

UFLC 27

Interviewee: Randolph Matheny

Interviewer: Denise Stobbie

Date: June 13, 1985

S: This is Denise Stobbie, and I am here with Randolph Matheny in his Orlando office as part of the College of Law oral history project. Mr. Matheny, could you please tell me your full name?

M: Randolph Y. Matheny.

S: And your place of residence?

M: Longwood, Florida.

S: Your birth date?

M: November 24, 1918.

S: And your birth place?

M: Sarasota, Florida.

S: Where were you reared?

M: I was born and reared in Sarasota, Florida. I was actually born in Osprey, Florida, which is part of Sarasota County between Venice and Sarasota.

S: And is that where you received your primary education?

M: My primary education was in Sarasota Grammar School and then Sarasota Junior and Senior High.

S: When did you become interested in law?

M: I do not know. I think some time when I was in high school.

S: What got you interested?

M: My family had friends that were lawyers that I saw frequently, and I got into the high school debating club. I did debating for the high school. I just naturally –

S: Interested.

M: – acquired an interest in it. I cannot tell you exactly when.

S: So you did have some lawyers [in the family], some relatives who were lawyers?

M: Yes, in Illinois.

S: How did you decide to attend the University of Florida?

M: Well, my brother was attending the University of Florida while I was in high school, and I just never thought of any place else. Besides, it had the only good law school [in Florida] then. There was just Stetson and the University of Florida, I guess. I do not know whether the University of Miami had a law school then or not.

S: When did you first enter the University of Florida?

M: In 1936, I think.

S: As a freshman?

M: Yes.

S: That was when the Depression was going on.

M: Right in the middle of it. Right at the height of it. I went to school the first year completely on about \$320. That was books, education, tuition.

S: Oh, your first year of school?

M: Yes.

S: Did you work to put yourself through school?

M: Yes.

S: Where did you work?

M: Well, I worked in the Student Union building which had just opened and was the activity building. I washed dishes in the cafeteria.

S: Did they have a cafeteria there at the Student Union?

M: They had just a big school cafeteria where most of the students ate. I would say they served several thousand people a day for each meal.

S: Where was that? What part of campus?

M: Well, it would have been almost – well, let me see. The Student Union building was just south of Buckman Hall, and it and the cafeteria were connected, so it was just a block from Section B of Buckman Hall, where I resided as a freshman. It was a much smaller campus then. We had about 3,000 students.

S: What were you studying as an undergraduate?

M: I took a group major in arts and science: speech, philosophy, Spanish, economics, religion.

S: So was your degree in arts and sciences?

M: Yes.

S: Did you pay for all of your schooling, or did your parents help you out?

M: No, I worked my way completely through school.

S: Did you hold any other jobs?

M: Yes. I had laundry routes, and at one time I operated the concessions in the gymnasium for the student dances and things. We had the big weekends then, four of them. [There were] no women on the campus, so they were imported four times a year. They would have big orchestras there like Jimmy Dorsey or somebody like that, and they would usually have a Friday night dance and a Saturday afternoon tea dance and a Saturday night dance, and the fraternities and everybody would have parties scheduled. It was just one big party from Friday noon on.

S: Did you get to party too, or did you work through all of that?

M: Well, I worked most of the time, but I partied some.

S: What signs were there that a depression was on when you were at the University?

M: The biggest sign was that the best job you could get paid sixteen cents an hour.

S: Wow! Sixteen cents.

M: [laughter] You could get that and go to the College Inn then and buy a complete meal of meat and two vegetables, a salad, dessert, and a drink for twenty-five cents.

S: Did most of your friends work? Your friends from school? Was that pretty much the norm?

M: The vast majority of us only worked part of the way.

S: Were there any other signs of the Depression--in the city, for instance?

M: Well, yes. This was in the days of the WPA. You would see all kinds of government-made work. They put people to work, you know.

S: The students could find jobs if they needed work?

