why do you need more money? What is the problem?" Indeed the problem is that a lot of that money is not liquid. It is not available at that time. If someone is giving it through a request, we do not get it until that person or the spouse or whatever the parameters are for that request.

M: What proportion is liquid roughly speaking?

B: I do not want to venture a guess because there is a very specific number. I think the key to the long term is the endowment that we support and that is established. That is going to be the source of funding in the years to come. You never touch the principal of the endowment. You only work with the interest on the endowment. For some reason, 20 to 25 percent is in my mind, but I do not know if that is correct. What I am leading up to is now we are talking about a second campaign that we are all starting to plan for. We are doing a feasibility study with a tremendous goal--another five year campaign. We will be following some of the same strategies that we did for the first campaign. What happens is the rule is that once you do a campaign, you do a campaign forever. You do not let it behind each other. You are always in the market for a campaign. What it does is it is a great opportunity for a donor to support the University of Florida or the institution. Through the campaign, the nature of that educational process, we were identifying new people who did not support the first time around for whatever reason. They did not hear about it or had different problems. We create the excitement about the University of Florida. These are some great things that are happening since the last campaign. The list goes forever in terms of what accomplishments we have achieved since the last campaign. In my college alone, we have a writing lab that was established by IBM. It is for beginning English composition. It is a format that is unique. I think we are the only institution in the company that is using it. Basically, the students have access to

computers (PCs), and that is how they are learning English composition--on the computer. The response has been tremendous. IBM of course is excited donated the equipment. I think the gift was just over \$1 million total. We have it housed in Rolf's Hall. I think there are about 200 or 300 students taking advantage of it now. There is a waiting list. That is one thing that we are doing. There are all kinds of centers that are being funded through various research monies that are coming through. In other words, my basic point is that there is so much going on on this campus that because of the numbers of programs and the interdisciplinary nature of the University of Florida, we can go talk to any donor who has any interest or anything that you can imagine. We like to use the phrase in our college from A to Z, anthropology to zoology, everything in between. We have people who are doing sea turtle research. We have people who are interested in sea turtle research and therefore will give us dollars to support that program. That is the fun part of the fund raising aspect. It really is an educational campaign that I love to tell and enjoy telling. People enjoy hearing it. Then you move to the next level, the giving level. Then they understand why there is a need and how they can individually and personally impact that.

M: I get the sense, and you might as a former public relations major, that the University of Florida is just now getting into gear in promoting itself.

B: Absolutely.

M: Where is that coming from?

B: It is a wonderful thing. Again, it is giving us an opportunity to talk about the University of Florida. Now before, let us say ten years ago, there were not the concerns of the budget, for instance. It was enough for each department and college to have their own little territory, interests, or own community. It was all College of Liberal Arts and Sciences or College of Engineering. Everybody had

their own little territory. They were all very successful in various degrees in terms of getting additional support for their unit. There is a question--did the Division of Information and Publications Services, which was the public relations for the University of Florida **[[please finish thought]]**. The director was the press secretary/public relations spokesman. All those words go together there. There just was not any real serious promotion of the University of Florida. There were some things, I mean the obvious like the student murders and things of that nature. As far as other type of regular ongoing public relations, it did not exist on as wide a scale as it does now. When Lombardi came on board, he saw that as a tremendous problem and as a deficit, and hence reorganized the Division of Information and Publication Services. It is now Public Affairs and Communications. They do a much better job with keeping in touch with the media, particularly around the state, but all over the world and the country. Whenever something of significance happens on campus either research-wise, or grant-wise, then there is going to be some publicity about that. They do a better job of tracking. There is a publication that comes out called Dateline. Someone in that office, public affairs, search hundreds of publications around the country. If the University of Florida is mentioned, they pull it. We are getting again a much wider scope of advertising and public relations because of what is happening on campus--the Magnet Lab up in Tallahassee, the Brain Institute that will be housed here on campus. I think the leadership has come in and said in order for us to move to the next level as a national and international university, we need to do these things. We need to promote ourselves. We need to start talking about the fact that we are the only school in the southeastern United States that is a member of the AAU, the American Association of Universities. [It is] extremely prestigious. It is by invitation only. The institution is scrutinized and only the best are asked to join the AAU. We are the only Florida school. I think

Vanderbilt is a member. I think we are the only other SEC school.

M: Vanderbilt is private.

