N: This is Diane Nelson interviewing Professor John Stewart Kitts for the Oral History Project of the University of Florida. Today is Tuesday, April 13, 1987. [The interview was continued on April 20.] We are in Mr. Kitts's office in the Music Building on the campus of the University of Florida. Thank you, Mr. Kitts, for your participation in this project. What I would like to talk to you about first is a little about your background so we can find out how you got to the University of Florida. Where and when were you born?

K: I was born in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in 1931.

N: Is that where you grew up?

K: No. I left there when I was six months old. My father was a regular army officer, and it was a very peripatetic existence back then. He was a horseman. He was in the 1932 Olympics, so he left Fort Sill to go to [Los Angeles] California, where the 1932 [Summer] Olympics were [being held]. After that we went around (it was a little early for me to remember). He was in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, so I really did not settle down anywhere until second grade, when we stayed in one place for three years. That was a record. That was Culver, Indiana, and I was there for third, fourth, and fifth grades. I might mention that--applicable to where you are probably going to be leading to later--Richard Bowles, the professor emeritus of band here, was my fourth-grade music teacher in Culver, Indiana. He gave me my first lessons on an instrument other than piano in the fourth grade in Culver public school.

N: Did you graduate from high school in Culver?

K: No, I left there at the end of fifth grade, and I went down to Birmingham, Alabama. Rather, my father was stationed in Birmingham, Alabama, at Fourth Army Headquarters. This was in 1942. I enjoyed sixth grade outside of Birmingham, Alabama, in a little community by the name of Mountain Brook. I started seventh grade in Mountain Brook, and I continued it in Los Gatos, California. Los Gatos means "the cats." It is close to San Jose, and I just have hazy memories of it. I remember being able to see an observatory from Los Gatos. I remember passing one of the homes of Yehudi Menuhin, who lived there. Then I finished high school up in Montclair, New Jersey. It took me a couple of years to recover from that.

But important for my future is that during the move from Mountain Brook to Los Gatos to Montclair, New Jersey, I lost my trumpet, which was the instrument Mr.
Bowles taught me. I went into the public school music office and asked to rent a trumpet. This was sometime after Thanksgiving, and they did not have any trumpets. Even if they had had trumpets, they would have been gone the first week. I asked for anything with three buttons and a mouthpiece—euphonium, French horn, or anything that would relate to what I could do. They had nothing. Well, they offered me a harp. I was twelve at the time, and the idea of playing the harp did not appeal to me. They offered me violin, and even though I now have a family which includes six violinists, the idea of playing violin did not appeal to me then, either. They did offer me an oboe and a bassoon, neither of which I had heard. The oboe looked really neat. I was very small—I did not start growing until about my sophomore year in high school—and the oboe case was nice and small, whereas my trumpet case was a monster, so I chose the oboe. They opened it up and put a reed on it, and I could not make a noise on it. Then they brought out this veritable steamer trunk of a bassoon case; it was the largest bassoon case I have ever seen in all my life. In all my forty-three years of playing bassoon I have never seen a case that big. They put it together, and as fate would have it there was a reed that worked in it. And I could play it, too, mainly because the fingering system was very much like the ocarina, which I had played as a recreational instrument. That was the beginning of that.

Where did I graduate from high school? Well, let me see. I finished seventh grade in one school, transferred to another school in Montclair in eighth grade, transferred to yet another school in ninth grade. Then I went to Culver Military Academy in Indiana, where my father had been stationed when I was in third, fourth, and fifth grades, and that is where I graduated from high school.

N: You mentioned an ocarina. For those who might listen that do not know what an ocarina is, could you explain?

K: Yes. It is a folk instrument called the sweet potato. Actually, it goes way, way back to Paleolithic times. Ethnomusicologists refer to it as a globular flute. It is made of a hollow vessel; it could be a gourd or cast in clay or something like that. It has a whistle-type mouthpiece and has finger holes in it so that you can change pitches while you are blowing into it. It is a simple instrument, and it is still played as a recreational instrument.

N: [My husband] Bob has one, so I have heard it frequently. Was your family musical?

K: That is an interesting question. My mother was a child of the Victorian era, and, as with most people who were brought up during that time, she was able to paint and etch and write poetry and act, and also to play the piano. She had about a two-hour memorized repertory. I can remember sitting down at the piano and playing. There was never a day in which there was not some sort of music in the family. My dad was a regular army officer, an Olympic sportsman, and an Episcopal priest. But very, very important to my background: he listened to [the] Metropolitan Opera every
He would frequently fall asleep listening to it, but as far back as I can remember I associate one corner of my dad with the Metropolitan Opera and the music that he would listen to. He thought it was important, so I thought it was important, too. So while they were not overtly musical, they were appreciative of music and actively appreciated music.

N: What did your dad do in the Olympics?

K: He rode a horse event called dressage. You have heard of [a degree of horse training called] high school. Dressage is sort of "college" horses. The object of dressage is to get the horse to go through intricate maneuvers without what they call visible aids of the rider. In other words, by subtle shifts of weight and squeezes and gentle manipulation of the reins you get the horse to do these utterly incredible maneuvers. It is a gorgeous thing to see. The more the rider approximates a lifeless doll the better it is. It is a very difficult science. It is the toughest thing in riding.

N: I have seen them do it on television, and I wondered what the goal was or what was going on. So after you finished high school, where did you go from there?

K: I went to Princeton University. You must know that when I was six I had my tonsils out, and I decided that I would be a doctor. As I grew I focused sharper and sharper on being not a general practitioner but being a surgeon. Then finally I had the idea that I was going to devote myself to brain surgery. I chose a college with a high rate of acceptance to Johns Hopkins, which had the program I wanted to enroll in, and that was Princeton. I tried for no other college; I applied only to Princeton. As luck and fate would have it, I was accepted. I graduated from Princeton in 1953 with a bachelor of arts in music, following the dictum "there is many a slip twixt the cup in the lip."

N: Was there any particular reason that you finally decided to go ahead and change [to music]?

K: Yes, a very specific reason. I can put my finger on the exact date, time, and circumstance. See, I had played bassoon now. I was the very best bassoon player in Culver, Indiana, which does not count for much! [laughter] But I went to Princeton and was the only bassoon player there. Now, the music department there is very small, and I was intensely busy, being the only bassoon player. I would get called to go over and play at Westminster Choir College, which was in the same town. I played in the university orchestra and the university band. I did not march with the bassoon; I marched with a baritone or a bass saxophone, one or the other. I thought the bassoon was a pretty neat instrument. I had played it since the days I was so short that when I stood up the bell of the bassoon was the same height as my nose; I started when I was twelve.
At any rate, the summer before I went to Princeton I established a bank account. With a bank account I could write checks. With this glorious feeling of money, I went into the record store at Princeton, and there was a recording of the Mozart Bassoon Concerto with the NBC Symphony Orchestra, Arturo Toscanini conducting. I had played that in state contests and gotten a little medal for it, so I thought I would see how this person plays my tune. The person who played it was the principal bassoonist of NBC at the time, a man by the name of Leonard Sharrow. I did not know at the time that the man was undoubtedly the greatest bassoon player living. At the age of seventy-one he was getting ready to retire after fifty-one years of symphonic playing. He is still principal bassoon in Pittsburgh, and he plays like a god. The man is utterly incredible. Anyway, here was a recording of Leonard Sharrow playing the Mozart Bassoon Concerto, with Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony Orchestra. I played it until the other side of the record was coming through the grooves. I listened to it every day. My roommate just about killed me. This was in the fall.

Well, close to Christmas vacation, my uncle, who lived in Montclair--remember I had lived in Montclair for a while; you cannot throw a rock in Montclair without hitting a relative of ours--called me and said, "We are going in to see the ice show. Would you and your roommate like come in? You can take Dory (his daughter Doris), and your roommate can take Dory's good friend Babs." Subsequently they were married, Babs and my roommate. At any rate, we went. As fate would have it--fate grabbing me by the back of the neck and shoving me in the direction it intended to all along--this pre-med arrived at the ice show a half an hour before it was ready to start. It was freezing cold in there--naturally; it was full of ice--so my uncle, my roommate, the two girls, and I said, "Let's get out of here until it starts." My uncle suggested we go over and take a look at NBC across the street, so we walked across the street.

Across the huge lobby of NBC I saw somebody with a bassoon case. I have been described as impulsive; I suppose I am. I walked up to him and said: "Hi. I play bassoon, too." The man was charming, very nice, friendly, and we talked about bassoon. The more I talked the more I realized that this man knew a lot more than I did, and I started feeling a little bit embarrassed. I wondered if he was a professional. I asked him, "Pardon me, sir, are you a professional player?" He said he was. "Where do you play?" He said, "I play here at NBC." I asked if he was Leonard Sharrow, and he said yes, he was. Well, I almost literally fainted. I could think of nothing to say except, "May I have your autograph?" That is the only time in my life that I ever asked anyone for an autograph, a hobby which I think is exceedingly vapid and stupid. At any rate, that is the only thing I could think of to say, and I was thunderstruck. At that moment in my life I was going over in pre-med. I had met the god of the bassoon, and I was an apostle. If you could read on that picture there--that is Leonard Sharrow in the picture--you will see where he says, "I came to Florida to grow bassoons. They grow oranges in Florida." So I have been his apostle ever since, and a student. I still take lessons with him.
whenever I can, and I still learn. It is indescribable the way I feel about this man as
a musician and as a person.

At any rate, I was playing in the New York Junior Philharmonic at that time, and I
went to the conductor bright-eyed and bushy-tailed and told him that I had met
Leonard Sharrow, and I asked him if he could arrange lessons, which he did. I
never studied weekly with Leonard, and I never called myself a Sharrow student
until years and years later when I could study weekly with him. I thought in my mind
I was still pre-med and had academic things to do at Princeton. I took lessons with
him as often as I could, anywhere from every three weeks to four weeks, something
like that. I worked very hard for him and just worshiped him. He taught me a lot.

I will never forget my first lesson. Remember, I was "the best bassoon player in Culver, Indiana." He sat me down, and I put my bassoon together. The first thing I
discovered was that the bassoon would not play. He picked it up and discovered
that it indeed would not play. Then he discovered that I had left the swab in the
instrument. No wonder it would not play! I was somewhat embarrassed by this. So
we got the swab out of the bassoon, and he said, "Play me a three-octave Bb scale."

So in my best impulsive [manner], I played a three-octave scale in Bb. He looked at
me and shook his head and said, "I will have to begin from scratch with you," which
is something that I have never been able to forget. Every time I think I am "the best
bassoon player in Culver, Indiana," I remember what Leonard Sharrow said. It is
easier to remain humble when you have had lessons like that. And it is a valuable
lesson, too, because no matter what you think, you do not know it all. The more you
learn the more you realize there is more to learn. Witness the fact that I still seek
opportunities to take lessons from him. So our relationship has spanned some
thirty-eight or thirty-nine years.

Subsequently, after he left NBC, he went to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as
first bassoon. I went on to Philadelphia to study with John Shamlian. He was the
associate first or assistant first in Philadelphia under Sol Schoenbach. Then I
graduated from Princeton with my B.A. in music, having abandoned (or been
abandoned by) the pre-med program. There was a slight altercation between me
and organic chemistry that was not successfully resolved, so I left Princeton. Do
you really want to know all about me?

N: Just a little bit, yes.

