

UFLC 44

Interviewee: Frank T. Read

Interviewer: Denise Stobbie

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When Frank T. Read was growing up in Spokane, Washington, he had a reputation for being contentious. His friends and relatives said of him "this kid has got to be a lawyer because he argues all the time." Read has always been interested in law; he cannot recall a time in his life when he was not. He saw a great deal of unfairness around him, and he was familiar with the practice of lawyers' righting such injustices. Another great influence on Read's youth was participation in the Boy Scouts of America, which filled the role of a "surrogate father" for the urban youngster. He is still active in the Alachua District Boy Scouts.

Frank Read joined the debate team when he was in high school, a practice he continued into college. He attended Brigham Young University, where he participated in debate and graduated with high honors. He then moved on to the Duke University School of Law. His areas of specialty are evidence, trial advocacy, and professional responsibility. Following tenures at Duke, the University of Tulsa, and Indiana University, Read came to the University of Florida as the College of Law's seventh dean.

Among his accomplishments at the University of Florida, Read counts an increase in the number of faculty and in their scholarly production, increased private funding, improved relations with the alumni, national recognition of the college. The Quality Writing Program has been largely responsible for the improvement of scholarly contributions of the faculty. He is especially proud of the foreign exchange program, since he sees Florida as being at a crossroads between Caribbean, Central American, South American, and European markets. The biggest plus has been his ability to avoid divisive internal academic squabbling, which he attributes to the faculty's high morale, cohesiveness, and respect for others. Much of his success is due to the fact that he is a "people person" who simply likes being around people.

Work still remains in developing the international emphasis of the college, and particularly in expanding the library. Read discusses all of these and other interesting topics in a lucid, forthright manner.

S: I will first ask you some questions about your arrival here. How did you view the deanship at Florida, in terms of a career move?

R: Well, the deanship at Florida was clearly a career move up for me. My previous deanships started at the University of Tulsa, which is a newer, relatively small private school in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with a day and evening division. The second move was to Indiana University in Indianapolis. The law school at Indianapolis is fairly large with a good-sized evening and day division. It also had a bigger faculty than at Tulsa. Coming to Florida was significant because I moved to a very large day-only operation that really was already a force in public legal

education with the potential to move even further, so I viewed it as a very significant career move. Florida was then emerging as the great state of the southeast quadrant, and that progress has continued even more rapidly than I expected. This school is the dominant law school in the state. Even knowing as little as I knew when I made the move, I knew it was a major career move for me.

S: I found a statement where you said that your dream was to be at the helm of the next great state-supported law school.

R: I think I have been. We have emerged rapidly through the Dean Joseph Richard Julin era and into my era. I have said publicly, and I believe it is true, that of the large state-supported law schools, we have moved further and faster in quality than any of the rest.

S: What do you consider your greatest accomplishments when you were at Indiana and Tulsa?

R: At Tulsa I added to the faculty and, to some extent, the student quality. I inherited a brand new building, but the faculty only had thirteen members, and the school was quite small. I got there only a few years after it achieved its membership of the Association of American Law Schools. I took that faculty from thirteen people to about twenty-four or twenty-five in my five years. I raised a considerable amount of private funding, and left enough funding when I left to begin a new wing on the building. I established an alumni program at the University of Tulsa, which really had not had one previously. I think I solidified the school's relationships with the bar and its alumni. Overall, I think the quality of my faculty hiring was perhaps my biggest achievement. We hired some tremendous young people at Tulsa. We began to emerge on the national scene as a relatively new school, but one worthy of some respect and showing some substantial progress.

S: And at Indiana?

R: At Indiana, the first year was magnificent. We had a very substantial increase in our budget and we hired a number of new, young faculty members.

S: Did you push for that budget increase? Were you involved in that?

R: Yes, I negotiated that when I came on as dean. We got a very substantial budget increase, and I was able to both raise faculty salaries substantially and increase the number of faculty members substantially in order to lower the student/faculty ratio. The second year at Indiana was a little bittersweet because the state of Indiana that second year went into a deep, deep recession.