B: People need to know that.

M: Certainly.

B: The student body is incredible. The grade point averages and SAT scores are phenomenal. They are up there. We are seventh or eighth in the country in the number of Merit Scholars that have enrolled in the University of Florida. These are the brightest of all of our students. Everybody is competing for them-- Harvard, Yale, and Stanford. You name it. All of the big schools are recruiting these students. They decide to come to the University of Florida. That is a coup. That is a very important factor. We are obviously doing something right, or have something that they want and feel that they can achieve on our campus. These stories are tremendously important. It is interesting because as you alluded to, the University of Florida has been around...the seal says 1853. It is not like we are new. It is not like the Gulf Coast University in Naples that in fact will be new. I do not think they have even broken ground for it. There has been a tremendous lag in the University really promoting itself. I think a lot of it has to do with Lombardi. I know when I worked for the Alumni Affairs Office before working for liberal arts and sciences, I spent five years in alumni affairs. We were called the friend raisers for the University. We were not asking for money. What we wanted to do was go out and talk about the University of Florida and promote UF through the Gator Clubs, which are also alumni clubs.

M: This has nothing to do with football.

B: Actually, they do.

M: They sort of blend.

B: Right. They were established originally for athletic booster clubs. Wayne McDaniel who is the current director of alumni affairs (I think he is now vice president) saw

an opportunity to combine Gator Clubs as alumni clubs. Many of them had a lot of alumni involved as officers and so forth. We came around and we talked a different talk. Instead of just focusing on athletics, we said, "Let us talk about Merit Scholars. Let us talk about academics. Let us bring speakers to your club who are non-athletic speakers who can update you on what is going on, speakers are entertaining, engaging, etc. Let us talk about getting the students involved in your Gator Club. They are going to be the lifeblood of your Gator Club as the elders retire and move on." The goal was to bring a different slant or area to the Gator Club again for most of the University of Florida as an academic institution. Most of the Gator Clubs have outreach programs where we bring speakers into the community, whether to the club itself or a civic organization, or recreate a special program. To take the athletic slant on a different direction. Working for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, we are doing the same thing. I am in fact right in the midst of coordinating receptions for the dean where we will take the dean to different communities. A good example is next week. We will be in Tampa. We will do a program where the dean will be the host, and he will give a presentation. We are taking Dr. Proctor [Dr. Samuel Proctor, Distinguished Service Professor, Julien C. Yonge Professor of Florida History, Curator of History, Florida State Museum, Director of Oral History Program]. He will be the keynote speaker. We have invited all of our class alumni and supporters in Tampa to come to this reception. Again, it is an opportunity for us to create a presence in the community. This is what the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is doing. It is your college. You have a vested interest in its success. This is how we would like to involve you through these receptions. That part is not necessarily new. We have been more active with it. It is wonderful to see the alumni respond. Their overall comment is, "This is great. We would really like to see more of this. Can you come again? Can you come

more often?" I am going **whew**.

M: [Laughter].

B: If there were five more of me, then we could probably [do it].

M: I honestly can see a difference because I graduated from Florida in 1983. I moved away and have been away for ten or eleven years. I just moved back in August. Just being back in Jacksonville, there is really more of a presence of the University of Florida. It is just a little bit more sophisticated. It is not just that Florida is a state school, and FSU is a state school. We can afford to go there. It does have a greater status. In just that short time frame.

B: Yes. Again, it goes back to the campaign. It goes back to the lists. To look at the lists of graduates from this University and where they are now is just mindboggling. We have graduates who are CEO's of major Fortune 500 companies. We have a corporate leader's weekend in fact. We had one last year that was billed as the most successful. We had the most corporate leaders, as well as representatives, participate in it. Basically, we bring them on campus. Each unit would have a program. We would have a program where they would tour the teaching lab. We would feature our key areas. Our college has kind of expanded on that example. Chemistry has been extremely successful raising money. Our Ph.D's graduate and go to Shell or Exxon. They become directors of their research and development, very high significant positions. Of course, they are very interested in other Ph.D's coming into the system with the new knowledge and potential that is always going to keep their company on that competitive level. To see the corporate leaders that are University of Florida graduates out in the world and the country, is impressive. That has also helped our cause because then people say we are more than just a public institution. We are more than just a land grant institution. We are one of only three universities in the country with the number of academic disciplines. You can

come to the University of Florida and get any degree, any major, with the exception of divinity.