K: In a nutshell, I then taught school for a year while waiting for my active duty army
orders to come up. I had intended then to become a regular army officer. I was still
fighting music. I had taken the ROTC [Reserve Officers Training Corps] program
and had [served] two years in Germany, where I did some more studying. The year
that I taught school I played in the South Bend [Indiana] Civic Symphony, my first
professional playing job. Then I spent two years in the service, and I studied
whenever I could in Germany. This was [during the time of a] Hungarian revolution
Germany, and we were out on maneuvers a lot and occupying our no-retreat line, where we would do a strategic withdrawal to that point and then withdraw no further no matter what. It was a very humbling experience to sit on the spot where you might die.

At any rate, I did have fun in Germany. I bought a bassoon there and studied with a very, very fine bassoon player who was a bassoon player of the old school; his name was Otto Hängelhaupt. He actually had a rank of Kammermusiker, so when I wrote him it was "Herr Kammermusiker Otto Hängelhaupt." He was a chamber musician to the city of Augsburg. Yes, he had a title, and I learned a lot about technique. I learned double tonguing from him, just an awful lot about technique.

After my two years there I had a marvelous opportunity to take an overseas release, so I went down to Salzburg, Austria, and studied conducting with Igor Markevitch and [Louis] Ariacombe, who was a French conductor. I studied bassoon with Ferninand Oubradous, who was the professor of bassoon at the Paris Conservatory. There are a number of interesting things with him. He was a conductor and chamber musician, as well. He hated the German bassoon; he played the French bassoon there. That is a big, huge discussion that we do not have time for. Through these discussions I met my wife, because the French student who translated for me at my lessons could not translate my arguments to Oubradous. He would say, "You cannot say that to any professor at the Paris Conservatory," so I went out and found someone who would say what I wanted to tell this guy! He kept attacking my instrument. I had just this brand new instrument, and I thought it was a pretty neat horn.

At any rate, after that summer, having met my future wife, I went home and went to graduate school at Indiana [University]. I auditioned for and got a position in the Indianapolis Symphony [Orchestra]. It was from the Indianapolis Symphony that I came to the University of Florida in 1966.

N: How did you hear about the position here?

K: Do you remember Richard Bowles, professor emeritus of bands? At that time he was professor of bands. The first year I was in the Indianapolis Symphony it was a twenty-one week season, one week of which was vacation without pay. Naturally, I was getting concerned as the season approached the end about how I was going to pay for groceries. The English horn player of the orchestra, a young man from Jacksonville [Florida], by the way, told me there was a bassoon vacancy at Transylvania Music Camp at Brevard, North Carolina. I wrote there, and as fate would have it they had not filled the position. They took both my wife, who was a violinist in the Indianapolis Symphony--she had subsequently come to America and auditioned for and made the Indianapolis Symphony--and me. We both went down to Transylvania Music Camp the first year. That year not only Dick Bowles but Reid Poole, who was former chairman of the department, and several other people from the University of Florida were also at Transylvania. They would go there in the
summer when they did not get on for the summer semester here. Even then, more particularly back then, the professors on a nine-month salary were somewhat hindered by the financial limitations of not getting a pay check during those months. I met them, and we did a lot of chamber music. I performed a composition of mine with the band, and I got along with them very well.

Subsequently, Reid Poole called me as chairman and said: "We have an adjunct instructor of bassoon position opening up here. Would you be interested?" I said, "Let me think it over, Reid." So I called my brother, who was a professor of art at Ohio State [University], and I said: "You are in this academic game. What do I do?" He said, "Do not accept any no-tenure accruing professorial-rank position." I did not know what he was talking about, but now I am glad for the wisdom. I called Reid and told him: "The salary you mentioned and the rank that you mentioned is not in keeping with what I am doing right now. I am already [earning that much playing in the symphony]. Thank you very much for thinking of me, Reid. When it gets to be a tenure-accruing assistant professorship, let me know and I will come."

At that time I initiated a doctoral program at Indiana University, primarily so I could study with Leonard Sharrow, who had left the Chicago Symphony and was professor of bassoon at Indiana University. So I spent a lot of time on that road between Bloomington and Indianapolis.

I was down in Bloomington in a bassoon lesson one day--Leonard was teaching me--and the phone rang. He answered it, looked quizzically at me, and said it was for me, long distance. I picked up the phone and said hello (with a question mark at the end), and it was Reid Poole. He said, "Jack?" I said: "Yes. Reid, it is nice to talk to you again." He said, "We now have a tenure-accruing assistant professorship in bassoon available." I asked what the salary was, and he named a salary that was better than the combined salary of second bassoon and second violin in the Indianapolis Symphony. I said, "Let me think a minute." I turned to Mr. Sharrow (who had since then become a close friend) and told him that I had just been offered a good salary as assistant professorship of bassoon at the University of Florida. At this time the Indianapolis Symphony was on strike, and the possibility of a season coming up was way in the air. He told me to take it, so I said: "I will be down there. When can I come down for the interview?" He said as soon as I could make it. So my wife and I and our one-year-old child, Jennifer, who is now twenty-one, came down to the University of Florida. That was in the spring of 1966. No, it was in the summer, because they were having the Gator camp that they used to have. I did some teaching at the camp and had a lot of fun. I met a lot of the faculty. They never said: "We are interviewing you for the possibility of this job. You are a candidate. Please submit your vita," or anything like that. They did not do things like that back then. They looked me over, I looked them over, and we said okay, so I came. So I came in the fall of 1966, after nine seasons with the Indianapolis Symphony.
N: What was the Gator Camp?

K: It is still here. Back then it was a very large thing. Students came from all over the state. It was the Gatorland Music Festival, and we had the orange band, the blue band, and the symphonic band. We had chamber music and private lessons. This was all in the old building, by the way, [Building R]. It continued past 1972 when we moved in here [the new music building]. The Gatorland Music Festival was very, very good. One time it was expanded--I think we were in this building, so that was 1973/74--to include orchestra, piano, and choir, as well as the bands, jazz bands, and chamber music. It was very, very big. It is a real shame that things developed so that it is no longer feasible or possible to have that. It was a big chapter in our recruiting.

N: Did you know anything about the University of Florida music department before you came here?

K: Only that Dick Bowles was here. He had been my fourth grade teacher and my supervising teacher when I did my practicum. After I got out of the army, that year in Indiana I was working on a music education master's degree, which I never got. I got my master's at Butler University in music history and literature. Butler is in Indianapolis. I was working on the degree nights and summers. But I knew nothing about the University of Florida, except that I had a distant relative in IFAS [Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences], and he did not even live in Gainesville. He was in Sanford at an agricultural experiment station. My only previous visit to Florida had been Christmas of 1949 when my brother was at Rollins [College in Winter Park]; that was my first time in Florida. And [we came here] on tour with the Indianapolis Symphony. Other than that, I knew nothing about Florida.

N: I understand about the time that you came here they were just beginning to get degrees developed in the music department. Did you have any involvement with this?

K: Not actively. We were under the College of Architecture and Fine Arts back then. It did not become a separate College of Fine Arts until after we were in this building. When I first came, the only possible degree you could get (I think) was a bachelor of music education. It was not until considerably later that we got our first bachelor of music and went into the five different areas that we now have. I understand now that we are going to reduce it at the bachelor's level. The master's did not come for a number of years. I recognized when I came here the advisability of a bachelor of music education. It was a bachelor of education in music, as a matter of fact. I adjutated for a bachelor of music education, which I think is, for our professional purposes, a more-valid degree. Then when people started talking about the advisability of a bachelor of music, I was all for it because it is a degree that allows specializations other than music education.
N: I know we have a master's degree in historical instruments here. Did you have a big role in developing that degree [program]?

K: Oh, yes. The whole recorders and historical instruments program here was my idea. I would like to talk about that, because I think it is really great. Early music for me was something I had to take in college. At Princeton I had Oliver Strunk, who edited the *Source Readings in Music History* series, as a professor. I had this overall impression of Oliver Strunk, the man that I never saw in the light of day—I only saw him in the third floor underground at Firestone Library. He always wore black or dark gray suits with vests, and he smoked without ever using an ashtray, so his vest was always covered with ashes. Back then, early music did not have the vitality or interest that it has today, and all the recordings were just ghastly. I was crushingly bored by early music and early musicians. So early music to me, then, was when the conductor cranked up some [Johann Sebastian] Bach.

Well, I came here, and I was teaching one of the skills courses for music ed. in which they used a fife. It looked like a piece of chromium gas pipe with a lead fipple on it, and it sounded ghastly. I said, "For goodness sakes, let us use recorders, because recorders are musical instruments." I had learned the recorder in Germany when I was stationed there, not having time (in that critical time) to do any practicing. Being a musician, [it was difficult] to exist not being able to tootle on something. I got a recorder, and I thought it was a neat little instrument. I had my little five-Mark German system soprano recorder, and I played that around and convinced the people that this was a good instrument [to use] instead of that confounded fife. So I was known as the guy with the recorders. Well, four students came to me. Do you know Steve Kress?

N: No, I do not.

K: He is a former graduate student. He still hangs around the building. He went up to Cincinnati and got his Ph.D. there. He plays clarinet in the [Gainesville] Chamber Orchestra. Steve Kress was an undergraduate then. The first Renaissance [Ensemble] was these four kids: Moria Willis, Steve Kress, Shirley Abdullah, and Billy Winn. Billy's dad was Myron Winn, who ran the Primrose Inn at that time, subsequently the Winnjammer. That is where the name "Winnjammer" comes from. At any rate, those four kids came to me, and somehow they had gotten together a complete soprano, alto, tenor, and bass recorder quartet. They asked me what to play on them, and I said I did not know. I looked on my shelf, and the only thing I could find that would encompass the ranges was some Renaissance motets, so we dragged them down. We were in the old building, which used to be a gym, of course, in the section that used to be bleachers, because it was tiered and terraced. [We were] sitting on the area where the teachers used to stand, and it was so narrow there that there was room for two of them to sit side by side on each side, two of them across, and I had to sit in the first bleacher. We played this one Palestrina motet, and they were all very good musicians. Billy Winn was a clarinet
player, Steve Kress was a clarinet player, Shirley Abdullah was a clarinet player, and Moria was a flute player. We played this one thing, and they played it very well. When it was over, it was one of those mystical experiences where no one could say anything because it was so beautiful. Finally we broke the silence and said, "My God, that is great!" That was the beginning of the Renaissance Ensemble and the whole historical instrument/recorders program that has developed. We started meeting regularly playing recorders.

Then fate stepped in again. This was my first year here, recall. I met a man, Dr. Guy Omer, who was on the astronomy and physics faculty. He was one of these people who are absolutely essential to the music industry—the well-informed audience. He was so well-informed that he became a musical amateur, and he has a huge collection of Baroque music; by huge, I mean when he brings it out and puts it on the floor there are two stacks of music about three feet tall—all [Georg Philipp] Telemann. He had his Telemann Chowder Marching Society, I think they called it. There were several faculty people in on that, including the former head of physics. Together they set up a blind corporation so that they could order musical instruments at cost. While this is probably not entirely legal, it did equip all their friends with very fine musical instruments. And Guy's collection was marvelous.

Guy and Martha, his wife, were in the same gourmet club as my wife Sonnhild and I. One evening we met at Guy Omer's house. He knew I was a musician, and with malice of forethought he said, "I have something to show you." He showed me a case that included two complete quartets of recorders, along with a sopranino and a great bass. I had never seen a sopranino, and I had never seen a great bass recorder, and I was thunder-struck. Then he said, "Let me show you this case." He opened up that case, and he had a bass crumhorn, a cornetto, and several Renaissance musical instruments. I was thunderstruck again.