You may recall both the steel and auto industries were very hard hit during those years [1980-81], and agriculture was also very hard hit. The state of Indiana itself went from about a \$600 million state budget surplus to a deficit in about a six month period. We took massive budget cuts all through the university and state system the second year. I think my major accomplishment my second year at Indiana was to protect our budget from really devastating cuts, to preserve all the young people I had hired, and basically to batten down the hatches and hold through the recessionary period. I was there only two years, but I think that my accomplishment was the initial first year increase, and then hanging on reasonably well through a bad recession the second year.

S: When you accepted this deanship, is it correct that you planned to stay five years?

R: Well, I knew that a school of this size and complexity required some substantial continuity in the job. I had [stayed] five years at Tulsa, which seemed about right there. The two years at Indiana were very short and probably not sufficient, but I am an expansionist/growth dean, and with what I was facing in the recession, the situation there was not a happy one. When I came here, I knew I had to put in a substantial amount of time to get the reins on a large and complex institution. As for how long my tenure would be, I think for almost everyone it is very difficult to look beyond five years ahead. The faculty has a request that a dean go through a faculty evaluation of the dean's performance every five years. I viewed that as probably a good idea; I would basically commit myself to at least five years and take a look at how I was doing, what the school thought of me, and where it was going. [I had] no clear idea of what would happen thereafter.

I did go through that five year evaluation here, and it turned out to be very complimentary to me, for which I am deeply grateful. At that point, there were several more things I wanted to accomplish, and things were going so well I just did not feel five years was sufficient. As I have indicated in my public statements, the national average is about 3.2 years for service of deans. That really is a very sad figure. Too many schools have deans coming in for just a year or two before leaving, which is not good for the school, and I worry about that. I think there ought to be a notion that most deans should try for at least four, five, or six years to give a school enough continuity to see some substantial accomplishments.

After I got to six years, things were going extraordinarily well, so I stayed. If anything, I may have over-stayed my welcome; I hope not. But I also knew, and knew when I started, that deanships are not lifetime jobs. An institution deserves periodic changes of leadership. It is very important for an institution not to get too comfortable, and it is also important for the dean. Otherwise you fall into a routine or tedium, and the institution does not really grow or have the vibrancy it gets when it has periodic examinations of its own soul. Every time you get a new dean in, the school has to look at where it is going and what sort

of person they want to lead it the next time. I think all of those things are healthy.

My biggest concern (it is partly selfish and partly legitimate) is that I did not want to leave at anytime when there was ever a cloud – a political controversy, a major fight on the horizon, or some kind of difficulty involving the school. I am of the temperament that I do not back off a fight, and I do not want to leave under those kinds of circumstances. So for the past two or three [years] I have asked myself, "Is it enough?" Even two or three years ago I knew by then that I had provided enough continuity. I had to ask if it was time. Each year it was going very well and I was enjoying it very much, so I decided, "No, it is not time."

Ultimately, I knew I had to make that decision, and it was a very hard decision. It was not one of those overnight/wake-up-in-the-morning decisions. There was a gestation of several months. One of the hard things about it is that I have really, truly enjoyed the job. I liked it and I found it extraordinarily exciting and stimulating. It consumed all my time and attention. Giving it up was very hard, but I knew at some point I had to step down or step aside.

S: You really did not have any clouds to worry about for your years as dean.

R: No, I did not. For the past several years, we have really had upward productivity, good morale among the faculty and the student body, and good resources – both private and public – coming in. I have been a very lucky guy. Finally, it dawned on me: "How much longer could that last?" I tried to pick a time when I felt I was still right at the top of my form, before I had started to decline or it had gotten too routine for me. I also wanted to step aside at a time when the institution was at rest and even did not necessarily desire a change. We went into this fall with no political quarrels on the faculty, no major issues, and everybody being highly productive. I had been around a very long time, so it just seemed to me that it was as good a time as any to go.

I know it was a good time for me personally. My last child, my fifth child, David, will graduate from high school this spring. I will hit fifty this summer. I am right at the dead midpoint of my career. My wife and I will be together with the last child gone this summer, so it is just a very good time to take a leave and think about the future and whatever it holds. For me personally, it was a very good time.

