

M: This is Carol MacDonald interviewing Joe Sabatella for the [Samuel P.] Harn Museum of Art oral history project. Today is January 25, 1993.

Where were you born?

S: Chicago, Illinois.

M: Tell me about your family. Do you have any brothers or sisters?

S: I have a sister. My father is still alive; he will be ninety-one [years old]. My mother passed away in 1979. Essentially, the family is located in Chicago. My mother came from a large family--she was the oldest of nine.

My father was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and moved to Italy when he was very young. Consequently, he was really raised in Italy. Then he came here around the age of eighteen or nineteen, somewhere in the early 1920s. Essentially, he has been in Chicago for all of that time.

M: What was his profession?

S: Essentially, a lot of things. In Italy he was a traveling actor. I think he went to the third grade, [and] that is about it. He never had a formal education. He is a self-taught musician. He did some acting. He had to have people read the script to him because he did not know how to read. He was a blacksmith for a period of time in Italy. He did gatework and shoed horses and things of that nature. But he always had this artistic talent in terms of music and visual arts. He loved the opera and that kind of thing.

When he came over to the United States, he worked in New York for a period of time and then became a barber. Then [he] moved to Chicago because there were some more opportunities and a cousin or a distant relative there. He finally found a position with his future father-in-law, my grandfather, in a barber shop, and was a barber for sixty-some years. He worked in the Bell Telephone Company, and he essentially had a closed clientele. For a good number of years the Bell Telephone Company was the central communications network for a lot of the military. You just did not come off the street as a customer because the building was secure to only those who worked within it. So it was one of the few public businesses that were not so public. There was a restaurant, a gift shop, and a barber shop in the Bell Telephone building in downtown Chicago. Consequently, he dressed up like he was a bank president when he was going to his barber shop, which he owned for a good number of years. He retired about twenty years ago.

M: Tell me about your education and where you went to school.

S: Starting when?

M: Tell me about the evolution of your art and your interest in art.

S: I grew up essentially in Chicago, but it was a suburb called Norwood Park. If you are familiar at all with Chicago and the northwest side, there was Park Ridge, Norwood Park, Edison Park, Des Plaines, and so on. These were little suburbs. If you were to go back today they would be in almost the same configuration as they were sixty-five, seventy years ago. A good number of the same families are still living in the same houses.

The period of time when I grew up was when, obviously, things were a lot simpler. By that I mean for a youngster growing up, you lived within walking distance of all the major influences that were going to have an impact on you, such as school, church, and home. They were all within walking distance. There was also a large park district, so you had recreation, church, school, and home all [within walking distance]. In fact, we did not even own an automobile until I purchased the first automobile in the family, a Model-A Ford.

The elementary school that I went to was a parochial school. It was essentially during the Second World War. I am trying to recollect my first interest in art and the people who may have recognized some talent. It essentially was the war bond drive during the Second World War where everyone was encouraged to save newspapers, much like what we are doing with recycling today, only it was for the war effort--tin cans, scrap metal, paper, etc. [The war bond drive] encouraged people to buy war bonds. There was a continual kind of contest among elementary and secondary schools for students to do war bond posters that would be featured in local libraries and things of that nature to encourage the general public to buy bonds to help the war effort. Since there were no art teachers--at least in the school I attended--the nuns used to put me off in the corner because I was the peculiar person who was always drawing. "You go off in the corner and do the war bond poster for our school." I did that on a number of occasions, and a number were selected as the winning entries, you might say, for those particular months. They were shown in the local library and so on.

In a sense, you got the impression that visual art was important in my life, but it did not appear as though it was very important in the curriculum, certainly in elementary school, where we had no art. I took private piano lessons for years and years, so there was relatively no music other than maybe some choral activity. So the arts in public and private education is not as bad today as it was then. I feel as though there are art teachers and music teachers in elementary and secondary schools today, but not during those years. There was very little formal training in the arts in the 1940s and the 1950s. So you might say it was self-taught drawing out of books and so on.