Well, I started being interested in this stuff, and he would have me over and we would play. Then he said, "You know, Jack, there is a workshop this summer in Celle, [East] Germany put on by Moeck, the company that makes these." I said: "Let's go! That sounds great." I applied for a humanities grant for foreign study, and I got it. It cost me an awful lot of money to go there, but the humanities grant at least paid for part of it.

Another interesting thing happened; fate again struck. I was at a cocktail party, and at this party I happened to overhear someone from Tigert Hall say they had $35,000 that they had to spend by Friday or it would be lost. At this point when I tell this story, I say, "Two seconds later, while sitting on this fellow's chest, I took down the notes about this." It was a discretionary fund from the president [of the University]; I think it is profits from the drink machines. It is a fund that they use for emergencies. Well, it had accrued a nice $35,000 amount, and they had to spend it. So I found what to do, and I went home that night and wrote a grant request to end all grant requests.
You must know that the other half of my schizophrenic life at that time was with the army. In 1984 I retired with thirty-four years as a reservist; I had kept up my reserve, was very active, and ended up as a full colonel in the field artillery. At any rate, part of my army education was at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and I subsequently taught Command and General Staff College courses in what they call satellite schools. One of the things you do in Command and General Staff College is learn how to write operations orders. Operations orders, like many things in the army, are very structured. There are formulae that you follow, with things like tabs and cross references and things like that. I wrote a grant request like the operations order to end all operations orders. It was just beautiful. It was typed, and I had color-coded tabs and annexes and words like "interdisciplinary" and things like that. I wanted some money to buy musical instruments while I was at the workshop. I asked for $3,500 out of the $35,000; I figured 10 percent was a good figure to ask for.

Well, it so happened--this is the story I have been told; I cannot swear it as being gospel, but it is a good story--that my request was thrown on the desk with another request by one of the hard sciences: engineering, or physics, or something like that--people who were used to getting anything they asked for. They had written their request in pencil on yellow legal-size [paper]. I understand that Bill Elmore [vice-president for business affairs]--now, again, this is what was told to me--looked at the two of them, and probably did not even read mine, but said, "We will give this guy what he wants." Just from looking at the appearance! That is probably just a story, apocryphal and all, but I had worked very hard, and I got my $3,500. That $3,500 was the foundation of the instrumentarium of the Renaissance Ensemble. It fixed us up with the beginnings of a collection which now, including my own personal instruments, is probably the best in the entire Southeast. It has representatives of every family [of Renaissance instruments], and in most cases complete consorts of every family.

I spent the summer (that was the summer of 1970; I cannot remember for sure) in Germany at a two-week workshop learning to play these cruel and unusual instruments with Guy Omer. Professor Guy Omer went with me, and we were roommates. It was an incredible atmosphere, and it was where I really got the early music bug and was infected. No matter when you got up in the morning, someone was already playing. No matter when you went to bed at night, someone was still playing. It was an intense musical activity, the most intense I have ever seen. Most of [the participants] were amateurs, but [there were] some pros there.

At any rate, the upshot of that was the founding of the University of Florida Renaissance Ensemble, built around Billy Winn, Moria Willis, Steve Kress, and Shirley Abdullah, and people who joined and replaced them. Dave Vessetti came back from Vietnam. He was almost a mental case. He came to me in the fall of
1972 and said he needed to add a couple of hours in order to get his scholarship, and he did not know what to add. I said, "Add a special project in historical instruments (there was no class at that time) and Renaissance Ensemble. That will take care of those four hours." He agreed, noting that he could drop them later. I did not let him drop them because it was just the challenge he needed. He had been in Vietnam and was really distraught the way many kids were who came back from Vietnam. To this day we have a phenomenon in the Renaissance Ensemble called "Vessetti-itis." Dave subsequently graduated and has been a school music teacher in Palatka, doing very well. [He is a] marvelous representative of our student body.

At any rate, Vessetti-itis was something that he suffered in his trying to learn all these instruments, because I had them play crumhorn, shawm, and recorder. Each one is somewhat different [to play] and in different keys. We would be playing along, and we would hear this muffled oath from the back of the group--it would be Vessetti looking at the instrument and saying, "This is a recorder in F!" We would figure out what he was playing. Well, you have played recorders, so you know what we are talking about. That inability to figure out what instrument you are playing is called in the Renaissance Ensemble Vessetti-itis. We still laugh about it when Dave comes by, as he frequently does. He is a very loyal alumnus.

At any rate, the Renaissance Ensemble was founded on the noblest of foundations, that is, student interest and student push. Since my background in music history was definitely not in early music, I was playing catch-up ball. In the early days, I was learning the instruments and reading, and I was going to workshops myself as a student. I finally began to catch up a little bit.

When we were in this building already--so it was 1972/74, somewhere around in there--I proposed that recorders and historical instruments be added to our offering under what we back then called applied music. It was unanimously accepted by the faculty. [That was] the only time in my career here that I have indulged in academic gamesmanship. I had heard, quite understandably, too, that people thought recorder was a wooden toy and that they were going to vote against its being adopted as a musical instrument. Someone told me this, and so I began circulating the rumor that I was going to compare the amount of repertory for the recorder with that for the euphonium, tuba, saxophone, and several other instruments. The fact was that there is more repertoire for the recorder than for all the other woodwind instruments combined. So when we had the meeting in which the vote was going to be taken, I walked in with a stack of music three feet tall. I had to carry it like this, and I put it on the table in front of me. I did not say a word about it. When it was brought for a vote, there was no discussion; it was just voted on, and unanimously passed. Of course, the music consisted of anything I could drag off my shelf. It was not recorder music; I did not have that much recorder music. But the fact is that the recorder is a viable instrument, and there are people in many institutions majoring in it. We have had a number of majors in recorders. Most important, we have had
people who (you do not say minored in southern schools) have taken secondary instruments in recorders. This is exceedingly important for people going into musicology, people going into elementary education, and people going into private teaching. Recorder is a valuable instrument.

So in answer to your question about fifteen minutes ago, historical instruments and recorders began from the students and worked up through my learning. Now you can get not a master's degree in historical instruments but a bachelor's degree in historical instruments. You can get a degree in applied musical or performance practice in recorders, just as if you were majoring in percussion or oboe or bassoon.

N: I was a little confused about that. I thought that was a separate degree program.

K: Absolutely not. This is a misconception. People have been misconstruing that and thinking that historical instruments is a degree-granting area. It is not. It is just a studio instrument that you pick up. Of course, the lessons are not just studio work, like scales and arpeggios. There are historical perspectives that you need to know as a player, and this is a part of your private lesson.

N: What have been some of the major concerts and performances that the Renaissance Ensemble has played?

K: Oh, my. Every year, of course, there are the Madrigal Dinners. That started out eleven years ago with, I think, three [dinners]. We peaked at six; we are back at five. Every December we have that, and we entertain about 500 people every night. We have played for the American Musicological Society [AMS]. We played for the large MENC [Music Educators National Conference] meeting; we went to Norfolk, [VA] and played there. We have played for the College Music Society [CMS] several times. We have played for a number of concert societies. We do professional concert engagements; we tour out. We played in Miami, we played in Pittsburgh, we have played in parts of Georgia, we played in the Panhandle, and we have played all through Florida. I have a map upstairs with pins in places where we have played, and it looks like a pin cushion. I stopped counting after 400 concerts since our founding. People do not realize this, but the Renaissance Ensemble is the most active performing organization at the University of Florida.

N: When you said you played for the AMS and CMS, were those national meetings or regional meetings?

K: Regional meetings. MENC was also a regional meeting up in Norfolk. I have not tried for national. There are specialty programs such as at Sarah Lawrence [College in Bronxville, NY] and several schools in New York and New England where they have intense programs in this. They are the people who should be playing that, people who are majoring specifically in historical instruments as an upper degree major area. Half of my "kids" here come, I would say, from the department, and half are walk-ons. I have some staff and some faculty. It is a group that is homogenous,
but not because they are all music students. The homogeneity comes from the same eccentricity. The Renaissance Ensemble never has been your home of a person who is content to play third-chair second clarinet. It is made up of rugged individuals. I love them all like my children because they are all in Renaissance Ensemble for a specific reason. It is where they express themselves.

Interestingly enough, I have had some people in the Renaissance Ensemble who were considered incorrigibles by the department. Now, there is one person particularly who was threatened to be thrown out of school because of his diverse activities. He joined the Renaissance Ensemble, and he is one of the sweetest, nicest persons I ever had in the ensemble. He played cornetto, or zink, which is one of our hardest instruments, and he played it beautifully. I just have never had a bit of trouble with him. I think he was a guy who was looking for something to do and found it, and that cured his ills.

N: How did the Madrigal Dinners get started?

K: They started eleven years ago with probably the example of FSU [Florida State University] in front of us, or Indiana [University], where they have had madrigal dinners or Elizabethan dinners or Christmas festivals or whatever you want to call them for years and years and years. [Music] Professor [Willis] Bodine and I collaborated on the first one. It generated from Professor Bodine and the J. Wayne Reitz Union, which said that they would sponsor us. The idea is to recreate the environment of an Elizabethan festival, complete with the Lord of Misrule, who is in this case not the Lord of Fools, as he is in some madrigal dinners, but really an authoritarian figure. In some madrigal dinners, and in historical madrigal dinners, for instance, they would choose someone to be the Lord of Fools, and he could tell the master of the house to do ridiculous things. It was sort of like a "Truth or Consequences"; you could tell the lord that he had to dance with a scullery maid, or had to sing a song, and things like that. There was a lot of riotous behavior at the authentic ones. I have tried to get a little bit of that riot into our Madrigal Dinners: we have had some sword fights, we have had some hollering back and forth, and I make the audience sing and dance. It is an awful lot of fun.

When we first started these dinners, the chamber singers, which is a vocal collegium, was at one end of the hall, and the Renaissance Ensemble was at the other end. There was actually quite a bit of actual and social distance between the two, and we never mingled. We alternated; the chamber singers would sing, then we would play, then the chamber singers would sing, and we would play. Although we were both in the same department, it never occurred to us to present a united front. For many reasons there were barriers erected. In the first dinner we were not given a place to sit down, the Renaissance Ensemble was not given the wassail to drink, we were assigned tasks that were menial, and I had a terrible time keeping the early Renaissance Ensemble, which was a much more vitriolic group than our present group, from open rebellion. But things improved. We fussed and put up a
minor riot, and in subsequent years we were given places to sit and were allowed to eat. One of our functions is to wander during the eating portion of the program and play for the people who are eating, so when we do not eat we are given meal tickets, and we eat down in the Orange and Brew and prepare ourselves for the evening to follow. So we are very happy.

Now, with the advent of Professor John Grigsby as director of the chamber singers, and the subsequent appointment of Ron Burrichter as director of the chamber singers, we have a very, very cordial relationship, and we have begun collaborating and do works together. We have done the Spanish carols. Do you know the Spanish carol "Riu, Riu, Ciu" and things like that? There were very popular in the early music circuit. We have done those together, and we have done English motets and madrigals together. It is just an awful lot of fun.

Madrigal Dinners have turned into something really, really neat, and they are intensely popular. One year in five nights there was a total of five empty seats out of five nights. The trouble is, and this is really something we have to do something about, everyone thought they could not get tickets, because people were lining up the night before and spending the night in a line of 200 people for Madrigal Dinner tickets.

N: How many seat in there?