I do not think there is ever a really good time for an institution to switch, although the institution has to do it periodically. This appeared to be the least of the bad times and, in fact, I really do think, a pretty good time for the institution to make this kind of decision.

S: This is the first time that you will be without children in how many years? How old is your oldest?

R: My oldest is twenty-six, so it has been a long time.

S: Let me ask you a little bit about the building campaign. Did you know what you were getting into?

R: No, and that was not due to a lack of warning. I was warned; I just did not appreciate the magnitude of the things.

S: You were aware that a major campaign was about to begin or was going on?

R: I was aware that it was going on and that we had to get some state matching money. What really did not dawn on me was the difficulty of the task. We were then in a recessionary period in the United States, and I came into a school that had never run a major capital campaign for its law school at all. It actually had a fairly small annual giving program. The campaign had not started much earlier than the time I came in. A campaign had been organized, and Bob Lindgren [Robert A. Lindgren, director, University Development] had been hired and was waiting for me. Basically, Bob and I had to carry out the best bulk of it ourselves.

I have told a number of people something that amazes me about this school. At Indiana, we had about 750 or 800 students when you add the day and evening division together. Here we have 1,000 J.D. [Juris Doctor] students and about 100 LL.M.s [Master of Laws], so it was bigger, and I knew it was bigger. But somehow when you jump up to the size of Florida, it is a dimension of difficulty way beyond what I had seen at two other deanships. It was a huge jump. The external constituencies were much more complex and much more diverse than the ones at either of the other two schools. Here one has to deal with the legislature, with the regents, with the central administration, with the alumni, and with the organized bar in ways and at levels that were just unheard of at the other two schools.

When I arrived, not only did I inherit a massive fund raising campaign that surprised me by its complexity, I had to learn a very complex state. A whole series of complex external constituencies had to get to know me, and I had to develop some level of confidence with them. At the same time, I was a brand-new dean in a law school, and I had to spend some time here finding out about this place. The first two years were extraordinarily busy, almost frenetic. Somehow it all came together. If I made a mistake, [it was that] I slighted the inside a little bit in order to go outside and raise the money that simply had to be raised for the building. Fortunately, I have a good faculty and they put up with that.

All in all, I think if I have had any success it has been [in] balancing all of the constituencies reasonably well. There is a dimension of difficulty with this job well beyond that of normal deanships because of the size and complexity of the state, and the position of the school within the state. In fact, being dean of this law school is very much like being president of a small liberal arts college of about 1,200 students with a very complex staffing arrangement. Being

associate dean of this law school is much more like being dean at another law school. This is a major institution. Although I had been dean at two other law schools and I thought I knew what a law dean did, I really was unprepared for both the size and complexity of this job. In fact, it took about two years before I began to fully appreciate how complex it really was. It was like peeling an onion: every time I peeled it, there was another layer of complexity.

S: You did have some experience with fund raising, and you said that you liked being a growth-oriented dean?

R: Yes, and that experience I had had and that attitude, I think, were very beneficial. I like growth, and I had just come [out of] a state that had faced a bad recession. I knew that all the money in the world would not come from the legislature. It had to be coming from a public/private partnership. That is why I think I came in with the attitude that I needed to work at both public resources and private resources. I could not slight either. I think that orientation helped a lot.

S: So you did not want to move into a school where it was just status quo?

R: No. One of the things I did find here was that the faculty already was a mature and established faculty with good academic judgment. There needed to be less tinkering academically inside than there had been a need for at the other two places.

S: Why were you willing to put forth the fund-raising effort for this school for those first two years? You were from the outside, and it took a tremendous effort on your part. Why were you willing to do that?

R: Well, I guess that is the nature of the person that I am. Once I decided to commit to this institution, I decided the only way to do the job was [to do] the best I could do. I had always wanted to lead a great state law school. This was my chance – to either succeed or blow it. I would like to say that the fear of failure compelled me to succeed, but I do not think I ever had any fear of failure because I am too much of an optimist. I think I had enough self-confidence to think I could really do it all the time, even when others may not. It was touch-and-go a lot of times, particularly during the first two years of the campaign. But you begin to see what can be done at a place with the basic assets and the potential of this place. It would have been a terrible crime to not have done the best I could to move the school toward realizing that potential. It was there, and we were in a delicate time period when the school had the ability to move ahead. I think if we had not taken the steps we had taken, we would always have been a good school, but we might have foundered and would not have achieved what we have been able to achieve.