In fact, I went to a parochial high school, De Paul Academy, an all-male school, and I think there were four [curriculums]. There was the general college preparation curriculum, the engineering curriculum, a business curriculum, and a liberal arts curriculum, or something of that nature. I chose the engineering curriculum simply because it offered mechanical drawing, and I was very interested in any kind of drawing.

Consequently, I did graduate from high school and went to the University of Illinois. I did not go into the art program, however, because I was extremely interested in Scouting. I did an awful lot of work with the Boy Scouts of America. I got to the rank of Life Scout. The reason I did not work for Eagle Scout was simply because I was right on the edge of being drafted into the Second World War. There were no males over seventeen or eighteen years old, so at sixteen you are one of the older younger males in the neighborhood. I was, in a sense, the Assistant Scout Master, so I spent a lot of my time with the younger lads who were coming through. I spent a lot of time in Michigan at the Owasippe Scout Camps; for four summers I was on the staff there. So I really wanted to become a scout executive; that was my goal when I got out of high school. In order to become a scout executive, you needed a baccalaureate degree, and it did not matter what it was in. Since my interests were in the area of the outdoors at that time and I was spending a great deal of time with scouting activities, I felt that probably agriculture and forestry [were good choices].

I did state that my major was forestry when I entered the University of Illinois in 1950. Pre-forestry was an agricultural college offering. We did not have the advisement then that we do now. You were kind of just given a program, and you selected the courses. So my first term in college I took English, chemistry, botany, physical education, military science, and mathematics. I think I had something like fifteen or eighteen hours. It was just an avalanche of information. I also had a meal job, working in a sorority waiting on tables which took a considerable amount of time every day, plus the weekends. So I had my hands full, and the first term I did not do very well academically.

I lived in a barracks type of housing, these temporary housing facilities that were constructed for the returning veterans of WWII. Even though this was 1950 and the war ended somewhere around 1945, there were still a lot of veterans taking advantage of the GI Bill and so on. Consequently, interested in the least expensive housing situation, I applied for what we called parade ground units. They were built near the football stadium on large tracts of land and were barracks-like facilities holding sixteen men. I probably was one of maybe two or three out of sixteen that did not have military experience, so I got a different kind of education, you might say, from these older gentlemen.

One of them was the brother of someone who was majoring in art. This gentleman would come by and carry his drawings and occasionally a painting or two. I was very fascinated by the fact that this person was going to college and taking art as a curriculum.

After my first term, in which I did not do very well academically, I was going to give it one more try. These rather interesting things happen to you. The night before registration, I got ptomaine poisoning from eating at a little beanery down the street, and I was unable to register. The person who I admired in terms of what he was doing with regard to his artwork and so on came by and planted the seed in my head. He said: "You ought to major in art. That is all you have been talking about. Every time I come by you want to look at my drawings and paintings." Because I was late in registering and was not able to register for the second term in forestry, I had this occasion to make a switch in majors. I did not tell my parents until I was a junior. Nevertheless, I went into art school. Things worked out very well academically from that point on. I graduated with a baccalaureate degree in painting and graphics.

I was also in the ROTC because at that time the Korean Conflict was upon us, and in order to stay eligible for school, males had to be 4-F, which I was not. In other words, you had to be ineligible for the draft, [and] I was eligible for the draft. But as long as you were in an ROTC program, you were allowed to continue your school.

So that was a very contrapuntal, you might say, experience of going to school on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in a military uniform, and taking painting. I took military in the morning and painting or art in the afternoon. That was really incredible.

Nevertheless, I was a commissioned officer, and in 1954 I was called to active duty for two years. I spent two years in the Antiaircraft Artillery branch of the U. S. Army and learned a great deal from that experience. In fact, I almost considered the military as a career. I was offered a permanent, regular army commission, but I did not accept it.

I was married in 1952, which was about my junior year in college. It was not too long before we started a family. In fact, after I had put the two years into the service I gave a long thought about going back to graduate school. I did in 1956. At the time we had four children--four boys. In fact, I have six boys and two girls; I have eight children.