K: Five hundred a night, about. More or less. So there is a total of 2,500 seats. The trouble is that as the years have developed, people say: "The heck with it. I am not going to get a seat," so now we have actually had to cut back. We went to six to accommodate, but that was the year that people gave up, so we have had to retrench to five nights. We had a big meeting about Madrigal Dinners, and one of the things we have to do is publicize the fact that there are seats available, that you can actually show up at the ticket office and buy a seat. Now you can even phone and Mastercharge a seat. But they are an awful lot of fun. [They are] one of the best things that the music department has done for our image, and also financially. This is archival information: the full-price tickets at the Madrigal Dinners include a dollar contribution to the music department scholarship fund. I do not know about the chamber singers, but my share of that goes to pay my graduate assistant. As such, it was the very first graduate assistantship this department ever gave. You know, we have had this funny attitude for years and years that graduates did not need assistantships. I paid out of my own pocket (actually out of Renaissance Ensemble funds) my graduate assistant Beth Nicholas before this happened; she was the first graduate assistant we had who got paid. We did that out of proceeds from professional concerts we played. So I gave the first graduate assistantship [in the music department], although it was not much.

N: You paid it out of your own pocket?
K: Not out of my personal pocket, but out of the Renaissance Ensemble funds. So we started a tradition that is now beginning to blossom. That is really good archival information, that we now have a graduate assistant.

N: We keep fighting for more!

K: Well, yes, and deservedly so. I heard of a graduate student who was getting $700 a month salary, plus all fees, all books, all tuition. I believe that was at LSU [Louisiana State University]. Write it down, Diane! LSU. At any rate, it is a step in the right direction, and that is part of the spin-off of the Madrigal Dinners.

N: Another thing that you have been a part of that has been sort of an adjunct to the University is the Kitts family and their contributions. Could you tell me a little bit about that, and how that got started? Well, I know how it got started! [laughter]

K: The Kitts Family Players just gave, I think, their eleventh Christmas concert as the Thomas Center. We always give a Christmas Eve concert at 3:00 in the afternoon on the twenty-fourth of December. We figure by then either everyone has everything done and can begin to relax a bit for Christmas, or, if they have not gotten everything done, they need an hour off. This year was marvelous, because the Kitts family concert had my wife (of course), all five of my children, my son's wife, and my first grandchild, whose name is Aria—very musical. And we all performed. It started many, many years ago when I wanted to do something on the faculty program. Actually, in 1966, when my son Stewart was in second grade, was the first appearance of what could be called the Kitts family thing. My wife played keyboard, my son played violin, and I played bassoon on a sonata from the very, very early Baroque. It was a "Sonata Supra `La Monica."

"Supra `La Monica" means "above `La Monica."

"La Monica" is a plainchant that was put into rhythm, and this was what my son played. [It was] a very simple part, but he played it beautifully. He has always had an incredible ear. I did the embellishments around it. It was so much fun that we thought when the kids got older we would have them play. My daughter Caroline was in kindergarten at the time. I had started her on recorder in Indianapolis, and she was playing recorder very well. My daughter Jennifer was just a baby; she was born when we came here. After a couple of years, we started getting asked to play at Decorator Showhouse at Christmastime. We went into one. My father-in-law was still alive, and he played. He was a violinist/violist. My wife played, I played, and Stewart played, and Carrie [Carolyn] was beginning to play. We have some marvelous Christmas things arranged by Maria von Trapp. She just died recently; did you hear that?

N: I saw that.

K: She was a great lady. So we started playing the Decorator Showhouse, and they asked what to call us. I looked at this Trapp family thing out of which we were playing, and I remembered the Trapp Family Singers, so I said, "Call us the Kitts..."
Family Players." It was a spur-of-the-moment thing. From then on we played for Kiwanis clubs and things like that. As the kids grew up they literally demanded instruments of their own. I started writing arrangements. Carrie switched from recorder to oboe. She did so well on the recorder that when she was nine she won first in state [at either a Florida State Music Teachers Association (FSMTA) or Florida Federation of Music Clubs (FFMC) competition] on the [Giovanni Battista] Sammartini Recorder Concerto [in F]. I thought, We will have to channel this into another instrument as well, a legitimate instrument. I had seen the trouble I had had convincing these people that the recorder really was not a wooden toy. From that $3,500 I had a Baroque oboe. I gave her the Baroque oboe, which fingers like a recorder, and she was a natural for the oboe. She studied with Earl Groth, who was professor of oboe at the time. He was a marvelous teacher. Earl taught her regular oboe. He started her on Baroque oboe but later said that she should have a real oboe. I had a real oboe tucked in the closet--there is a story about that all in itself--and she played that. She was born for the oboe. To this day she plays the most incredible oboe--without practicing.

N: That is incredible.

K: That is almost self-contradictory, particularly for oboe. So she began to play oboe. My wife plays violin, viola, and keyboard. By then, in 1972, I had bought a harpsichord because I started falling in love with early music. I played recorders and bassoon. Stewart played violin. Carrie played oboe, keyboard, and violin, although more and more she refused to play the violin because of sibling rivalry. Jennie played violin. Stefanie started playing with us on violin when she was three. Jackie came along, and she started the violin at I would say eleven months, when she insisted on having an instrument. This is very interesting pedagogically, because it shows the capacity of the very young to appreciate and learn. I cut out of wood a violin-shaped thing, glued a neck on it, and gave her a wooden spoon. She was delighted with that because she could participate in the posture games and the group activities of the Suzuki group. [Sonnhild] taught at the University for one year as an adjunct instructor. After she no longer taught at the University, she started the Suzuki classes, which is, as they say in the vernacular, a "whole nother question."

At any rate, we started playing, and a friend of mine who is a concert manager said, "Jack, let me talk this up at some of these places where I go." He hit the retirement centers down in south Florida, these villages where people go and want to have entertainment. He started getting us performances, and I had to start arranging lots and lots of stuff. That was easy, because I had an oboe player, a couple of keyboard players, a portable harpsichord, a bassoon, and lots of strings. We started playing around, and it was instant success, because I think every grandparent in the audience (and there were a lot of grandparents there) would look up and see "their" grandchildren. And "the family that plays together stays together" and all that stuff. Were I not so subjectively involved I would say it was really neat. But I have to keep
some objectivity and say it was interesting. As the children developed, we had
developing levels of ability.

Stewart was professional when he was fourteen, and Carrie developed very quickly.
Jennie was a late bloomer; again, pedagogically, it was very interesting. My wife
swears that anyone—literally anyone—can play the violin, and one of her great
challenges was our middle child, Jennifer, who apparently had a lazy ear. Other
people said she was tone deaf. My wife, in her beautifully optimistic manner, said
she just required a longer exposure time. She never gave up on Jennie, and Jennie
plays to this day beautifully. She has a lovely tone. She was state winner [Florida
State Music Teachers Association] on a concerto [competition] on violin, and she
played with the Florida Symphony. Stewart was state winner in his time. At any
rate, Jennie is a marvelous musician. Stephanie came along, and she plays
beautifully, too. She is just a very talented little girl, a very sensitive musician.

Then there is my last one, Jackie, who is now eleven. I am going to brag a little,
okay? My wife just came back from the Florida Federation of Music Clubs state
convention. Jackie participated in violin solo, and in her class she was first in state.
She participated in cello solo, and in her class she was first in state. She
participated in piano solo, and in her class of thirty-eight she was state runner-up.
This is the quality that Jackie is; she is just a natural musician. Again, an interesting
pedagogical point is that she has benefited from sibling spin-off, or whatever. Her
entire existence [has been immersed in music].

When my wife went into labor with Jackie, she was actually finishing up a lesson.
That is the kind of devoted teacher my wife is. The mother of the student said, "For
God's sake, will you go to the hospital?" She called me and said, "I have to cut this
lesson short." I knew it was critical; if she cut a lesson short, it was critical. So she
went to the hospital and had Jackie. She hates the hospital, absolutely hates the
hospital. She was home in three days and teaching in four. The baby was in the
studio from the very beginning. Sonnhild adjusted her schedule so she had time to
nurse the baby and to be with the baby. But Jackie was always there hearing the
lessons. So no wonder when she was eleven months she wanted to have an
instrument like everyone else.

Pedagogically, the point is [with regard to] environment (and perhaps heredity): the
environment was there, and she has really benefited from this. She plays very well.
I use her in faculty recitals. As a cellist she plays a very, very dependable continuo
bass. I had no qualms about using her when she was ten. Actually, when she was
nine she played in my faculty recital, playing the continuo bass line on cello. [She
was] absolutely trustworthy. [She has] good tone, does vibrato, and she makes
decisions for herself. This astounds me. We were doing a [Georg Philipp]
Telemann trio sonata, and the slow movement had isolated quarter notes in the
continuo part, the bass part. All of a sudden I noticed that she was not using her
bow, but playing pizzicato. I said: "That sounds really neat, Jackie. Why are you
doing that?” She said, “I just thought it would sound better.” She made that decision on her own.

So the University of Florida has benefited somewhat from the Kitts Family Players, because we have played for University audiences, I have used them in my faculty recitals, we have used them for music education demonstrations, and all of my kids have played in the University symphony. They have grown up around the University, so for your archives it is not only the Kitts Family Players, but also what they have done with and for the University.

N: Do you play in the Florida Woodwind Quintet?

K: Yes.

N: Was that started when you came here?

K: It was started formally when I came here. They had used students. As a matter of fact, when I first joined the quintet, the dean of the College of Architecture and Fine Arts [Robert S. Bolles] was the flutist. That was before Sally [Sarah] Fouse came here. Sally, by the way, was at Brevard that same summer as a senior student when I was there, so that was another thing that happened that fateful summer at Brevard. Terry Small, the present professor of clarinet, was there. Reid Poole was professor of horn, and he was one of the very, very finest woodwind quintet horn players I have ever heard. He stopped playing because horn, probably more than any other instrument, demands upkeep and is more debilitating on the chops [facial muscles needed to play the cup mouthpiece]. He made a very difficult decision that he was not playing as well as he thought he could, and he turned over the playing to Don Carlson, who is sort of adjunct faculty as well as being electronics technician and custodian of sorts. But Reid Poole was probably the finest woodwind quintet French horn player I ever played with, and I have played with one of the best. He was one of the most sensitive, finest, gentlest players I have ever played with.

At any rate, Terry Small played clarinet. The oboe player was [George] Phil Koonce, who played with me in Indianapolis. He was professor of oboe here a year before I came, and he left at the end of my first year. It is very interesting that when I played my first season in Indianapolis, I sat behind Phil, who was so tall that he could not be drafted. The first summer after that first season behind Phil, he was the first oboe in Brevard, where I was first bassoon. So for an entire year, the conductor to me was two arms sticking out of Phil Koonce’s ears. He was so huge! But the quintet was Phil Koonce, Robert Bolles (the dean), Reid Poole (the chairman), Terry Small, and me; we were the first Florida Woodwind Quintet. The next year Sally Fouse came, [and] it was an all-faculty quintet. It was created when I came down, and it has been playing every year since.

N: Where have some of your major performances [been]?
K: Again, we have done MENC things. We went up to Atlanta and played for (I am not sure I have the title right) the Georgia Composers Alliance Woodwind Quintet Contest. We entered there and played a composition of mine which had won third prize.

N: What was the name of it?

K: Amazing enough, *Quintet for Winds*.

N: Clever! [laughter]

K: Original title. We have played in Miami. We have done a lot of convention things, like MENC and FSMTA. We do recruiting trips. This year we made a trip down to the west coast of Florida, down to Fort Myers. We have a concert every semester. It is not as active as it could be, but we do regular concerts.

N: One of the things I read about regarding the development of the music department was the old building [Building R].

K: Oh, yes.

N: The new building was [completed in] 1971, right?

K: I think we moved in in 1972. I am not sure.

N: What was the old building like?