S: So you made that commitment and stuck with it?

R: Yes.

S: Did you enjoy the travel and meeting the alumni?

R: I enjoyed meeting the alumni very much. I really do like lawyers, and I like the practicing bar. I was a practicing lawyer for five years. The practice of law is not strange to me. In fact, I feel quite comfortable with the issues the profession is facing. The Florida Bar, our organized bar in the state, is the best organized bar I have seen in any state in which I have been, so it was a joy to get active in the Florida Bar. I truly do like the lawyers and alumni, and I found a kind of special spirit among Gator lawyers that is hard to describe. It is a special kind of loyalty and affection for one another and for the school, and those roots just needed to be tapped. It has not been a burden. Actually, that has been a very happy portion of the job. Gainesville is difficult in its location, so getting back and forth to all of these places and the endless amount of driving that had to be done is not a lot of fun. The actual doing of the job was fun.

S: It was you and Bob Lindgren on the road?.

R: On the road. And relying on Jeff Lewis [associate dean, 1982-1988; dean, 1988-present, College of Law] at home to keep the fort.

S: Do you consider yourself, or were you before this job, a "people" person?

R: Always.

S: You certainly have been here.

R: Oh, yes, I like people. I really enjoy being around people. I enjoy people events.

S: Are there any experiences that stand out in your mind during that time of the campaign – experiences that happened around the state with alumni?

R: Well, I could tell some stories that would slight some alumni. The obtaining of the Bruton gift [retired Circuit Judge James D. Bruton-Quintilla Geer Bruton Endowment] is a fabulous story all by itself. The judge is such a remarkable fellow. That gift, which made the campaign, is a marvelous story. It was an important one. The gift from Lewis Schott (I can not remember how much it was, I think about \$60,000) was a terribly important gift because it was a gift that came about a week and a half before our deadline. We had to obtain \$1,500,000 of private money in order to walk in the \$1,500,000 of public money. We still had a lot more fund raising to go, but we would have lost our public

appropriation. Lewis Schott made a gift and told us that he would make up any deficit that existed between what we had raised and what we had to raise. It turned out that it was about \$60,000. Once he made that commitment, we knew about a week-and-a-half before the deadline that we were going to make it. We were awfully close and we were trying to pull in those final gifts to make it, so that was a dramatic thing. That one stands out in my mind.

Another one that stands out in my mind was the gift that was made by Toby Carrol, who is now deceased, from Naples, Florida. We went down and had a small lunch with alumni. Toby was very dissatisfied with the law school's admission policies. He had written some recommendation letters on people he thought were quite good, and they had not been admitted. He went to the luncheon, basically, to ask about admission policies and to complain. I was able to describe the admission programs and to convince him of its fairness sufficiently that he walked right out after that meeting to his office and signed over a couple of mortgages to the law school that ended up being worth \$30,000 or so. He made a gift of that magnitude just immediately as soon as his worries had been put to rest. I found small misunderstandings or grievances over and over again around the state. If I was ever able to get the people to air them, then over and over again we turned that person into a real friend and supporter of the school. Those are three gifts that I remember with great fondness.

S: You seem to have a knack for that--turning troubles into assets.

R: What I have found is that if someone harbors a grievance for a long period it can really destroy his or her relationship with an institution. The way to resolve that is to just go talk to them. Why is there a grievance, how did it occur, what happened, and what should have been done? Then find out as many of the facts as one can have and simply talk it out. That will frequently remove the vexation. You have shown, even if you are not able to satisfactorily explain to a person, that you have tried. They know an intent has been made and there is not just some bureaucracy ignoring the complaint. What we do, for instance, on our telethons--when the students call and raise money every year for us--is for every complaint about the law school that is a specific complaint, the student caller writes a note. Then I will get that note, and I will literally call everybody who makes a complaint and talk to them personally, because I think the goodwill the school has is very important.

S: Even though it is such a big school you have tried to keep that closeness.