M: They were hard to find. Very hard to find. I shined shoes one semester for a nickel a pair for black and a dime for regular shoes. I got a dime for two-toned, black-and-white shoes.

S: Did you do that at the University?

M: Yes, I did it there at the Student Union building.

S: Oh. And you lived in the dormitories while you were there?

M: Well, I lived in the dormitories for the first four years. Then when I joined a fraternity in my freshman year in law school I lived in the fraternity house from then on.

S: What fraternity?

M: Sigma Chi. See, I had already been president of Florida Blue Key and chairman of Gator Growl, so I held a lot of positions at school prior to my entering law school. I was four years as a non-fraternity man and three years as a fraternity man.

S: So you were president of Florida Blue Key. What year was that? What year of school were you in?

M: I would have to look in the manual, but I believe it was 1939.

S: So you would have been a junior or a senior?

M: Senior, I think.

S: Senior.

M: Yes, I think I was a senior.

S: So you were pretty involved, then, in undergraduate school.

M: Yes. I was head of the YMCA as a student.

S: Were you involved in student government?

M: Yes, ma'am.

S: Was that separate from your Florida Blue Key involvement, or was that all? Was student government a separate organization?

M: Well, I think they gave me a major in politics when I went. You used to have a major and two minors and grade point average. No, I was chairman of Gator Political Party. We controlled the politics back then at the University.

S: So let me see. When did you finish your undergraduate? Was that in 1940 you got your degree?

M: I think I got the physical degrees both at the same time, 1943, but I was eligible to get my degree or whatever in 1940.

S: And then you went to law school immediately after?

M: Yes, I went right into law school. As a matter of fact, I went year round to school. I had gone to both sessions of summer school and both semesters of regular school from the beginning of my sophomore year right on through graduation. I never left it. I never left the campus, except for Christmas vacation.

S: Why is that? Were you in a hurry to get out?

M: [laughter] No. In law school they would not let me take full courses because I was working my way through school. The dean made me carry about a two-third load, and then I would have to make it up in summer school. My job as head student assistant at the Florida Union building required me to be there quite a lot during vacations to do renovations to the game room and things like that.

S: How did you go about enrolling into law school?

M: Back then all you did was sign your name and have the average.

S: And you went right in. Did your parents encourage you to go to law school?

Were they behind that?

M: Well, I think they were happy I went, but they did not particularly encourage me. They said, "Be what you want to be."

S: What were your parents' occupations?

M: Well, my father was what I guess you would call a real estate developer. In later life he was in the water construction business--dredging, building bridges, sea walls, jetties, and docks. But [real estate] was his main profession of business.

S: Did your mother work?

M: No. She was a college graduate, but she never worked. I will not say that, because I think raising four children was a pretty good job. [laughter]

S: Four children! What are your parents' names?

M: My mother was Virginia H. Matheny, and my father was Charles Woodburn Matheny.

S: Now, you were living at the fraternity house while you went to law school.

M: That is correct.

S: Did you eat your meals there?

M: Most of them, yes.

S: And that was in 1940. Was the fraternity house full at that time? Were there a lot of students there?

M: Yes, it was totally full.

S: Had you noticed at that time any students leaving yet to go into the military service?

M: Oh, yes, they were leaving to go into the military service then. The number in the fraternity house reduced quite a bit in 1942 and 1943. I cannot tell you the exact number.

S: 1942 and 1943 is when you really started noticing the drop in enrollment?

M: Yes.

S: What was the law school like when you first attended? Were the classes full at that time?

M: Well, the freshmen classes were full. As I recall, my freshmen class had sixty-nine or seventy-nine students, and we filled just about the largest classroom or place in the law school.

S: How many women were at the law school then? You do not have to give me a number, but can you remember?

M: Well, I think that there were two. There was Mr. [Clarence] TeSelle's daughter who was a student, a law student [TeSelle was a professor of law at UF], and the other one – I cannot think of her name. She is a circuit judge now from Polk County.

S: Did you ever have classes with them?