M: What are the other two?

B: The other two are Ohio State and Michigan. When we talk to parents about the University of Florida and there are students applying, we very clearly explain to them that once your child has decided what to do, whatever they want to pursue, nine times out of ten they are going to come to Florida. We will have the best program in that area for the student, with a few exceptions. That is also indicative by the number of Merit Scholars. Here is a student that can go anywhere in the world and pursue an academic career. They choose the University of Florida because our programs are the best. They are the premier in the country and certainly in the southeast. That is not to belittle any of the others, Florida State, or Central Florida. They all have very specific offerings that their students can pursue and take advantage of that we may not have on a certain level. It is a wonderful story. If you are ever involved in sales, it is wonderful to have a product that actually sells itself. You get an opportunity to talk to somebody about the University of Florida, they can not help but come away thinking, "Wow. That is fascinating. That is interesting." The other part that makes this so wonderful is the cultivating aspect. You do not go in and hit somebody up for money and then you are gone. You build these relationships because you want the relationship to be ongoing. We are told that the best donor is the one who is giving. Once they give, it is very important that you continue to encourage their giving. Generally, they will. If you cultivate, you keep that relationship ongoing. That is one of the things that attracted me to this is that cultivating aspect. During that cultivation, you talk about the University of Florida, and then you learn specifically what that person might be interested in. There is another conversation. By the way, we have a director at the Archie Carr

Sea Turtle Research Program. We can set up a meeting with that person if you want to, or take you on a site visit. There are any number of strategies that can be used to get people excited about the University of Florida, specifically on the college level, program level, or center level. I will give you an example of a center level. I arranged a program for a retired village in Naples. The residents of this retirement community are in the top 1 percent in the country and very impressive. You just cannot in and say, "Can you give me a lesson. I will just do a canvas of your community." The community and the director for resident services were interested in programs. The community residents are varied. If they are active, they are still very sharp. They play tennis and golf. They are still very viable individuals. Through the outreach program, we said, "We can bring a speaker down and talk about any topic that they would be interested in." It just so happened that they wanted to have a program on hearing loss. Of course, we have a Department of Communicative Disorders on campus, and indeed were able to get one of the faculty members to go down and talk about hearing loss. We had a great attendance and people were very interested and asked questions. As a result of that, one lady came up and introduced me. She is the mother of David Challoner, who is in charge of the Medical Center in Gainesville. Another gentleman came up and had gotten some information about our Brain Institute, that we had won a grant through the Department of Defense. He is a retired psychologist from Boston University. He was still practicing at the time and very interested in the Brain Institute because the approach that we are taking is interdisciplinary where we are involving many different areas on campus--electrical engineering, the arts and sciences, psychology, a lot of different areas that up until now have never really been involved with the Brain Institute or the spinal cord situation of the central nervous system. He remembered that literature, came up to me, and said he was still interested in learning more about

it. He is interested in the consciousness and how that impacts that brain and nervous system. From that I came back and made my contacts. The chairman of the psychology was very interested. They have talked. He is interested in establishing a kind of consortium that would involve psychology, the Brain Institute, and a cross section of different departments. That conversation has now started to produce some interests. Who knows where that may lead? From a dollar level, we do not know yet. We do not know what the capabilities are of this gentleman or even if he is interested. There is that potential of looking at his resume and vita. It is very impressive. He may also be able to add something to what we are doing. So we went.

M: And you are filling a need.

B: Absolutely.

M: You were wrong when you said you were not a student. It sounds like you are a student every day on this job.

B: Absolutely. I am a student and also an educator. Both come because I am learning something new every day. I come in contact with new people with new ideas, new needs, or different needs. It is a constant process of adapting and trying to meet those needs or find out where we can help out. We have not even talked money. I think that will come. Of course, any good salesperson is going to ask for the money. I think you do that when you have determined the time is right. After a period of cultivation, helping that person with their needs and interests, then the financial part is right there. It will happen. It may not happen on the level that you would like it to or are expected to. Our history and experience tells us it could have far reaching and long term effects. There is a good story to illustrate that. We had a gift of over \$1 million to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences from someone who was not a graduate, and had never even been to Gainesville. A friend of his, who is a graduate and big supporter, had asked him

what can I do with this money. He just simply said, "You should consider giving this money to the University of Florida for scholarships for liberal arts and sciences." My point is that it is far reaching.