K: It was a wreck, but it was great. The old building was formerly a gym, and the main lecture hall--what would be Room 120 of the Music Building--was a room that was tiered. That had been built in subsequently; either that or it was the tiers of the basketball floor. In the middle of the wall behind the lecture podium was a closet where we stored the loudspeaker, the phonograph, the lectern, and things like that. We had to roll them into class. On the floor of that large closet you could still see the O-ring from the basketball court, the lines on the floor, the little thin strips of basketball-type floor wood paneling. It was definitely an old building--Building R.

But it was great. I was the nineteenth member of the faculty, I believe, and we were one happy family. We were all together. If you went from your office to the main office, you would pass by everyone’s open door, and you would greet them and say hello to them. My studio was a storage closet. [laughter] It was long and narrow, and this chair in which I am sitting, with its four wheels, fit exactly between that desk and that piano, and I could sit and work at my desk, and, without moving the wheels, turn around and play the piano. That is how wide that office was. But it was adequate at the time.
I was right next to Harold Bachman, professor emeritus [of music] at the time and a marvelous man. I just wish you could have interviewed him, because that men would have filled up ten of those hour-long tapes and still have a million hours to do. He was so great for the University of Florida. He was the band director before Dick Bowles and [was] one of the great figures in the American band movement. Bachman's Million Dollar Band [was world famous]. There is a whole book about it [The Biggest Boom in Dixie], and that is in the archives, at least. Also Terry Small was there. It was Kitts, Bachman, Small, and [James] Hale, [who taught percussion]. We shared one another's lessons. We could keep track of how the clarinet students were doing because their sound went through the walls. Terry Small and I would have these instrumental wars: he would play the [W. A.] Mozart Bassoon Concerto on his clarinet, and I would play the Mozart Clarinet Concerto on the soprano saxophone, because at that time I was also the saxophone instructor here.

My original load was two saxophone students, two bassoon students, and the music for the elementary teacher [class]. Monday, the first day of my first trimester here, the chairman, Mr. Poole, came up to me and said: "Jack, how would you like to teach music history? I see by your transcript that your master's degree is in history and literature." I said yes. I thought that by this time next year I could get some notes together and think it over and work pretty hard, so I thought I would be able to. "Okay. Fine, Reid. When do you want me to start?" He said, "Tomorrow." It seemed that a music history professor (who shall remain nameless) had too many organ students and wanted to be excused from teaching this class, so I took over the music history survey course and taught two trimesters back then. Later it was three quarters when we changed to the quarter system.

That went along for a while until it was determined that I was getting credit for teaching one course for three quarters. This, of course, is academic idiocy, which happens. So what did they do? We had three different professors teach the three quarters, so each got credit for teaching a course. I got a reduction of two-thirds of my level, but the same academic credit. I then could teach some literature courses and take care of the burgeoning renaissance ensemble and early music program, as well as my bassoon work.

The old building--I keep taking these interesting side trips--was marvelous. We were one happy family there. We knew each other. Being a smaller faculty, we did more things together. We had entertainment; we would go to Christmas parties. I had a party for the entire faculty at my house, a Faschings party, which is a Mardi gras party. I said everyone was invited with their guests. The only proviso was that you must come in costume, and the costume had to be a Mozart-oriented outfit. I have movies of those, and you would not believe the ingenuity. For example, Jack Grigsby came as the priest from the Magic Flute, with the big white garb and a big bishop's miter on it. Reid Poole came as Mazeppa, from Marriage of Figaro. Dick Bowles came as the barber, with white barber's jacket on and scissors and things
like that. It was just marvelous. Someone came as the Queen of the Night, and someone came as Papageno [both from *Magic Flute*]. My daughter Jennifer was two and a half at the time, or maybe three, and to this day she can remember the horror that she experienced opening the door and it was a professor from the math department, a South African fellow. He is about 6'4", and he came with these ostrich feathers on him and this huge, long proboscis. She screamed and said, "Yong nose! Yong nose!" She could not say an *L* back then. You could still get a smile out of her by looking at her and saying "yong nose!"; she would remember because it scared the pants off her.

At any rate, back to the old building. It was fun. It was a pain. The air conditioning was the unit that you had in your window. When the marching band had an indoor rehearsal, everything stopped because the whole building vibrated. Somehow I think--this is not gospel, but it is my impression—that they went out to the surplus place in Starke and got intercoms from the army, and each office had one of these boxes in it. The departmental secretary was Miss [Elise] Moody. Now, there is someone you ought to interview. She was there for years and years and years. She was Reid Poole's right hand. She knew everything; it was right up in her head. You would say, "Miss Moody, what course number is the second semester of music history?" She would say: "MUH 321, the section number is 6947. You only had an enrollment of forty-two last year, not counting the one who tried to drop and could not." She knew where everything was. The department rotated around her. She was a grand old gal.

N: Is she still alive?

K: Oh, yes. She comes to everything. She is a Friend of Music. You will get more than you can put on a tape from her. She knows everything. She started off as band secretary, and then went up to be department secretary, and then was chairman's secretary. She retired shortly after Dr. [Budd] Udell came as chairman. At any rate, Elise manned the speakers on these boxes. You would be sitting there, a million miles away, and all of a sudden a statical voice would say, "Mr. Kitts, there is a phone call for you." There would be a concave indentation in the roof where you just hit it, and you would go down there or you would say: "Miss Moody, would you take the number? I will call them back." "Well, it is long distance." "Okay. I will be there." Well, my office was so small that the speaker (and I had an uncomplimentary name for the box that dealt on its legitimacy) [literally boomed in that room].

My office was right above the girls lounge and bathroom, and I had a lot of girl students. Ronnie Lebman was a student; she was a sax student. Jane Kinsey Allen was a student; she is a very active alumna. She was a marvelous teacher in her days, and now she is active as an alumna. At any rate, they would wait downstairs in the girls lounge, and when I was ready I would stamp on the floor and you would hear this spectral voice say, "Coming, Mr. Kitts." [laughter] This is in the old
building. This the way we did things. It was a little bit sophomoric, perhaps, but it was a lot of fun. The students were more intimate with us back then because there were fewer of them. Bigger is not necessarily better.

The alumni from the old building, I think, are really very, very true to the department. For instance, Jane Kinsey Allen, as I was telling you, is an interesting story. Pedagogically, she was interesting. She was a bassoon major--music education; she got her bachelor of education in music, I think, or a bachelor of music education (one of the two). She was a miserable bassoon player, just terrible. I would not tell her that. She tried very, very hard, and she did make progress. She was not miserable. She was just not a bassoon player. She was a teacher, and she was gifted. She just had that attitude about her that you knew when she got in a classroom she would just have every child right in the palm of her hand--either in the palm of her hand or eating out of it. I fought for that child. She would go in to her juries, and they would say, "Jack, she cannot play bassoon." I said, "I know she cannot play bassoon, but she is going to be a great teacher! You pass her!" And when she came up for her recital, it was literally dragging her through. She knows that and appreciates it.

She was the first contributor to the "Kitts Memorial Scholarship," as I call it. [laughter] Some of my students wanted to do something for me. I have always felt very close to my students and maintain a close personal relationship with them. Sometimes they get out in the real world and want to do something, so they contribute something in my name. Sometimes it is really embarrassing, but it happens. Jane has contributed, and I have used those moneys for bassoon students and bassoon scholarships. She is an example of one of the alumna of the old building. The kids from back then are now sending their kids here, because that has been almost twenty years. We are getting some second-generation kids, and they are just as true to us as can be. Not that the present kids are not. It is just that when you are brought up together in adversity, you have a bond that is a little stronger than our present placid society affords, I think.

N: When they dedicated the new building, Aaron Copland was here. Do you have any particular memories of that experience?

K: Oh, yes. He was a marvelous, marvelous person. He was so interesting and so kind. You would think that a man of his stature and repute and all that would not have time for kids. But the really great ones truly are great. He was so interested. He talked to people, and he would show interest. Of course, a lot of Copland was played, and he would sit down and talk to you about that. I have seen that in later days. Do you know Q. C. Hilliard, a [former] graduate student? [He might have been] a little before your time.

N: Quincy? Yes, I have heard of him.

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K: Q. C. was looking around for a topic for his dissertation, and he decided on the music of Aaron Copland. Someone remembered how charming he was when he was here at the dedication, so we encouraged Quincy to write him. Q. C. said: "A black kid from Mississippi? I cannot write him." He was always coming off like that. But he did write him, and Copland wrote back and invited him up. A very close relationship evolved on a first-name basis. Q. C. got some tremendous stuff from him. I believe it entirely, because he was so nice.

For instance, at that banquet, which was in the Florida Museum of Natural History (that is where the dedicatory banquet was; we needed a big place), the Renaissance Ensemble furnished music. It was sort of background-type stuff -- Renaissance Muzak. But at one time we were strolling, and we had an excellent crumhorn quartet. There were still three members of the original group there; it was a marvelous crumhorn quartet. They whispered: "Mr. Kitts. Mr. Kitts." I recognized from the tone of voice they were up to something. "What do you want to do?" "We are going to play crumhorns at Mr. Copland." "Oh, my God. Sure. Go ahead." So the four went up, and I was doubling the bass part on racket, which is a buzzy tooter. We played a crumhorn quartet for Aaron Copland. The man stopped eating, looked directly at us, listened, asked questions, and asked us to play again. That is the kind of man he was. Ninety people out of 100 would continue eating, or maybe talk to their neighbors, or be polite enough to look at us and say "Thank you very much," and then come back to the real world. But he was kind and considerate. He knew that the kids wanted to play for him, and he knew that they were doing it because they respected and admired him. He returned that, and that is the kind of man he was. He was a really great person.

N: How did things and the lifestyle around the music department change after you moved into this building?

K: Well, the design of the building, unfortunately, is very geographically isolating. You have your band department over in one end, applied music up in the third floor at the other end, musicology somewhere else, and the office down there. Instead of rubbing elbows, we were thrust apart. Also, although it is very functional, I hate this building, mainly for the fact that there are no windows. I am in my second studio. My original studio was not quite this big at all; it was about half this size. I would go in there, and if I had successive lessons, say five lessons in a row and be there for five hours, I would lose track of reality. I swore that I was going to come back from my army tour of duty in summer and bring a Claymore mine and blow a window in my studio so I could look out at a distance farther than six feet away from my eyeballs. I had to get up, open the door, and walk around the corner just so I could see a green tree. I really think there are major errors in the design of this building. Of course, the climate control system is absolutely terrible, and the acoustical isolation is not isolated at all. We had a bass baritone, Gus Halley, who was a marvelous singer with a tremendous voice, and his office was one removed from
mine. There was my office, my neighbor's office, and then Gus Halley's. When he would do his vocalizing in the morning, it would shake the pictures on my wall. That is how acoustically isolated this monstrosity is. I just had to change the thermostat in here: it is either too hot or too cold. There were grave mistakes made in this building.

N: What happened to the windows? Did they run out of money?

K: Oh, no. It was fashionable then not to have windows. It was an architectural (what they say in German) *Fimmel*, which is "preoccupation." We also thought it would be better for climate control. Of course, a double-pane window with a vacuum in between is one of the best insulating agencies in the world, but we cannot talk to some people.

N: No comment about the windows.

K: No.

N: We just had Richard Taruskin here. Who have been some other big guests?

K: [Vincent] Persichetti. Of course, [Vladimir] Ussachevsky. We have had conductors, we have had groups. We had the Boston Chamber Ensemble here; in fact, we have had them here twice. That was an incredible visitation.

N: When was that?