M: Oh, yes. I think Miss TeSelle was a year ahead of me. I cannot think of the name of the other one.

S: Maybe that will come to you later. Was the University encouraging students to continue their studies at that time?

M: Yes, but when we got to 1943, there were very few University students. To keep the University going, they changed it into a ninety-day [Reserve] Officers Candidate [Corps, ROTC] school, and a great many of the graduate students like myself started teaching these so-called ninety-day wonders in lecture classes because there were not enough faculty and teaching officers. We had 3,000 or 4,000 officer cadets then. I think that 1,000 came in each month and 1,000 went out each month.

S: Where were they coming from?

M: All over the United States.

S: For officers training?

M: Yes.

S: And you taught in that program?

M: Yes.

S: What did you teach?

M: They did not have a name for it. It was current events. We taught about modern political history and social events. That was just when the unions were coming to the forefront, and I remember there were several lectures on unions and their place in business.

S: And that was for service men?

M: That was just one course. In other words, they would get these kids in from Alabama who had never worn shoes, and they were trying to teach them something about what the United States was. It was just an over-all, broad picture. It was like one of the condensed C courses when I was going there [for my undergraduate], the comprehensive courses [of the University College].

S: And these were people who were already enlisted in the military?

M: Yes, they had enlisted in officers training or had been selected for it.

S: And that was one of the things the University did to [fill the buildings].

M: Yes, because all of the dormitories, almost, were totally full of officer cadets.

S: Did you go into the officers training program?

M: Myself?

S: Yes.

M: No, I was 4-F, which means they would not take me. [laughter]

S: Why was that?

M: Well, I have a knee that was torn up from playing football, and every time I volunteered they decided they did not want somebody that crippled-up in the service. They would not take me, so I ended up finishing school. I was the only man in my class that finished on time.

S: How did you feel when all your classmates were leaving? Was that a sad time?

M: Well, yes, you know. But I think the main impression it made on me was [the size of my classes]. I guess my biggest class my last two years was maybe three students. For some professors I was the only student.

S: In the class?

M: My senior year I had classes on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, starting at 8:00 and getting out at 12:00. I had four classes. I was under Dr. TeSelle all the time. I checked in at 8:00 in the morning, and he called the roll and said, "Matheny, take the first case, and Matheny, take the second case." I just stood on my feet for four solid hours reciting. [laughter]

S: Gosh. Did he do any lecturing to you?

M: Well, by that time most of my classes were using casebooks, and I just recited the cases. But it was a battle, because towards the end of the class I talked slow and he talked fast, because he wanted me to give an answer unprepared and I did not want to get beyond where I had studied. It was a real opportunity for me because it was one-to-one work with some – what I considered to be – very, very capable professors. I had Jimmy Day and TeSelle, [Harry] Trusler [who was the dean of the College of Law], and –

S: Was [Robert S.] Cockrell still there?

M: Yes, Cockrell was there, but I think I had finished all of Cockrell's courses. He mainly was teaching freshmen when I was there. I think we were down in all three classes. There was something like eighteen students, and we had lost some of our professors, like [William A.] McCrae [Jr.]. You will find him in the picture. He was a real good law professor. Well, he went into the service, and I think a couple of the other younger professors did. So we got down to about Trusler and Ila Pridgen, who ran the office and at that time was librarian too. I think there were maybe four other faculty members, besides the dean. I do not think we had twenty students the last half of my senior year.

S: Trusler was the dean then?

M: Yes.

S: Do you remember Ila Pridgen doing any teaching?

M: No, she had not even finished her law degree then. She got it later. She was taking a course about every semester. She did that for years.

S: Did you ever have her in any of your courses?

M: I do not recall. I was in contact with her daily, you know. The law school then was so small that you saw everybody every day. If you went out for a cigarette you would see everybody in law school.

S: Did you become close with the other students that were there?

M: Yes, quite a few of them. We did all of our studying in the law library at that time.

S: Did you study together?