M: And you do not always have to ask.

B: You do not always have to ask. Sometimes, it comes when you least expect it or when you do not expect. That is always very welcome to have as well. We know that when you follow the plan and strategies that you know work, they are also very productive as well.

M: You sound so satisfied. I am sure you have not reached your pinnacle. Where do you go from here?

B: You are right. I am very satisfied. I am very happy. I still have ambitions. I would like to run my own program. In other words, I would like to be director of development.

M: Here of course.

B: Here at the University of Florida preferably, and ideally for the College of Journalism and Communications. That would be the next level. That would be the next step for me. It would be to move into a director's position and have a specific unit that I am totally responsible for. That will come. That will happen because of my commitment to what I am doing, and the success that I will have with the position. The only thing is that the key and also the problem is trying to achieve that in Gainesville. It is very limited. There are hundreds of people like myself who just love Gainesville and prefer to be in Gainesville, and will stay in Gainesville as long as they can. That means the competition will be keen as well. I think there are a lot of advantages that I have that when the opportunity comes, they will come into play.

M: I think we will end on that. Thank you for sharing your very interesting life.

B: As I said, I love the University of Florida. Having gone through the system, both the

good and the bad have come into play. I think it all makes you a better person. It makes you very appreciative too.

M: I guess we have concluded the interview, but just ending on your success and satisfaction with your career and life in Gainesville, I guess you must feel some validation for all that hard work and the frustrations when you first graduated with a bachelors [degree].

B: I do. I feel some validation, although there are some problems. There are some of the same problems. They may be different. They may be on a different magnitude. We still have a situation where our minority, African American, population is declining. I mentioned some of the reasons why that happens. I think again if you have an opportunity to address those concerns, you will find that the administration is very supportive of those philosophical concerns, and in a lot of cases have gone to bat, if you will. The numbers have not significantly increased in spite of that.

M: Do you feel a responsibility as a very successful black man? Personally, your battles are behind you.

B: Yes, that is true. I strongly feel that, and I do feel that there is a responsibility for me also to work with the groups on campus. I did not mention it, but I have been involved with the Association of Black Faculty and Staff. I have also been involved with the Association of Black Alumni through the National Alumni Association. In other words, establishing an alumni association for blacks, for African American graduates of the University of Florida. That total comes close to 4,000 now.

M: Why did you feel the need to do that?

B: I felt that having worked with alumni affairs, I would go to a function and be the only African American in the room. There could be 500 to 700 people in the room. It is a situation where a lot of African Americans do not feel comfortable there.

They do not feel welcome in that environment. It can be a perception that may or may not be founded, but that is the reality. By establishing the Association of Black Alumni, this is an organization that is supported by the National Alumni Association. It is supported by the University of Florida, but it focuses on the specific needs of African American graduates, which is basically the idea to come together as a group, talk about the concerns, supports, and needs of the University of Florida, specifically African American students on campus, to provide a network, support, or mentoring situation for African Americans. I have been working the last five years to get that established. We have had a few successful meetings where African Americans have come back to campus. [We have] great programs. The president has been involved. Some key administrators have been involved. We are now planning a meeting down in Miami for the group. We are all over. We are all over the country. We are trying to create an organization that can be a conduit, if you will, of support for the University of Florida that we can take on the road and go to the various communities, and get African American, black graduates out and say, "You may have had a bad time, or you may have had to struggle, but look at what has happened now. Look at the impact you can make. Look how you can be involved to make it to further the improvement and the advances. Also they have the current student population of African Americans having a successful career as you did. There are people out there, it is not limited to whites, but there are graduates out there that if you say the University of Florida, they will have nothing to do with it. They do not want even want to mention it. There are a lot who have had very positive relationship. I have had a positive relationship overall. I want to support the University of Florida. There are other African Americans who want to support the University of Florida. This is again something new. There were chapters in various levels in different cities a few

years ago. That has somewhat declined. Now we are trying to revitalize that. With this wave of progress and improvement that the people have now seen and are hearing about at the University of Florida, they are trying to be a part of that as well. That is my contribution. That is my involvement back to the African American community and the University of Florida--making sure that this organization is as successful as it can be with the support of the University of Florida.