K: This was in the old building in the late 1960s. The Boston Chamber Ensemble had first-chair players--flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, bassoon, trombone, trumpet, percussion, violin, viola, cello, bass--and a pianist. They put on a chamber music program that I remember with the utmost clarity to this day. They did woodwind quintets, they did string trios, and they did mixed-wind-and-string [pieces like Igor Stravinski's *L'Histoire du soldat*]. They did a week residency with master classes. That was really marvelous. My kids (my bassoon students) got a chance to talk to Sherman Walt, principal bassoon in the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Then I brought my own teacher here twice, too. Leonard Sharrow was here last year for a three-day residency. He played a mini-recital, gave lessons to my kids, and did master classes and lectures, not only on bassoon but on music in the orchestral life.

It is important for us to tap on these people. Leonard Sharrow, when he comes here, gives my kids direct contact with the greats. For example, I heard Leonard play the [Francis] Poulenc *Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano*. It is one of my favorite pieces. I used to do it a lot with Dr. [Mark] Ostoich, the former oboe professor--his wife [Nancy] is quite a piano player--and I said, "Leonard, I liked the way you played the beginning." It is a very hard thing to coordinate at the beginning. It is an octave passage with the oboe and the bassoon, and it is always a question
of how you are going to do it. I said I admired the way he did it, and he said, "Well, that is the way I did it with Poulenc." So he had played this thing with Poulenc! Of course, he played under [Arturo] Toscanini, and he played under all the great conductors. He knew all these people, and he knew stories about them that were both dramatic and funny.

For instance, on his first visit, he went to the radio station. Our former director of music there was a raconteur from way back. He knew how to ask questions. They talked for an hour and a half, just solid chatter, and he got orchestra stories from him and composer stories from him and conductor stories from him. Those are on tape somewhere over there [at WUFT-FM], and every once in a while I will hear an interview with Leonard Sharrow. But the music department has done that on their own, and members of the faculty have done things. I brought him here on my own once, and the department helped once. It is just tremendously valuable for these students to be exposed to people like that. Of course, we have brought orchestras here. Wherever possible when we had visiting luminaries. We like to get workshops.

N: What about Richard Taruskin?

K: Richard Taruskin is a manifold genius. He has a five-language doctorate from Columbia University, which he received with distinction. He is on a Guggenheim [Fellowship] right now writing a book on [Igor] Stravinsky. His Ph.D. dissertation, which is published and is masterful, is on Russian opera. He is one of the world authorities on early music. He is a performer on cello, which he does not play anymore, and he plays viola da gamba like the instrument was invented for him personally. He was here with the Renaissance Ensemble as our clinician. He gave some marvelous lectures and some tremendous help to my ensemble with their music. He played on our concert. He did a sonata attributed to [G. F.] Handel, and he played the viola da gamba just beautifully--incredible technique, beautiful tone. Because he flew down, he could not bring his instrument; he had to use ours. After just astounding everyone, he walked off-stage with this viola da gamba in one hand as if he were holding a dead snake and said, "I cannot do a thing with this damn thing," after making it sound unlike I have ever heard that instrument sound before. [laughter] Richard Taruskin was marvelous. He is an editor of early music. Just to give you an idea of his status, he is now on a leave of absence from Columbia and will join the University of California at Berkeley. He is joining with tenure, and you do not do that. He is joining as an associate professor of music with tenure.

N: Why associate?

K: It was a trade-off, somehow--I think associate professor with tenure rather than full professor without. But either way, you do not join a faculty [with tenure]. He is not an older man; he is in his early forties, I guess. You do not join as a full professor as a younger man; you do not join with tenure. But he is marvelous. He is an example
of what the department can offer the students here in something that is really landmark for my students. I know they were thrilled, as I was. I learned a great deal from my "children" [my students]. I was playing catch-up ball. I would go to the workshops where he was teaching and take his classes in music.

N: This is a continuation of the interview with Mr. John Kitts at the University of Florida. There are a few things we talked about last time that I wanted to talk with you a little bit more about. One thing you mentioned was the Gatorland Music Festival. Is that what we now know as the band camp?

K: Yes.

N: You led me to believe that something happened to it.

K: Well, it was a very large and viable festival with hundreds of kids here. But what happened is sort of an interesting historical thing with the state. The week-long camp is, I think, a little bit too short. There are five-week and four-week camps and week-end camps. The week-long camp, I think, is a little bit too short. Also, there are different orientations available in other camps. It sagged quite rapidly in the 1970s, and soon they offered no orchestra, no piano, and I do not even think they offer voice anymore. It is strictly a band camp and has gone into the more flamboyant aspects of band, the non-musical aspects: twirling, rifles, flags, drum majors, and things like that. So it has changed its emphasis from general music to specifically band, and almost specifically marching band.

N: Why did this happen? Do you have any idea?

K: A number of factions are responsible. First of all, [there was] the aesthetics of the band movement in the state and our way of interacting with those aesthetics. [Also, there was] the orientation of the band faculty and the fact that the faculty was not financially rewarded for taking part in these band camps. It got to be whoever happened to have summer duty was also expected to participate in the band camps. Less and less of us were available for summer duties, and more and more of our duties were taken over by graduate students and other people. I really cannot explain exactly what happened. My opinion is that the focus was changed rather specifically.

N: Before we started the interview, you mentioned a special guest who had come to the University that you wanted to bring up.

K: We were talking in the previous interview about important visitors, and I mentioned Persichetti, Copland, and people like that. When I first came here--this was long, long ago in the old building and before the [University Memorial] Auditorium was refurbished--we put on Douglas Moore's opera *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, and Douglas Moore himself came to the performance here and also a performance in St.
Augustine. We did it in the Cross and Sword pavilion in St. Augustine, so we did it outdoors, as well. That was a high point for me in my early days here, to meet Douglas Moore, a rather famous American composer, the composer of a piece which I happened to like very much, *The Devil and Daniel Webster*. I was very pleased that the outdoor performance [included additional works]. *The Devil and Daniel Webster* is a rather short opera; it is one act, or at least it is not a full-blown opera. When we went to St. Augustine, we fleshed out the performance with some of our pieces. I was able to have him comment on my quintet that I wrote. It was *Quintet for Winds*; I think we mentioned earlier the unusual title. He gave me some very nice suggestions and was very sympathetic about my quintet. He was a very pleasant person.

N: Was the opera received well?

K: Yes, very, very well. It is a marvelous piece of Americana, and I think it pretty faithfully covers the same story that a short movie which was made of it does. I saw that recently on television. I have forgotten the author, I am sorry to say. It is a very well-known American author who happened to be a friend or an acquaintance of Douglas Moore's, and he set it for him.

N: Another thing you mentioned before was your teaching load when you first came here to the University. How has that changed?

K: Well, not terribly much. I have not taught thirty-eight hours for a while. In the old building we were, as I mentioned, a much closer, more-cooperative group, more of a family where the chairman would come to us and say, "I need you to teach this," and you would say, "Sure." Or a student would come and say, "Would you do a special project in that," and you would say, "Sure." It has changed in that faculty no longer is involved--or at least the wind faculty--in the orchestra. One time when I was here I was playing in orchestra, which was four hours a week; woodwind quintet, which was another two hours a week; I had a survey course, which was I do not know how many hours a week; eight bassoon students; some recorder students; another class; and Renaissance Ensemble. All that added up to thirty-eight hours in a forty-hour week, supposedly. Of course, the legislature absolutely requires us to do twelve hours a week. I think either we have gotten better organized or I have learned to say no a little bit--although I suspect that is not true--or we have organized ourselves so that the students' needs are satisfied by course offerings. The music department [faculty] as such has always done more than its twelve hours per week, at least most of us.

N: Another thing that I thought of later on that has been really important to the music department here has been the Friends of Music. I was wondering what your association has been and what you know about them as related to the department here.
k: Well, I was a charter contributor to the Friends of Music; I have a card from them somewhere to that effect. I support their activity 100 percent. We could not have existed without them for years and years and years. They are lovely people [who are] very supportive. They show up at concerts and they raise money. Sometimes it is a pretty thankless task, because even though we mean to acknowledge and we mean to call public attention to them, it sometimes slips by. But they are very, very nice people. I am thinking of Frances Milliken Reitz [Mrs. J. Wayne Reitz], for instance, who is a real Friend of Music and has been. Elise Moody, the former secretary of the department, is a Friend of Music. They have done a number of marvelous things [like] fund raisers, as well as offering some non-fund-raising activities, such as trips to Europe and the Orient. Friends of Music is a support organization that has realized right from the start that music, at least the performance of music, is not a money-making proposition. It has to be underwritten, particularly in the field of scholarships. This is where even with our best efforts we seriously lag behind other schools. There are students going from Gainesville receiving thousands of dollars in scholarships to attend other schools. We are playing catch-up ball in that respect.

Somehow the [University] administration has not seen the Department of Music as a fiscally important organization, although we have been given a lot. It has not been given the support commensurate with its task here at the University, or its representation of the University in terms of people. When you look at our organizations in the Department of Music--the choirs, the orchestra, the student and faculty ensembles, the band--you say, "What does the University of Florida mean to you, Mr. Joe Blow-in-the-street?" and they will say, "The fightin' Gators," probably first. Then they will probably say the band, or if they are culturally oriented, "I heard the orchestra," or if they are early music freaks, "I heard the Renaissance Ensemble." You do not hear the man on the street say, "Well, the department of plant pathology really makes me swoon," or something like that. It is the music performance people who go out and represent the University all over the country, as well as, of course, the athletes.

I think that the music program could be supported an awful lot better than it is. Our new chairman, Joel Stegall, has done a marvelous job in finding money. He went out and found from the University (not to deny them credit at all) an annual $50,000 a year for scholarships. This is a total commitment for scholarships, annually renewable. I really salute Joel for his efforts. It is a good beginning, but it is a beginning. I am afraid that people will say, "Well, $50,000--you have got it, and that is the end of the road," instead of, "That is a new beginning." If we are to build a viable department here--and we have been working on it for a long time and have not achieved it in all areas--we have to be able to fund it, because rationally speaking the best students, the ones upon whom you can build an orchestra or a band or choral or piano program, are going to be offered scholarships by other universities, colleges, and conservatories. We have to be competitive. We have not been.
N: You mentioned you were one of the first members of the Friends of Music. Do you know how that got started?

K: It got started to raise money for scholarships, that is how. It involved some of the musically active people in the community. I think Frances Reitz was right there at the beginning. Reid Poole was chairman [of the department] at that time, and he was always very, very active. He has always been a tremendous worker for the department, both as chairman and as representative before the community of the whole music field. He is a true soul, and one whom I cannot praise enough for all the work he has done, as I say, in every aspect. As a musician, I think I said last Sunday that he is one of the finest woodwind quintet French horn players I have ever heard or with whom I have ever played. He was always very enthusiastic and very eager for the department to proceed.

Now I am speaking subjectively. I think it got to a point where everyone knew Reid and what a sweet person he was, and they would not pay attention to him when he said, "The department needs this," and, "The department wants to have that," and "The department has to expand." They would say "Well, that is just Reid." He stepped down from chairmanship, and Don McGlothlin came in. After Don McGlothlin left, Budd Udell came in. In each case, we had a new broom that swept a little bit clean.

The administration would say I was lying through my teeth, but the fact remains that we have a difficult time in this department getting an orchestra together because we are not able to attract string players. Florida has not been a very fertile ground for string players. The work my wife has done in town with the Suzuki program is changing that. She has seventy families, many of which are multiple-sibling families, involved in a corporation. Some of these kids are going to college, but they are getting recruited away. The best viola player in the last couple of years was recruited up to Furman [University in Greenville, SC]. FSU [Florida State University] comes down here all the time and gives free clinics and free workshops for my wife, and they just grab her students. We have a couple of good students [from Gainesville] right now at FSU.