M: Not so much. The way it was set up, there were study tables around, and the school was small enough so that each student really had a desk where he could keep all of his books and notebooks and supplies and everything, so he could study at his desk. I did not attempt to study in the fraternity house or any place like that. [I] just could not get it done [there].

S: So you studied in the law library.

M: Yes.

S: What was it like being the only student? Did you have to study hard?

M: I sure did. We covered, in one of my classes, five casebooks in a semester. They had never finished the first casebook in a normal semester, so we covered four or five times the material in each of my classes. It was really something that very few people would ever have. It was just circumstances. In other words, I almost had a private faculty, you know, on a one-to-one basis. Most of them were pretty informal. Mr. TeSelle called the roll like there was going to be more than one there. [laughter] He would say: "Matheny, take the first case. Matheny, take the second case." At exam time he would give me all of these mimeographed instructions and remind me of the honor code, and I used to say to him, "So, who am I going to cheat with?" [laughter] It was a party for one.

S: Would he stay in there while you took your test? Stay in the room?

M: No, he gave his tests in a small room across the hall from his office. But there was nobody else in the whole law school but he and I and Ila Pridgen.

S: So you had the school almost to yourself.

M: I was not the only student in my classes when I started in my senior year, but I ended up being the only one. You said you had a conference with Mr. [Raymer] Maguire [Jr.]. Well, I first started to work for his father at Maguire, Voorhis & Wells in 1943, and when I interviewed he asked me where I graduated and where I stood in my class. I said I was top of the class. He was chairman of the Board of Control later, and he came back to Gainesville after then and said he had been with Dean Trusler the night before. He said, "Incidentally, you were technically correct." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "You told me you

graduated the top of your class." And I said, "That is right." He said, "Well, you could have said bottom and middle." I said, "You did not ask that." [laughter] But there were others; I think [there were] two other law school graduates with me, but they were not in my beginning class.

S: Did you have a graduation ceremony?

M: Oh, yes. Yes.

S: What was that like?

M: I cannot be sure about this. It was a long time back, but I think there were about 150 graduates for the whole University that year.

S: That is right. The law school graduated with all the other seniors.

M: All the others, yes.

S: So did three of you get your law degrees that year?

M: I think it was three. I may be wrong.

S: And was that 1942 or 1943?

M: 1943. I graduated at the end of the second semester of 1943. The second semester of 1942-1943. I think it was late May when we graduated.

S: Who handed out the diplomas?

M: As I recall, it was Doctor Tigert. You probably may not have even heard of him.

S: Oh, yes. There is a building named after him.

M: He had a very deep, raspy voice when he talked. One of the prominent lawyers in the state told me one time, "Every time Doctor Tigert talks he sounds like a burlap sack tearing." He would say, "On this most auspicious occasion –" [laughter]

S: How much time did you spend studying, usually?

M: I studied in law school about one and a half to two hours for each hour of class.

S: So you would spend your nights at the library?

M: Yes, and I would study in between my work. I did a lot of studying on weekends. Of course, there was not anything else to do. I did not have a television. There were no females [laughter] except for a few town girls. You could go to the movies or you could study or you could work. So I did.

S: I see. Was the war the topic of conversations at the law school?

M: Oh, well, it was on everybody's mind, constantly. We all had friends and family in it.

S: How did you keep up with what was going on?

M: News. Radio and the papers [were] about the only means of acquiring news back then.

S: Did you ever have discussions with faculty members about the war? Did they talk about it?

M: Oh, yes. I always tried to get to know the faculty. We used to eat lunch and sometimes dinner with faculty members, periodically, and I used to invite them over to the fraternity house.

S: So did you know them, most of them, personally?

M: Oh, yes. School was so small, you could hardly help it.

S: That must have meant you could not fake it, then.

M: Oh, no, no, you could not fake it. They all knew you personally by name and by sight, and we spoke to each other every day. If a faculty member thought you were not doing something up to snuff, he would see you out in the hall or smoking a cigarette, and he would say: "Matheny, drop by my office sometime this morning. I would like to talk to you for a few minutes." It was entirely different from the atmosphere that exists in school now.