M: Philosophically, do you think many views on integration have changed? You are not talking about integrating alumni. You are talking someone having a segregated base from which to operate. Do you see that as the key to success? This has been part of the project of the Oral History Program is to interview former African American leaders on campus. They seem to be saying they want desegregation. We want integration that is natural but we need a base. You throw us out there, and we are 6 percent of the student population. You cannot just send us out **willie nillie**. We need a base in which to operate from.

B: I think that is very true. The problem is the perception. People will look at that and say they want to be integrated, but then they do not want to be integrated. Which is it? Which is it going to be? I think it is going to be all of that. Having an ABA does not mean that we will not be a part of the larger community of Alumni Affairs. I think if the individual groups create that foundation and are successful with that foundation, then it is going to be a natural process. They will get involved on a much more broadly integrated level. As it stands now in 1995, that is not true. That is not where we are right now. What we are trying to do is get our group together and solid in terms of what can I do to support the University of Florida? What impact can I have that will make a difference at the University of Florida. Let us talk about that and create a plan. Let us create some strategies and see how we can do that with the support all the time of both the president of

the University of Florida, the Alumni Affairs Office, the Office of Development, and so forth. That is the beginning. That has always been true. We are not doing it isolated from what is going on with the whole. I think there have been some instances where African American graduates have gone to functions of the Gator Club and have been less than happy or satisfied with that, whether it was just not being comfortable. The race issue is one that is going to be with us for a long time. I do not see that disappearing. I think the dynamics of it will change. As you see more and more of us being involved, being active and proactive, that is going to change the perception. That is what we are hoping to do with the ABA. First we want to get the foundation established, and then go to the University and say as a group we want to support scholarships for African American students because that is a need and for graduate students that is a need, and move forward from that perspective. That can be said also for the Hispanic group as well. They are mobilizing in the same way for the same reasons that we are. As far as the Association of Black Staff is concerned, there is a plan to have a meeting with the Hispanic Faculty and Staff group so that we are not just being isolated and concerned with one, but we are looking at the total picture and how we can as a group impact that overall situation. As I said, the administration is always aware and has always been aware and supportive of what we are trying to accomplish. Going back to high school and junior high school, it is that sense of identification of self and who you are and what your goals are, how you match and integrate that with the rest of the community.

M: Do you think some of that was lost with integration as it occurred?

B: Oh yes. I mentioned that one of the problems with integration was that they did not talk to the students. They did not talk to the students or people that would be most effected. It was a dictation of law coming down from Washington, and by God we are going to follow it. When they closed down our high school **[[end of**

tape]].

B: Along with the church and the school. Those were the two most vital centers for our neighborhood, for black neighborhoods. That is where it all happened--church and school. The school was named after **Blanche General Elie**. It was incredible. I know this in retrospect. She would go to the schoolboard of Broward County and have to fight tooth and nail to get funding for our school because we were a black school. We established traditions that were critical to the community. Everybody went to the same school. The teachers knew the parents. The parents knew the teachers. I will never forget my brother and sister would get involved with programs like plays and ring circus. There were so many things that we as children looked forward to. We said, "Oh we cannot wait to go to the big school." We had all of these traditions. As I say, it was such a vital part of the community that when the law came down that said that school would have to be closed and you are going to be bused here, there was a very negative response to that, as you would imagine. As a result of that, the communities were really in a kind of disarray. There was no longer that family closeness, unity, or familiarity. Rather than send us all to the same school, we all were just split up throughout the county.

M: I address that indirectly in my masters thesis. Just through a class assignment, I did an Oral History Project with former African American leaders of the YWCA during segregation. I have to tell you this whole world opened up to me. I was like thirty or thirty-one. Things that I had no idea. The more I delved into it, I thought, "Why did I not know this? I grew up in Jacksonville. I am a southerner. We have a sizable African American community." This was a total surprise to me. As I started researching, I found that in Charlotte at least (this is when I was in Charlotte, North Carolina), if you compared the white to the black teachers, the black teachers had a higher educational level. They had more years towards

graduate school than their white counterparts. I was curious if I might ask you this. When you went to the integrated school, was the change in the teaching methods and attitudes were really topsy turvy for you?