First and foremost, my number-one priority would be to get string players here, because our entire orchestra program hinges on the availability of string players. We need to have scholarships available for them, because string players are very realistic and rational people. They know that they are needed, and they will rationalize where they want to go against where they can go against where they will get the most to go. It is a rational and realistic point of view. If you can get a degree (which, if you are going to be a professional string player, does not mean anything), you might as well get it at the school that will pay you the most, where you can get playing experience. Then [you would] graduate with a degree and go out and audition. We have had a terrible time recruiting strings. I do not think that we are going to have any violin majors next year, any at all. We are losing the two that are
here. They both played their recitals in the past few weeks. One is going out to Colorado on a $7,000 scholarship, and I do not know what the other is going to do. One problem is recruiting, which is a many-edged sword, one of which is a handful of scholarship money. The University has to understand that. I could make some comparisons between athletic recruitment and music recruitment and come out really in the hole, but I realize that it is much more important to the University to have a Fightin' Gator football team than to have a Fightin' Gator Philharmonic. What I would like the University to realize is that although it is not as important, it is important to have the Fightin' Gator Philharmonic, too.

N: You mentioned FSU. I would like to talk about that a little bit. It is my understanding from Mr. Poole that there was an agreement signed a number of years ago that the music department would be service, that FSU would have the degree in music, and we would have the med. school.

K: I do know anything about that, Diane. It sounds like something that should be honored in the not-keeping of it. There are aspects of our department that are better than FSU's; I fully believe that. There are aspects of their department that are better than ours, but that is life. For one thing, they are very close to the legislature there and can be persuasive where it serves the purpose. We have difficulty communicating with the legislature, where they do not. But there is no reason in the world why we should not have a viable music school here. There is no reason in the world why we should not have equal degree offerings.

N: Since you mentioned the legislature, I want to talk about some more political things that have happened and see what the impact has been on the University and the music department here. In 1967 there was a reapportionment. The legislative power was stronger for the University of Florida before this point, and then it shifted to south Florida. Did you see any direct impact here?

K: I saw no real direct impact here. There were lots and lots of rumors flying around, like opening medical schools where they did not need to open medical schools and building up programs that would duplicate programs that existed here and at FSU and all around. I really did not notice any direct impact on us because of legislative reapportionment. No matter how the legislature is apportioned, it is the University's job to represent itself to the legislature. If the University does its job properly, it makes no difference. So I think that this talk of legislative reapportionment affecting the University is a cop-out for not doing our job right. I am sorry to say that, but that is my feeling.

N: Several times during your tenure here we switched from quarters to semesters. How did that affect you and the music department?

K: It affected me very negatively. For one thing, I teach the survey class in music history. When we were on the quarter system, it so happened that the fall quarter was eleven weeks long. I met my class on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and
Thursday--forty-four meetings. That quarter went through the end of the Renaissance, to 1600. Some great elucidation occurred, and they said, "If we go to the semester system, we will only have to go through registration twice," whereas it was three times or four. I am absolutely certain that was the main reason. You can rationalize all you want about length of the semester, but they were talking about administration. So they said, "All right, we will have sixteen weeks." I said that was fine; sixteen weeks times four [classes per week] . . . But it was not sixteen weeks times four; it was sixteen weeks times three, which if you multiply out is forty-eight. However, my class had to go up to 1750 now, and in the 150 years from 1600 to 1750 we have [J. S.] Bach and [G. F.] Handel, the beginning of opera, the beginning of the orchestra, the development of the sonata form, and other unimportant things like that, which you can easily handle in four more sessions. In addition, it went Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Do you realize how many Friday vacations there are in the fall semester? Enough to bring me down to a net loss in class meetings, and a net gain of 150 years in my responsibility for teaching. I go in to the first class of the fall and say, "Fasten your seat belts! I recommend that people who do not have total recall or take dictation bring one of those little tape recorders and transcribe their notes later so they can listen to me instead of trying to write and getting behind." It was one of the greatest injustices to students of music history that has ever occurred, in my opinion, when they went from the quarter system to the semester system. At that point in my student evaluations, which I read and build my course on, I started getting "we are moving too fast," "I cannot keep up." I really hate that. Maybe because I am a tenured senior professor I can dare to say this, but I think it was expediency of administration at the expense of the student. Unfortunately, that does seem to happen every once in a while.

N: Something else that came along that might have affected you directly is when they started requiring students to attend summer sessions.

K: Yes. The good and the bad. The good is that it does keep all of the facilities at the University in use, rather than retiring everything during the summertime. It does offer some faculty more employment: the nine-month contract is one of the great burdens of professorial life. I generally am in favor of it because kids are not finishing up in four years, anyway. Of all the students in my studio (I keep calling them kids; I feel like they are mine), I do not think any of them has finished in four years. I think a four-year degree program is no longer happening here. I think with required summer attendance we can get closer to it. Also, it is not too much of a chore to go to school in the summer. I certainly do not see any tremendous exertion or over-exertion on the part of the students in the summer semester. There is enough to do. Overall, I think it has been a good idea, a practical idea, because, as they used to say in the Indianapolis Symphony when we were on tour, we lose less money that way. So if you have students enrolled in the summer, the University uses the facilities which cost the state money, and there is at least some return.
N: So you do not see it as using up money having to hire faculty to teach summer classes. You see it as a financial benefit.

K: I think it is a financial benefit.

N: What about changing the requirements so students could take general classes past their sophomore year and begin course work in their areas of specialization earlier?

K: Well, of course, this is what you do in a liberal arts school. When I was at Princeton, for instance, in my sophomore year I was able to take a freshman course in music, a sophomore course in language, the junior course in music, and a senior course in ROTC. There is no sacrosanct status. If you are ready for the class, for goodness sakes, let the people take them. There are some seniors here who ought to be taking freshman English. There are some freshmen here who could already take advanced theory or upper-level [music] courses. I think that we are dealing with preciousness when we start complaining about that.

N: I cannot see coming close to graduating in four years and putting off your theory sequence until your junior year, anyway. It is impossible.

K: No. I agree entirely. Get the stuff out of [the way]. And added to that, due to certain cut-backs we are not offering the courses every semester or every two semesters as we used to. For instance, graduate history lit. was always given during the summer, but this is going to be the second summer it is not offered. What are the graduate students going to do who need graduate history review? Graduate history review is an absolute requirement. If they bomb their entrance exams, and God knows it is easy to do, [they need to take that course]. I bombed the Medieval and Renaissance portion of my entrance exams at graduate school. They need to be able to make it up. This is true in several other places, too. There is no necessity in having to take things sequentially unless it is a sequential single concept where continuity is involved.

N: A topic that may be a little more touchy is the integration of black students into this department. Did you notice any particular tensions?

K: I noticed no tension. I come from the North, basically, and I have never had any problems. I remember even in grade school there were black kids, and there was no problem there. I can remember when I lived in Mountain Brook, Alabama, seeing "whites only" and thinking that was stupid.

In this department there is no categorization by race. I had a black student who was really dumb, and I really did not think he was a very good student. But that is because he was dumb and not a good student, not because he was black. One of the finest students we have ever had is Q. C. Hilliard, who is black. He came from Mississippi, was rather behind because he had gone to the Mississippi school
system, and he worked his tail off here and just shone. Q. C. was one of the finest minds that came through here, not because he was black, but because he was a good worker. I think that color, creed, and things like that are less a problem among musicians than it is among other people, because among musicians (I have found this true in symphony orchestras and things like that) you go out and do your job. It does not matter if you are pink or purple. If you can do your job, you are one of the crew. I think the problem is when you have a nice compatible situation like that and then it had moved into an environment where prejudice exists. No, I have seen no trouble in this department.

N: What about the hiring of black faculty?

K: We have been very fortunate in hiring black faculty through the minority program. Again, as far as I am concerned, to our faculty it does not make any difference what color you are. We have some faculty and colleagues whom I do not respect at all, but it is not because they are black or white. It is because of their preparation or background, what they do, and what they do not do. So as far as faculty is concerned, if they are black, I do not care. I cannot imagine a nicer colleague or a better, harder worker than Elizabeth Graham, who is our black soprano. Kevin Sharpe, the black pianist, works very, very hard. Again, color does not make any difference to me.

N: What about women? There is a lot of talk about incorporating more women into college faculties now.

K: Fine. Even though in the symphony orchestras women had to fight to get in, once they got in they proved their worth. I do not care what sex a person is. I am probably old enough that if a woman were to be put in a position of authority over me, I would consciously have to say, "This person is my chairman or my dean," not, "This person is a female chairman" or dean. But that is my problem. I was brought up by a mother who was brought up in the Victorian era. I have changed a lot since my orientation. I respect minds. I do not respect genders.

N: Do you think the rest of the faculty feels the same way as you do?

K: I cannot answer. I know some might be more hesitant than I, but most of the faculty respect ability. For instance, Sally Fouse, professor of flute, has been here almost as long as I. She is a marvelous flute player and a dedicated teacher. Sally is one of the hardest workers in the department, and I respect her tremendously. Again, Liz Graham is a black female--two strikes against her, right? No! She is a marvelous gal. Then we have had faculty whom I do not respect, again, not because of gender, but because of their attitude. We had one faculty member, a female, whom I do not think liked music, I do not think she liked teaching, and I do not think she liked young people. She had no business on a college faculty, inflicting herself upon people who are trying to learn. I would not have liked her if
she were a male. I respect the person and their dedication, not their color or gender.

N: Back in 1972 there was a bad time on campus with anti-war protests. Did any of that filter into this department?

K: Somewhat. We had a blossoming of anti-war buttons and things like that. People did not bother me with it because they knew that I was at that point a lieutenant colonel in the reserves, and if anything happened I might be jerked out to fight. I was always very careful to qualify my statements. I did not argue. My brother was [in Vietnam] at that point, and he was almost killed in the Tet offensive. So if people got terribly critical of it, I would defend the soldier, not the politician. It is the question of I trust politicians about as far as I can kick a bass drum under water. But the people who work for the politicians are the ones who have to do the dirty work. I did not notice any difficulties. I had no difficulty with my students.

N: Economically, 1975 was a bad time, and I understand that they were asking people to go on vacations so we could conserve electricity and to turn off their lights [when they were not in use].

K: They ruined a number of pianos that way. They turned off the air conditioning at 5:00 and turned it on at 8:00, so what happened was every twenty-four hours the strings of these pianos would get heated up and then chilled off again. That was just terrible. It was a dreadful lack of foresight. We did not fair as badly as microbiology. I have an acquaintance in microbiology who had a 100-generation fruit fly experiment ruined because they turned off the air conditioning and they all died. It was a bad time, and we did have to cut corners. I think we cut some wrong corners, but we survived. I had to fly rather than drive to a concert because the chairman would not let me drive the Renaissance Ensemble in a Winnebago, which was our usual way of traveling back then. We had to fly up to Pittsburgh; we had two concerts in Pittsburgh, and they were professional concerts. Fortunately, they paid enough that I could afford to fly my group up. But as far as the department is concerned, we had some inconveniences. Other than that, when you are busy practicing and doing your job, you tend to sublimate these difficulties. This is not being Pollyannish. It is just that musicians tend to be very involved in what they are doing. Oh, we fussed some when they turned the air conditioning off, but I did not notice any great tragedies.

N: What about unionization of the faculty?