S: Because now you can pretty much get lost in the crowd, if you want to.

M: Oh, yes. You see, there are more people in law school, by far, than we had in the whole University as nonmilitary personnel. And my last year and a half I went to law school.

S: You said you noticed the drop of enrollment in 1942?

M: Oh, enrollment began to drop back in 1940. I mean, materially. A lot of people

and a lot of friends and associates in college volunteered as soon as it looked like we were going to really get into a war.

S: Back in 1940.

M: Yes. I had several friends who dropped out in the late 1930s and went into the air force. You see, we were in ROTC school. That was a pretty big contingent back then, and most of the students were army oriented, military oriented. A great number of them [were] called up as the original reserve officers to furnish the cadre of officers that were to teach and instruct this mass of recruits and draftees that they were bringing in. See, we jumped from peacetime to fighting a war in Europe and in the Pacific, from almost nothing to an army of millions, in just a year. A lot of my friends were second lieutenants in the reserve army. They were called up, and a number of them came out of World War II as staff command officers with general's rank. They rose from nothing to the top in maybe twenty-four months, you know.

S: And why was that?

M: Because they had been through the ROTC and had elected to stay in the active reserve. One of the reasons was [laughter] there was still hard times, and they got paid for the active reserve and for summer camps. So that helped them through school.

S: Did any students come back from war while you were still in school?

M: Not really. No. I am sure there were some, but I cannot recall.

S: And did you notice any increase in the number of women students at the law school?

M: Not then. Not really.

S: Then that must have come later.

M: There were perhaps two or three or four the whole time I was there, but I do not recall more than two being there at the same time.

S: Were you in ROTC?

M: No. I started in ROTC my freshman year, but they finally threw me out of there.

S: Your freshman year of college or of law school?

M: College.

- S: Do you remember any soldiers visiting the campus while they were on leave? Did any of them come by?
- M: Oh, yes. Some of my friends would call me and say they were in Jacksonville, and I would go up and we would go out to dinner and have a drink and chat. They would go on their way, and I would go back to school.
- S: Did you ever get the feeling that you were fortunate that you could go ahead and finish?
- M: Ah, I presume they did. Some of them that knew me said they did not know why the army would not take me. I could be shot just as well as they could, you know. [laughter] But I do not think there was anything like that. You know, in law school it was a small group of people, and those that were in your classes you became fairly close to. It was just good friends.
- S: When they left, was it right in the middle of a semester?
- M: Oh, some of them got drafted, and some of them volunteered the day before they were going to be drafted.
- S: Do you remember any pressure on them, pressure to finish up their studies?
- M: Oh, sure. There was pressure to finish up their studies, and there was peer pressure to go ahead and volunteer. [There was] the normal social pressure.
- S: I see. Did all of the facilities on campus remain open? Dining facilities and sports facilities?
- M: No, quite a number of those closed to what I call the lay students. In other words, we turned over the whole cafeteria seating facilities to the officers training group. Nobody ate in there. All the rest of us went to Ramsey's Boardinghouse and the College Inn and ate off campus.
- S: What boardinghouse was that?
- M: Ma Ramsey's. There were a number of boardinghouses there that were along University Avenue. Across from the old law school there were one or two, and almost down to Buckman Hall was just almost solid eating places. Most of them served family-type meals two times a day.
- S: Had Ila Pridgen opened her home up at that time as a rooming house?

M: I did not ever consider it a rooming house. I think she had one or two students who rented rooms from her, but I did not really consider it. Anybody who had a spare room around the campus was renting it. So I did not consider it as a rooming house.

S: Were a lot of people renting out rooms to the students?

M: Oh, yes. They always did.

S: I imagine that was extra income for them.