B: It did, but not really as bad as an extent as you would think. There were some very good teachers, white teachers. I remember at least three or four that I thought were excellent. The reason that I was successful was because they did not seem to care whether you were black, white, or whatever. You were a student. They had a mission. They had a job. They had a goal and that was to be the best teacher they could be. You had some teachers who were just not good teachers. I do not care what you were doing. I do not know that I could say that there was any kind of prejudice that I could determine or [if any] were prejudiced. I am sure there must have been because we are all only human. To go back to the black community again, being a teacher was a pedestal, a worthy goal. You became a teacher because of the influence, control, and impact you would then exert in the community. You were respected. You got your due as a teacher. It was a noble profession. Now it is just the opposite.

M: I know.

B: It is just the opposite. It is a shame because growing up, it sends a very different message to me. We were taught and we were instilled [with] education is the key. Even now, education is the key to a better life, successful career, and all of those good things of the American dream, if you will. When you look at the educational system and process in this country, it is the worst it has ever been. There is some hope because communities are now taking back control and saying, "Let us try this format." I know they are talking about charter schools in Alachua County and people are up in arms about that. People are bringing back uniforms in school. They are taking different tactics on how to deal with inner-city schools compared to schools in the suburbs. There are some things happening.

I think it sends a different message to a group of people where education was taught to be as the way out--that is how you are going to rise above it all, the poverty, prejudice, racism, etc. This is how this is going to happen. Then our education is being taken from us in the form of integration. The profession itself is less than what it was when we were growing up. We constantly hear the teachers are bad. They are bad because they are not being paid enough, and not trained properly. There are all these different causations that you hear. So that is sending a different message. Then you have this employment situation where you do all the right things, but you still cannot get a job. Those are mixed signals. When you do not have a support system there to help you, you can really feel lost and throw your hands up and say for what reason. Why should I suffer more when I am going to suffer anyway. I see some things that are happening that are good indicators. I love talking to Rod McDavis [Roderick McDavis] who is the new dean for education. He has got an extremely innovative approach to education and producing teachers. If he stays here, we are going to see some very dramatic things happen within the state of Florida, within the system that we have now. They talk about the uniforms in high school. People think why do you want to do that? It is so regimental, so military. I happen to be one of the students when I was going to school that was dressed. Even in junior high school, I would wear a sport coat. To me, that was something that was important to me. That was something that I wanted to portray. We had dress codes. You just could not come on campus any way you wanted to come on campus. The dean of boys and women would be standing right there watching as you got off the bus. If you were not properly dressed, you went back home and got dressed properly. That was just a sense of discipline that they were trying to instill. Most of us had no problems with that. When you look at the economic differential where their families cannot afford the fancy clothing, you

have that disparity. What problem can wearing a uniform cause?

M: Kids have enough to worry about. They can handle that when they are grown.

B: Exactly. I am laughing now because I laughed then. We dealt with dress codes every spring or whenever we started school. That was always an issue--dress code. Your parents were sent this list of things that you can and cannot wear. It was an issue, but an issue that people understood, addressed, and moved on. It was nothing you dwelled on the whole term. You got it and you move on. Those are all like a screen because it really is not an issue. The issue is the quality of education and whether or not the system is prepared to handle the student load that they have. That is another package right there. I think that the system is a good system. I would like to be more proactive and try to find a way to help us all deal with it more effectively. It is never going to be perfect. I do not think it was meant to be perfect. There are a lot more positive things that we can be doing that we are not doing.

M: Let us end in an unorthodox way. Maybe you cannot even respond to this. What would your mother think of all these changes, your life included?

B: It would not be a surprise to her. As I said earlier, I was always fortunate. I had the image of being a good student. We laugh because when we are in our family gatherings, my sisters and brothers would talk about all these little mean, devious thing I would do, had done, or been accused of doing. My mom would always be so surprised because she would never imagine me to be that kind of person. She is great. She is very proud and happy. I never complained. That was one thing too. Any specific intimate problems, she would not be aware of. She would know of some overall problems, like my involvement with the school and the system. The things I talked about today, she would be aware of most of them, but some of them maybe not so much. It would tie in very much with her idea of the person that I am and the success that I have been able to achieve.

M: And her view of progress.

B: And her view of progress.

M: [[inaudible]].

B: She always will throw my name up and say, "Look what Ed was able to do and how he was able to do it." [She] uses it as an example.

M: It has been so nice talking to you. I have enjoyed this.

B: I hope we have gotten something out of this.

M: Oh yes, we have.