R: Yes. One of the things that has impressed me most is the patience the alumni has had with me. I am not very good with names and faces. I came into an extraordinarily complex institution with a lot more faculty and students than I had previously encountered, and a big university. Then there were these major external constituencies. I know that I was introduced to the same people two

and three different times and I would forget. I just could not keep it all straight. Fortunately, they seemed to understand and have great patience with that and did not take offense, until I was finally able to get my act together. Eventually I could get most of them in the right place, in the right town, and with the right background. I have always been very impressed with the patience and basic goodwill that the alumni have had for the place.

S: I am including all the changes that have been made in terms of legal writing programs, the recent focus on international programs, faculty recruitment, fund-raising, and alumni relations. Are there any areas within those, or any others, that you have concentrated on most closely during your administration?

R: Well, it is very interesting. I am probably going to be credited, when I leave office, with two major accomplishments that I really am proud of and I appreciate. One is the amount of private fund raising that has occurred. A corollary to that is the amount of the state's Quality Improvement Program, which vastly increased the state's support as well. I will be credited, I think, as being a good resource dean, and I appreciate and am very proud of that. The other thing I will probably be credited for is the quality of the faculty I have hired, both at the top and bottom end. I am very proud of that and will freely accept the credit for it, although, frankly, it was the Faculty Appointments Committees that did all the hard work.

Despite my pride in those two areas, I think the thing I am most proud of is something that no one will ever mention; all of it will go unknown. It occurred at all three schools. The one thing for which I harbor the most pride is that at all three places where I have been dean we avoided divisive internal academic squabbling that could really paralyze a place and its productivity. In the law school world there are, unfortunately, many law schools that really do have serious internal problems – problems between faculty members, and problems of faculty members with their central administration. They just go on and are chronically unresolved. It creates a bad morale structure within the faculty and slops over into the student body. During my seven years at the University of Florida, we have avoided divisive internal squabbling. We are not divided into cabals or political camps. When there is a disputed item and where there are differing viewpoints, the faculty does not vote in voting blocks. You do not see the same people voting together on every issue. You see people splitting up and taking considered viewpoints based on the merits of the controversy each time. We are, as much as I have ever seen, cohesive internally. We respect the viewpoints of others, and there are no recriminations. Keeping the morale high and the productivity level high without the internal endless bickering, I think, has really been the thing of which I am the proudest. All the other accomplishments would pale by comparison if it were known the law faculty was not cohesive and constantly fighting with one another. It destroys everything you are trying to do. We have avoided that.

S: How have you avoided that?

R: I wish I knew a magic formula, but I do not. I can say that I do like them and respect their viewpoint. I believe in faculty governance, and I am convinced that the vast majority of the time, if given the proper facts and sufficient time for deliberation, the faculty will come out with pretty darn good decisions. They know I believe that and they know I respect their decision-making power. I have not tried to intrude on faculty prerogatives, while, at the same time, I have been no shrinking lily when it comes to asserting what I think are appropriate decanal prerogatives. I think we have achieved a congenial atmosphere.

S: You will be credited with that, also. I believe you said that at Tulsa you had strengthened the alumni program there. Why have you had such a strong emphasis on alumni relations here?

R: Because I think that the ultimate reputation of the institution depends on the quality of its product. Our product is our students and how well they do. If our lawyers are not ethical, highly competent, and skilled lawyers, then over the years the institution will suffer. If our lawyers are good and the quality of their work is good, then the institution will be good. I think that we must recognize, as a law school, that we are an integral part of the legal profession. We are the entry point to the profession. It is important that the profession understand what we are doing and we understand what problems face the profession. I believe in a high degree of dialogue between the profession and the academy. To get that you need to be out and involved and willing to serve. I think all of those things are part of the decanal job.

S: Concerning the curriculum, what is your philosophy of the balance of the traditional courses and the clinical courses? What changes during your administration were you pushing for?

R: Well, what we had when I came was a very large student body and not enough faculty to really service the student body appropriately. Our student-faculty ratio was high. What we needed was more faculty members so that we could reduce the size of a lot of classes and could offer more diversity in the curriculum. I think we have been able to do that. I do not detect tension between the theoretic side of the curriculum and the skill side of the curriculum, which exists at some schools. I think there is a healthy respect on the part of the faculties of both of those groups for the other. We did not have enough skills training options available to our students, so we have worked on sturdier skills training programs and increased the availability of those programs very substantially.