M: Yes. Up to the time I graduated we only had Thomas Hall, Buckman, and Murphree, and that is all. I do not think at the peak of those days we could have housed more than 25 to 35 percent of the students on campus. So [most students lived] off campus, and the closer you could get, the less distance you had to walk. Anybody that had a room that they did not want to rent, they would be talked out of it by some student. [laughter]

S: Did you usually get around by walking?

M: Oh, yes. Very few people had cars on campus. I think I finally had a car when I was about a freshman in law school. I had a car, but times were hard when I started to school, and nobody had cars. You could not afford them, and you could not afford to drive them.

S: Were there a lot of students when you started?

M: There were about three thousand. As I told you, I worked at the Student Union building at that time. As such, I was expected to know as many as I could. I guess I personally knew the names and faces of twenty-five hundred students by the time I had been there a year.

S: Gosh. I see.

M: There were a lot of them I never knew. The ones that were down in ag. school sort of lived off towards the ag. school, and we never saw them on campus. The whole campus consisted of from Ninth Street and University Avenue as a corner of it, down five blocks west, four blocks south, back to Ninth Street, and back to University Avenue. That was the whole University except some ag. school enterprises that went on out to the south. Where your fraternity section is now was a mile and a half beyond where any student ever went. You see, you could walk between any campus buildings in five minutes and not race.

S: Not anymore.

- M: [laughter] No, no. I get lost. Last time I was up there I got lost.
- S: Now you pretty much need a bicycle or a moped to go. You know, if you have a class at one end of the building and have to get to another class on the other end [you have to hurry]. [laughter] Did you go to town very much?
- M: Oh, mainly only for motion pictures.
- S: How would you get into town?
- M: Walk.
- S: About a mile, was it?
- M: Oh, I guess from my dormitory to the picture show was a couple of miles. There were two theaters, but the main one was on Ninth Avenue. It would have been about two and a half blocks to the west of the old county courthouse.
- S: So the movies and the University had other social functions for the students?
- M: Yes, we had most of these centered in the old Student Union building, which is where you had all your student meetings and the meetings of your clubs and organizations and your student government. It had recreation rooms and billiards and Ping-Pong.
- S: Everything you needed.
- M: Well, no. We did not have beer, and we did not have women. [laughter]
- S: No liquor on campus?
- M: No. The whole county was dry.
- S: Oh. Where did you get your beer?
- M: There were several good bootleggers. [laughter]
- S: Moonshine?
- M: No, no. They were illegal whiskey stores. There was one a block north of Ninth and University Avenue which was a filling station, but I think if you had gone in there to get gas, they would have fallen dead of fright or shock. [laughter]
- S: What about social functions for the law students?

- M: Oh, there really were not any, except for a few law school fraternities. One of them was sort of a drinking fraternity, and that is about it. There were not any real law school functions.
- S: Why was that? Because of the number of students?
- M: No, we were all too busy studying. And as I said, there were no women there, so why have a party? [laughter] Oh, every once in a while somebody would get up a group and we would all chip in fifty cents or a buck and buy a small keg of beer and go out to one of the lakes and maybe have a Saturday afternoon swim and beer session. But not very frequently.
- S: Was money tight then? Did you have to watch it?
- M: Oh, yes. I think all the people I knew had very limited funds.
- S: What about organizations at the law school? Were there any student organizations?
- M: Oh, there were two law school fraternities – Phi Delta Phi and what is the other one? I am not a member of this. I do not remember it. Look in the yearbook. You will find them.
- S: So the fraternities were operating.
- M: Yes, but [they held] only two or three meetings a semester. There was nothing. They were not fraternities as social fraternities.
- S: Was the John Marshall Bar Association operating?
- M: Yes, it operated. I do not know what it did. To tell you frankly, I just do not know. I think I belonged to it, and I think we may have met once a semester or something like that. We elected officers and things.
- S: How about the University's debating team? Was that operating?
- M: Oh, yes. The University Debating Team. They had a fine debating team, but the professors frowned very greatly on anybody that did any debating. They had to be almost a straight-A student, because the faculty took the position that you could not do anything but sleep and eat, and all the rest of the time you ought to be in class or studying. Anybody that took maximum cuts, you could just depend on [the fact that] your grade would go from *B* to *C*, regardless of what you scored on your exam.