K: Now you hit a topic where I will talk. I have been a member of the American Federation of Musicians since 1953, when I played my first professional job. Particularly in music, people are willing to take advantage of you, and I think that the union, although I disapprove of some of their tactics, is an absolutely necessary item in our society specifically to protect musicians, because they generally are too busy
practicing and composing and studying to attend to their own needs. I saw this happening in the Indianapolis Symphony where I was a member: the board of directors of the symphony treated us like their own personal toys and servants. I started fussing, and the next thing I knew I was on the orchestra committee. The next thing I knew I was negotiating the master contract, and the next thing I knew I was at an international meeting which founded ICSOM, the International Congress of Symphony and Opera Musicians. We met in Chicago—I will relate this to the University because this is one reason I am so devoted to the union—and what was there were orchestral representatives from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, from Boston, from Cleveland—from the Big Five. Indianapolis was definitely not a Big Five. St. Louis was not Big Five. Even Birmingham and the lesser orchestras like that [were there]. We sat around a table and compared working conditions, salaries, and things like that. We were absolutely aghast at the inequities. Inequities are what management and administration live with. I am very jaundiced when I look at administration and how things seem to get weighted to the benefit of the administrative process, frequently to the detriment of the active process.

When the University of Florida first started, the administration was carried on by the faculty, in addition to their teaching. I do not know what the administration versus instructing faculty ratio is now, but I bet it is pretty piercing. I think that the union is absolutely necessary to protect our rights, and I will include in the attitude of musicians the attitude of university professors. These people are intellectuals, are not versed or trained in the inter-Nicene warfare that is administration versus employee. They are not trained in standing up for their rights. Most of the professors I know are gentle people who would not pound their fist on the table.

To summarize briefly my attitude on unions, I will not say it is a necessary evil. I will just say it is a necessity for musicians and for college professors. Look at the advancements that have been made in this really anti-union state by the faculty union. I support it, I pay my union dues (something comes out of every paycheck), and I will continue to do so. So that is my attitude on the union situation. I believe it is necessary. I believe it is a natural thing that administrators do: try to hold down expenses and hold down fringe benefits. It is their job, and I think it is the union's job to see that the faculty are represented and that they get what they deserve. We certainly at this point are not getting what we deserve as far as pay and fringe benefits are concerned.

N: Would you care to elaborate on how the salaries in this department have grown since you got here?

K: My salary has grown almost 400 percent, but I came as an untenured assistant professor, and now I am a tenured full professor with over twenty years here. At that, I am going to get about as much as my son-in-law got the first year out of graduate school. He is an agronomist. Now, I feel that I have had just as much
training as he has had, and a heck of a lot more experience. I think that we need to address the inequities between faculties of certain areas when compared to others. I think the productivity of a typical music department professor far exceeds that of some of the departments where they are getting two to three times our salary. It is a dreadful inadequacy.

N: If yours has increased 400 percent, do you have any idea how the percentage of increase in other departments of the University compares?

K: No. I came awfully cheap. [laughter] I came from a middle class symphony orchestra, and my salary increased coming here quite a bit. I was very happy to get that, but then, as I saw that the complexion of my duties changed and that I was doing probably a lot more work than I had in the symphony, I began to see that my raises in pay were sort of keeping up with the cost of living, but not giving me Caribbean vacations.

N: One more thing about the union. In 1976 there was a vote on whether to go with United Faculty of Florida or the American Association of University Professors. Was there any general feeling in the music department about which way to go, or were they not particularly interested?

K: They were not particularly interested. Many people wanted to go with the professorial organization only because of the image, I think. I went with United Faculty because of its association with major labor organizations and its realization that in the association of administration and employee I was, in the administration's eyes, an employee. I think the other organization considers themselves professors. That is fine. I am a professor, too, but in my boss's eyes I am an employee. The other organization considers that in their boss's eyes they are professors and will be given sort of a magic status due to that. Now, I am very realistic about that. When I joined the symphony orchestra, I thought I was a musician, and I very quickly found out that I was an employee. There is a difference in that status.

N: One more off-campus thing I wanted to ask you about is WUFT.

K: Ah, WUFT. I was so excited when it arrived, and I was so supportive of it. When Norm Gilliland was here I was very active with WUFT. Norm Gilliland was the director of music, and he is a brilliant man, and humorous. He is the son of a dentist in town. He is one of the quiciest wits I have ever known. He and the over-all program director used to host the New Record Shelf, and that was a marvelous program. I really grieve that it is gone. What they would do was play new records, and after they were played Norm and the program director and the guests (I was guest about four or five times) would talk about the records. And in no uncertain terms, too. There was one fellow there with me (I have forgotten his name), and they did a piece with the Israeli Philharmonic, Zubin Mehta conducting. It was the [J. S.] Bach Double Concerto [for Two Violins]. It was really quite atrocious, and the guy said, "Well, what do you expect from Zubey baby?" [laughter] He was quite
definite on his dislike of Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic and what he was doing to it. It sort of bears up what many people think.

I know that Zubin Mehta tells lies about [Arturo] Toscanini. My teacher played under Toscanini and worshiped the man. He had a temper, but it was always directed at the music and at the inability of man to do the god-like with the music. He said all these stories about Toscanini's being a mad-man and vitriolic were untrue, patently untrue. When Mr. Sharrow came here, he was interviewed by Norm Gilliland, and they talked about some of these apocryphal stories. Afterwards, Leonard Sharrow said: "There are a lot of lies being promulgated about what an awful man he was. I have read some of the statements by Zubin Mehta about Toscanini which are according to what someone who was in the orchestra told Zubin. And they are wrong." Then he [Norm] said, [presumably to ease some tension], "I cannot conduct the Bach Double Concerto." [laughter] Maybe there is no relationship! But I miss that program you are talking about on WUFT, the New Record Shelf. It was a lot of fun. You heard the latest, the newest. And now with all these CDs [compact disks] coming out, you think they would grasp the opportunity to do that. I think they are missing the boat.

The whole WUFT classical programming was very, very well done. Not that it is not done well now; it is just that I had, perhaps, more time to listen to it. I listened to it more then. I find that WUFT can be a tremendous service to the University community. At one time the humanities department used WUFT, or its predecessor, WRUF, to have recorded examples played. One of the professors would go to WUFT studios—or, again, the predecessor's studio—and play on the piano there and give lectures. This rounded out their humanities presentation over in Carlton Auditorium. I have given lectures there for 750 people, and you feel like you are in an anthill. At any rate, the professor very wisely did some of his listening assignments over the radio. When you are listening to a radio, you alone in your room with that radio, it is one-on-one, not one-on-750.

WUFT has peaks and troughs, just like any student organization, like the Renaissance Ensemble. There are a lot of troughs when they get people who cannot pronounce composer's names or who read the wrong information on the record label. I think the fact that, as a public radio station, it helps, because they get some programming from outside. I am just very glad that we have WUFT. I wish it were better.

N: Does the faculty in general support the station actively?

K: Oh, yes. I talk on it when I have a President's Visiting Artist series guest, [such as] Richard Taruskin recently. We went there for an interview, and we spoke on the radio. I will go down when they are having a fund raiser to speak in favor of the station. WUFT serves a good purpose. I have said it before and will say it again:
every once in a while I sincerely wish they would pronounce composer’s names [correctly].

N: Let us talk about the recital hall.

K: Yes, the recital hall, or the absence thereof. I think that every music department needs a recital hall close to its normal classroom area in which students and faculty can play, where you can get an audience which, if it is small, will not embarrass you because only one-tenth of the hall is filled, or, if it is large, will overwhelm you because you feel you have really filled the hall. I am talking of a hall of maybe 300 seats, such as the one at Indiana University. There are several excellent halls [at major universities around the country]. The possibilities around here, ones which we use, include the University [Memorial] Auditorium, which is a barn. If you have a faculty recital, you might fill half to three-quarters of it if it has been properly advertised. But still, it is a very large environment for a chamber music recital.

We use Room 120 in the Music Building, which is actually a pretty good little recital hall, but if you dragged in every chair you can find in the building you would seat maybe 200. I once put on [Claudio Monteverdi’s] *Coronation of Poppea* there with Gus Halley and the opera workshop. I think we put 140 chairs in there. We thought who would come to an early-seventeenth-century opera. It was not the whole opera; it was eight scenes. I had made the arrangements from the score, and his opera workshop had learned the parts. It was a good job. I used the historical instruments, and Gus was a marvelous teacher and a good singer. The hall was full twenty-five minutes before it was supposed to start, and there were people lined up outside, so we had to say that we would do it again at 9:30. We started at 8:00, fifteen minutes ahead of time (because the hall was full), and it lasted for an hour and fifteen minutes. Then we emptied the house and started all over again. That is what you have with a small recital hall.

I have used the band room, but, God help it, it is always a band room. No matter where you set up, you still have these tiers and these chairs pushed up against the sides and ninety-five music stands knocking around. It does not look like a recital hall. I have used the orchestra room. It at least does not have tiers as the chorus room (120) or the band room, but it has all the charm of a roller skating rink. I have used two small halls down at the art gallery. There are actually quite lovely halls down there, one of which has a small stage. But there is no piano there, and the stage is very, very small and is designed for lectures. I think one seats 90 and the other seats 120. I gave a recital in the 120-seat hall, and it was marvelous. The acoustics were tremendous, but I had my friends sitting on the floor. There is no good recital hall here. The Medical Arts auditorium is long and skinny, and the acoustics are not the best—and it is in the medical building. We need to build in this backyard here, or somewhere, an honest-to-goodness recital hall.

N: What happened to it? Why was one not built in the first place?
K: I think they ran out of money. In the design of the [music] building--there are conflicting stories about it--[there was a recital hall]. The reason we do not have windows is because they ran out of money for windows. I do not believe that. I believe that they thought a lack of windows would be fashionable or something simply depressing. They did run out of money, and I think that [the recital hall] was the item that went, if indeed it was ever anticipated. A recital hall should be here. We have a place for it.

N: I understand there are plans to build one that we can use in conjunction with Santa Fe Community College.

K: I am not sure if that is a recital hall or a cultural center.

N: It is probably more of a cultural center.

K: They are talking about that. I will believe it when I sit on the stage and play a concert in it. There are also exciting plans (again--plans) to have a cultural center at the corner of 8th Avenue at 34th Street. There is some area in there where they want to build a cultural center. Also, down by the agricultural station [there is room]. But plans and sitting on the stage playing a concert are two different things. In the meantime, I will do my big concerts in the [University Memorial] Auditorium and my little concerts in Room 120, and wish that I had a decent recital hall.

N: I guess that is it.

K: I am sure there is lots more that we could talk about, but I have run out of ideas.

N: Is there anything else you care to share?

K: I do not know. I just think that after twenty-one years here at the University I am very glad to be here. I think the University has a lot to do. I think we have a lot left to do before we become a really top-notch music department. I think the potential is there and that the intention is there. I think if we got real driving support from the community, from the administration, and from the legislature, we could turn things around. Not turn things around; that is too negative. We could accelerate the process considerably. Our facilities are good. Everything is on the upswing. When I consider the development within the department over the twenty-one years that I have been here, it makes me feel very glad that I am here now, and not twenty years ago. Going from that atrocious but lovable old building with one small room full of 78 [rpm] records and unbound scores into this building with its very adequate music library, it just makes me realize what we have accomplished. It is very easy in the "autumn of our discontent" to criticize; it is very easy. It is harder to acknowledge that the criticisms are "It is not as good as it could be, even though it is pretty good." And what is really difficult is not to criticize, but to go out and do
something about it yourself. I have about ten years left, and I still have lots that I want to do.

N: Thank you very much for your time, Mr. Kitts. I am certain we will succeed with people like you working toward our goals here in the music department.