In my travels around the state my first two years here, one of the most common complaints about young lawyers was deficient writing skills. I knew from my own experience that all schools had struggled with writing programs. I

became determined that this was a school that would pioneer in the area of trying to do a better job in legal writing. The result of that has been the creation of the legal writing staff, the legal drafting staff, and the enormous amount of resources that we poured into that area. I do think that we are at the forefront of experimentation in developing quality writing programs. That appeared to me to be a common complaint about young lawyers that I received from the bar. It seemed to me that what they were telling me was true and we ought to work on it. That has been an area where I really had some substantial interest.

S: As far as your teaching, you taught Evidence and Trial Advocacy?

R: And Professional Responsibility; those are the three courses I have taught here. I have taught other courses in the past when I was a full-time faculty member, but those are the three primary courses I have taught since I have been here.

S: Will you continue to teach in those areas?

R: I expect so. In my year of leave I am going to be thinking seriously about whether I want to explore in some new teaching areas for me. I expect I will always stay in the evidence area. It is an area of primary interest to me. I would like to expand some more into the various constitutional law areas because of the writing interests that I have.

S: Where would you say the school is headed now in the short term and the long term?

R: Well, in the short term, what we will continue to do is emphasize quality faculty hiring and the resources necessary to appropriately endow a school of our quality. We need more endowed professorships, chairs, and student scholarships in order to give us the appropriate mix of private and public support. There will probably be a continuing emphasis on resources and on both teaching quality in the classroom and scholarly productivity to benefit the larger profession.

S: In the long term do you see us up with Michigan and Virginia?

R: Yes, but we will do it in our own way. They did not get where they are by aping somebody else. They looked within themselves and did what they did very well, indeed. We are beginning to find areas where we can be extraordinarily good in our own right. The writing programs and the skills programs, for example, are areas of excellence where we do not have to hold a candle to anyone. We have a state that is emerging as a major trade state. The future of Florida, with the population growth it is going to suffer, will be to develop occupations and callings for its people that maximize its resources without destroying its environment.

Florida sits like a giant thumb which is at a crossroads between the Caribbean, South and Central America, and the European markets. We have to develop our international and comparative law curriculum. We have to have many more foreign contacts. We have been working hard on developing faculty exchanges and summer programs for foreign lawyers. We need more international emphasis here as we emerge, because the very nature of the state of Florida demands we be a truly international law school.

S: Let us shift gears to some personal information. As far as your background, what were your parents' occupations?

R: My father was a barber who died when I was four years old. My mother worked throughout World War II as a riveter on airplanes that had been shot up flying over the Pacific. She worked at an air base in Spokane, Washington, on eighteen-and twenty-four-hour shifts repairing airplanes during World War II. I lived with my grandmother during the period when I was a small boy. I joined my mother after World War II was over. I was then raised in Spokane, Washington, by my mother alone. She was a widowed single parent and worked as a bookkeeper on very poor wages trying to keep both of us alive, body and soul, together. That is when I first really developed an appreciation for the discrimination women have faced perpetually in the marketplace.

One of my primary academic interests has always been the equal protection clause. During the desegregation struggles I wrote my first major book on the history of the desegregation of the Deep South. One of my major interests as an administrator was when I was a young assistant and associate dean at Duke: I was one of the initial drafters of the Association of American Law School standards prohibiting sex discrimination in law school placement. I just had a strong, deep, and abiding belief that underprivileged groups, such as blacks and women, have to have job and educational opportunities open to them. It has been a longstanding and major commitment of mine throughout my entire career.

S: Were there any other children in the family?

R: No, I was an only child.

S: When did you become interested in law?

R: I cannot remember not being interested in law. I can remember being an argumentative little cuss and having friends, relatives, uncles, and aunts say, "This kid has got to be a lawyer because he argues all the time."

S: Did your mother motivate you?