S: Oh, that is interesting.

M: I said it was much smaller and much closer, and there was much more inner work, I am sure, with the faculty and the students than there ever could be in a school the size of the school now. You know, I seriously doubt if most of the faculty and the students ever even really get to know each other now.

S: Yes, they may realize that. One thing they are going to start this fall is experimenting with smaller class sessions in the first year[, such as] the civil procedure and the contacts class. They are going to try small sessions, small classes, like twenty-five students, and see how that works. I think they realize they need more student-faculty interaction.

M: Well, of course, that is very much easier with a small school, [with] a small number of students.

S: How do you feel about the education you received?

M: Oh, I thought it was marvelous. You learn more when you recite under a probing professor for fifty-five minutes out of every hour than you will being called on to recite on one case once every three weeks.

S: Did that prepare you to go into practice when you left school?

M: Yes, it did. [laughter] I was never scared of a judge or anything in my life. I figure, if I could get through that, I can get through anything.

S: I can imagine. Which professors were scariest?

M: Well, I guess the one that the students – I do not know whether you would say "scariest" – knew they were going to catch hold of hell if they were not prepared would be TeSelle. TeSelle had been a very successful prosecuting attorney in Wisconsin. He developed chronic arthritis and moved to Florida for his health and started teaching at the University. He was one of the very few professors in the school, or that I ever had, who had practiced what he was teaching. I mean, he really been a practicing attorney, and he used to be a terror to us freshmen. He would get you on your feet and ask you to recite on a case; he would ask you a question, and you would answer it. Then he would ask another question. And by the time he asked a third question, you knew that you either had to back up and reverse course or in a few more questions he was going to have you answering black was white, instead of white was black. You know, he was marvelous at cross-examining and misleading you. [laughter] They [the professors] were all good. They all taught differently.

S: Very few had practiced law?

M: I think very few of the professors in law school have ever really practiced law for a living. It may have changed now, but in those days there was an old saying that the *A* students went ahead and got their doctorate degree and started teaching and therefore never got out of college, *B* students became the judges, the *C* students became the working lawyers, and the *D* students made the money.

S: Let us see what else we have not covered. Was there any moot court team back then?

M: Not like you know it. They had selected students to do the moot court trials, but there were only one or two trials a semester, and [there was] very limited participation in them.

S: Did you ever?

M: I never was involved in moot court at all.

S: In any of your classes, did you receive any practical experience?

M: None. Not while I was there. It was all theory. No, when I graduated, I did not know how to draw a deed or an affidavit or anything. I had never seen a legal instrument, and I had never seen a case or any legal instrument in my life.

S: Now, when did you learn all that?

M: After I started practicing.

S: Oh. Did the college have any kind of placement service to help students find jobs?

M: No, not to my knowledge.

S: How did you go about finding your first job?

M: Decide where you would like to go and send out résumés, then interview. Hope that you would get some place you liked. There were a couple of the students that clerked with the local bar association or worked for them in the summer. Some of them would work for big firms in the summer for a few months. But I never did because I was going to the University, in effect, twelve months out of the year. I went to both sessions of summer school and both regular semesters of each year, so I did not have any time to.

S: So you decided you wanted to work in Orlando? That was where your first job was?

M: I went to work with Maguire, Voorhis & Wells the summer of 1943--August 1.

S: Did you found this firm?

M: My partner, Mr. Arnold, and I founded it together.

S: And when was that?

M: 1947. September 1, 1947. Now, Mr. Arnold was ahead of me in law school. He graduated in, I believe, 1942 or 1941. I have forgotten which.

S: [You and Mr. Arnold founded this firm] in 1947, and you have been with this firm ever since.

M: Yes.

S: What is your position with the firm? Is there a title? [Are you a] senior partner or anything like that?