That was an experience, trying to get through school with that amount of responsibility. Consequently, I was teaching--I had an assistantship--and I had the routine classes for graduate students majoring in art, and I was also teaching night classes to adults, teaching drawing, painting, and so on.

M: What was your specialty? What was your major?

S: Painting and graphics. There are a lot of experiences I could tell you about, but let us just say that I graduated in the early part of 1958. It was the January term, so it was the beginning of the year.

That same month I joined a firm called Elenhank Designers, Inc. This was a design firm in Riverside, Illinois. We designed fabric and wall coverings. [We] primarily [designed] fabric which was printed in Providence, Rhode Island. I managed the firm, which was a relatively small husband-and-wife business that was started ten years prior to my joining them. It was a very exclusive fabric firm. We imported fabric from around the world and had it shipped to Providence, Rhode Island, where it was printed with our designs. The fabric was designed essentially for large interiors, such as banks, hotels, and that kind of thing. Occasionally, [we would design for] an airline or something of that nature. It was all hand-printed and specialty designed. It was an extremely good opportunity for me financially, and one in which an artist in the real world could come closest to working with color, form, texture, and so on, and still be in the real world, the business world. That was very challenging and rewarding.

In fact, it was a dilemma. I lasted a little under two years, because I came to the University of Florida in 1959. It sounded like [I only worked there for] one year, but it really was the beginning of 1958 when I joined Elenhank Designers, Inc., and it was really the end of 1959, September, when I joined the University of Florida, so it was almost twenty months that I spent with this design firm.

I felt that even though the work at Elenhank was very challenging and rewarding, I felt that I was not getting any painting accomplished. It was very demanding on my time. [There was] a lot of traveling. We traveled around the country because we had ten representatives of our designs and fabric. We worked with them periodically, so I flew to New York a lot, and to Providence, Rhode Island, to look over the screen printing activities. I was really away a good deal and was moving around the country. This had its good aspects. I was able to see museums and things of that nature, which I enjoyed immensely.

But in the early part of 1959 I decided that if I were to get any work done as an artist, I really needed to have chunks of time. I always felt the lifestyle I perceived my professors at the University of Illinois to be leading was pretty idyllic. I coveted that lifestyle. Consequently, I did the usual kind of thing, and that was to start writing to different schools. I did this without my boss knowing. He was like a brother to me, and I did not even want to tell him about it until I thought I was really serious about it. I was not really sure. We had a tri-level little home in Lombard, Illinois, the kids

were going to good schools, and so on. So I was really very ambivalent about the idea of going back into academics, so to speak.

As is usually the case, even though there was an expanding universe--at that time a lot of schools were expanding and enlarging programs--I got the usual number of turn-down letters. It was pretty discouraging. In the fall of 1959 I felt that it would be another year, because schools usually hire in the fall. That would be that cycle that one would expect; one would usually be hired in the fall.

In a sense I had given up for 1959 and looked forward to another year in this design firm when lo and behold [I received a phone call from] a previous professor who had the most influence on my work and my attitude toward art, a person by the name of Lee Chesney who taught at the University of Illinois. He went to the University of Iowa and worked under Mario Lasansky, who is an internationally recognized printmaker. Anyhow, Professor Chesney called me long distance from wherever he was in California or somewhere, and he told me about a job at the University of Florida that he had heard about. Someone had called him and asked him for names. He had heard through the grapevine that I was interested in teaching and going back to school, or going back to a university environment. I indicated yes, that I was, and he said: "This job at the University of Florida is available because somebody has just resigned, and school is already underway, so it is going to be a very close kind of timing situation. You need to be prepared for that, and you are going to be one of probably four or five names that I am going to give, so there are going to be other applicants." As it turned out, there were about ten or fifteen candidates.

Obviously, in those years you did not go through the kinds of processes we go through today, with the newly imposed procedures that one must go through in order to hire. You just do not hire over the telephone. But that is what happened here, in a sense. I was not offered a permanent position, but I was offered a position. I was one of ten or fifteen applicants. I received a long distance phone call from the chairman of the architecture department here at the University, and the chairman said that they were going to request approximately ten to fifteen resumés and portfolios of candidates for a position teaching basic drawing and design to architecture students. The program here, for many years, centered on a very pragmatic approach to teaching architecture. The academic program for architects was very professional and, in a sense, very practical. It did not have the more creative approaches that the administration would like to see.