- R: No, I think she really would have preferred I would have been an engineer or something like that. From the time I can remember anybody asking what I was going to be when I grew up, I was always going to be a lawyer, and that never changed. I do not know why that is so because there are no lawyers on either side of the family at all. I guess I saw a lot of unfairness around me, particularly in the treatment that my mother faced. It seemed to me that law was the way to right it. I had probably read a lot and seen plays and movies about lawyers who were able to correct unfairness. Whatever reason, I can never remember not wanting to be a lawyer.
- S: The unfairness that was brought toward your mother in terms of what?
- R: The way she was treated and paid. When she finally quit her job toward the end of her life, after she was befallen with a terminal illness, she was immediately replaced by two males, both of whom were paid double what she had been paid. Throughout her entire career, she carried that little business and was paid next to nothing. She never was recognized for what she did.
- S: That was still working as a bookkeeper?
- R: Yes, working as a bookkeeper.
- S: How did you become such a fine debater? I noted on your resume that you won numerous awards.
- R: Well, I drifted into the debate team because I had a choice. I used to think I was fairly fast, and I wanted to be on the track team. But I went to an inner city high school where the athletic facilities were about thirty blocks away from the high school, and I did not have the means to get to the athletic facilities. They had a meeting posted at the same time for the track team and the debate team, and I decided to go to the debate team because it met at the high school instead of going to the track. That is how I became a debater; it was as simple as that.
- S: And you excelled at it. Were you studious? Did you read a lot?
- R: I read a lot. I do not think I was ever particularly studious; in fact, I was sort of non-studious in high school. I got reasonably good grades, but I never worked very hard at it. It was in college that I began to learn how to study. There I simply was forced to because I joined the College Debate Team, which was a successful team that traveled a lot. In order to be able to travel on the traveling squad I had to be up in classes. I do not know if I would have ever been that studious in college, but I was forced into it because I wanted to travel around the country with the debate team.

S: That was at Brigham Young University?

R: Yes.

S: Then you won a scholarship to Duke?

R: Yes, I had a major scholarship.

S: So you did maintain the grades to win a scholarship?

R: Yes, I got much more interested in studying and ideas than I had been in high school.

S: What were your goals as a law student and as a young professional? Did you plan to enter academia?

R: No. In fact, I really always thought that I would be a trial lawyer. I did a tremendous amount of trial work my first five years. When I had an opportunity to go back on the Duke faculty, I taught trial subjects.

I never really thought of being an academic until I was asked to join the Duke faculty five years after I had started practicing law. It was not something I set out to do. I am not one of those academics who is in it because I did not like the practice; in fact, I truly liked the practice. The one thing I still miss is the trying of lawsuits, because I think I was pretty good at it. I teach in those fields and I love the courtroom work.

S: Do you think any more of that is in your future?

R: I have no idea. One thing that you missed in my background, which does not show anywhere, is the importance of the Boy Scout movement. The Boy Scouts of America almost acted as a surrogate father for me. I had an extraordinary scout master who took a real interest in me when I was eleven and twelve. That was really an awkward stage, when my mother was working twelve to fifteen hours a day and I was sort of alone. I stayed with the Boy Scouts and became an Eagle Scout. I went on an international exchange to Japan as one of ten Eagle Scouts representing the United States. I also worked five summers at a scout camp as one of the scout counselors and ended up as program director at that camp. I really credit Boy Scouting as keeping me on the job reasonably well in high school, causing me to be interested in college, and helping me get the scholarship which was necessary for me to go to college in the first place.

I simply can never repay what Boy Scouting did. I truly do believe in that movement. In fact, for the last year and a half, I have served as District Chairman of the Alachua County Boy Scouts of America. It is just a small attempt to pay back a little bit of what that movement did for me. The Boy

Scouts of America probably had more influence on my life as a youngster than any other single thing because it provided opportunities to get out in the country and camp. I lived in a very run-down inner city neighborhood and just would have had no exposure to any of those things without the scouts.

S: What scholarship did you get through the Boy Scouts? Was that to go to Brigham Young?

R: No, I did not get it through the Boy Scouts. I credit the Boy Scouts with making me work hard enough in high school to get a scholarship. I did get a scholarship to Brigham Young, as well as to Duke Law School.