M: Well, Mr. Arnold and I were senior partners. We started at the same time.

S: What kind of your practice have you done through the years?

M: General civil practice. About the only thing that we do not take is criminal. We have specialization now, of course. I was invited back to speak to the freshman class a few years after I graduated, and one of them asked, "How did you decide what to specialize in?" I said, "Whatever you find a solvent client in and you are successful at during your first case." [laughter]

S: Did you stay with Maguire, Voorhis & Wells until you formed this firm?

M: Yes, I was with them for four years.

S: Is that where you learned to draft deeds and more practical things?

M: Yes. They were a firm that had about fifteen lawyers in it, but because of the war years that drifted down to where there were two senior lawyers and myself. [laughter]

S: So you were there . . .

M: It was just sort of like grabbing you from the scruff of the pants, you know, and throwing you in the lake and saying, "Sink or swim." You just learned or you failed, I guess.

S: So you were there before Raymer Maguire, Jr.

M: Yes.

S: Can you think of any other areas we have not covered about those years?

M: Oh, I really do not know. Before I entered law school, I had been president of Florida Blue Key and chairman of the Gator Growl. I was at one time the senior monitor of all the dormitory monitors. Before I got in there on a first-name basis, I knew all the deans and the president and the vice-president and the dean of students. I had been on a working basis with them as a student leader. Then the war came along, and there were so very few students there that I continued to work with them. When they wanted something done or to get something over with the student body – what was left of it [laughter] – they frequently contacted us. So I had a working relationship with the entire top echelons of the University faculty that, I guess, very few students ever had before and will ever have again. Just because of the circumstances of the war and the sudden decimation of the student body around 1936, 1937, from about 3,000 in undergraduate school down to just a few hundred in the whole University, all of the normal chains of commands and links were broken, and I happened to be sort of a fixture.

S: How old were you in school?

M: In school? Well, I started school when I was sixteen, and I graduated from school at about twenty-two.

S: So your classmates who had gone away to war came back after you had already graduated?

M: Most of them did, yes. You see, the war was still on when I graduated. I then started practicing law the first two years.

S: So then slowly your classmates began to show up in the profession.

M: They began to come back and show up and finish.

S: Have you kept in touch with many of them?

M: Oh, almost all of them.

S: Let me see if I have covered all my questions. How did you decide to come to Orlando?

M: Well, a good friend of mine, [Robert] Bob Bishop, who was in law school with me, had come to work with Maguire, Voorhis & Wells. I was looking in Jacksonville and Tampa, and he called me and said the firm up there, he was sure, could use me. I went up for an interview, and Mr. Maguire, Sr., hired me. So that is the way I got there. [laughter] I really did not have any intention coming to Orlando.

S: There was work here.

M: Well, there was work here, and, of course, I stayed here because I just love it. I love the central Florida area, and I like being an hour or so from each coast. At that time my mother and father were living in Sarasota, and I could get home in roughly two and a half to three hours.

S: Were you single all through school?

M: Oh, yes.

S: Did you marry after school?

M: I married after I had been in the practice about twelve years.

S: Do you have any children or any lawyers in the family, other than you?

M: No lawyers in the family. I have two children – a boy and a girl. One of them, my son, did not go to the University, but my daughter graduated from the University of Florida. I am very proud of her. She had a 3.89 grade-point average.

S: What was she studying?

M: She graduated as a geographer. Her real forte is reading high-level maps made by satellites. But she decided that wherever she went she was the token woman. She got mad at them when one of her superiors – even though she was classed as a professional and had a secretary and all that – gave the top echelon one of her reports and put his name on it. She said that was the end of it. She just walked out that day. She now has a bookstore over in Brooksville. She is a feisty little thing, though.

S: Good for her.

M: She is only 4'11-3/4", or something like that. About like you – very petite.

S: [Laughter] Well, I think that is about all of my questions. Would it be okay if I take a picture of you behind your desk?

M: Oh, sure.

[End of the interview]