S: What are your current interests, legal and nonlegal?

R: Legally, I want to retool myself as I return to the classroom. I have several items that have been percolating about which I want to write, and I want to expand my teaching responsibilities. I am looking forward to returning to the classroom. Nonlegally, I remain interested in all sorts of things going on in the real world in an eclectic way.

S: What are some of those interests? What about your Indian interest?

R: I have a tremendous amount of interest in American Indians, and I collect American Indian art.

S: How did that develop?

R: That developed in my first deanship in Oklahoma. I think American law schools and the American Legal Profession is too insular. I think we need to be much more involved on the world stage. Our country suffers now because we have not emphasized international contacts nearly enough. One of the things this law school has done that I am proud of is to establish its foreign exchange programs. I want to be much more instrumental in the foreign arena than I have been.

S: One thing you are credited with also is your enthusiasm. Nothing seems to get you down. How do you maintain that?

R: I do not know whether I have as much as people think or not. I simply like being with people. I enjoy people and I tend to trust people. I like working with them on projects that are important.

S: All right. Let me ask you to look back over your administration. Have you accomplished what you set out to do?

- R: Most everything. In fact, some things we have done I would never have believed possible. For example, the State Quality Improvement Program; thinking we could have ever achieved something like that would have been unimaginable.
- S: How did that work? Was that you and Dean [Herbert T.] D'Alemberte [present dean, College of Law, Florida State University] approaching the legislature?
- R: No, it was Orrin Slagel, who was then dean at Florida State. He and I convinced the legislative leadership of the state to support a four-year Quality Improvement Program. That has just made all the difference in the world. It is extraordinarily important. So with some things I have done more than I thought I was going to be able, with others I am pretty satisfied with our achievements, and there are one or two things with which I am dissatisfied.
- S: The library is one of those.
- R: My biggest regret is that we were unable to expand the library, which desperately needs it. Planning money twice passed through both houses of the legislature only to be vetoed by the governor. That continues to frustrate me, because there is a real need.
- S: Which of your accomplishments, or the accomplishments of the school, gives you the greatest satisfaction?
- R: I think I am the most pleased with the productivity achieved by the faculty. In other words, it is not my achievement – it is theirs. We have better than tripled our scholarly productivity during my time. Our teaching quality is very good. I take my greatest satisfaction in their accomplishments and productivity.
- S: Has the deanship been what you expected it would be?
- R: Oh, it is never what you expect. I still do not know what a law school dean does. I have no idea. Every day I come with certain ideas in mind of what I am going to do, and then I always get sidetracked with fourteen other things that occur. Every day is totally different. This job is incredibly unpredictable. You are largely unable to set your own agenda; it is set by the needs of others and the various constituency groups.
- S: You have been a dean for a long time.
- R: For a long time. I like administration, and I have no sense of feeling burned out or any of those kinds of things that you read about, but I do know it is time [to leave]. I just feel strongly that I have achieved about what I could achieve and

that I picked the right time to go before there was any slippage or any plateauing.

We have been on an upward plain and we are still on an upward plain, and I do not want that to stop. I think it is the right time for the school to start the search.

S: Rather than move into another deanship or another administrative position, what do you want to do right now?

R: Right now I want to return to teaching and go back to my roots to rebuild my own sense of knowledge and participation in the academy. That does not mean that I will not do something else like this, but I do not see anything right now on the horizon that would tempt me.

S: Do you plan to do some writing?

R: Yes, primarily in my fields of evidence and procedure.

S: Procedure?

R: It is a broad word that describes the procedural portion of the curriculum: civil and criminal procedure, as well as evidence and trial advocacy. Those are all procedural subjects.

S: Is there anything that you will remember more than anything else as you look back at what you did at Florida?

R: Well, the mind is a funny thing. I do not know exactly what snapshots will recur and what ones will not. Memory is like snapshots: various points somehow did not seem that significant when they happened, but you continue to remember them.

S: What makes it all worthwhile?

R: Well, you can see an institution grow and you can see some long-term impact for your efforts. That makes it worthwhile. It is a job where you can make a difference and maybe even see that you have made a difference.

S: By all accounts you have.

[End of the interview]