The faculty at that time was fairly large for a school located where we are at that particular time. It was the only publicly supported architecture program in the state of Florida. The University of Miami had a program, but of course that was private. The University of Florida had a very good reputation in architecture in the South. In fact, it was connected with what is now the School of Building Construction, but at

that time it was a program in the Department of Building Construction. It is the oldest school of building construction in the United States. It was a very large faculty, comparatively. We are talking about probably fifty to sixty professors. Out of that there are going to be two artists--not architects, but artists--brought in to teach architects basic design, drawing, color theory, and so on.

Consequently another professor, who graduated from Yale, and myself, from the University of Illinois, were hired in the fall of 1959. I took the job after being offered it on the telephone, sight unseen, on a Friday afternoon. The chairman said: "That is wonderful. Now the only problem is when can you be here, because classes are already underway." I said "I'll be there Monday morning." That is what happened.

M: You moved in two days?

S: I moved in two days, but my family had to stay, of course, in Chicago. They did not arrive until January of 1960. I lived right across from the president's home on University Avenue in what was known as the [Ernest G.] Atkins House. He was a professor in the French department, and he had retired. He and his wife were in this relatively large home, and I was able to rent a room from them which was in walking distance, because I did not have an automobile. That is how it started.

I do not know why, but faculty tend not to read the catalog, and it was not long before I was involved in academic advisement because the advisor needed assistance. There were hundreds of students at the time. At that time the University of Florida was organized with a lower and upper division. There was the University College and then the professional schools. The first two years, the student would come to the University in the University College and would be seeking a major. The student was in the University College seeking admission to the upper level, or professional schools. But each of the professional schools had advisors which were responsible for suggesting to the student what to take in order to become eligible to be admissible to the upper division. In 1959, there were at least 300-400 students in the lower division that needed advisement. The professor that I worked under, Professor [Harold] Cleland Rosé, was the undergraduate advisor at that time. He asked if I wanted to give him assistance, and I did, since I had time, in a sense, on my hands. I had read the catalog, and I knew what was required of students and was very interested in the students and their progression through the curriculum.

At the end of that year, Professor Rosé left, much to my dismay, because I really admired him as a professional, and I learned a great deal from him. He went on to become the dean of the School of Architecture and Art at the University of Montana at Bozeman. This was some time at the end of the 1960 academic year. I was asked then to be the advisor, and that is, in a sense, when my administrative career started. So I taught three classes and was the undergraduate advisor for a good

number of years, until I became assistant dean of the College of Architecture and Fine Arts in 1966. Then in 1975 I was appointed dean of the College of Fine Arts.

M: So there was not a College of Fine Arts when you first came?

S: No, there was not. There was the College of Architecture and Fine Arts. It was divided into two parts, although it was never formally designated that way. The two divisions were called the building arts and the fine arts. The building arts consisted of the Department of Architecture and the Department of Building Construction, and the fine arts was the Department of Art and the Department of Music. The Department of Architecture had interior design, landscape architecture, and architecture.

M: Tell me about your work itself. You have had some of your work in exhibitions. Could you talk about that a little?

S: Yes. As a graduate student I had shipped work around the country. We were encouraged to participate in juried exhibitions because that is part of growing up as an artist, to know that you are going to be rejected from a good many exhibitions and that the world is not waiting there for you to enlighten it with regard to the visual art world. It is contradictory to many people's understanding. It is very difficult to get a gallery to represent your work. You must really somehow establish yourself or know someone or be friends with an individual or individuals. Generally, that is how it works; you get recognition through juried exhibitions and juried shows. In places where you are not known, the juror or jurors select your work simply because of its artistic merit, as opposed to knowing about you.

So even as a graduate student, I think there are a number of national exhibitions that I was selected to: the Hunteerton Print Society in Pennsylvania sponsored an annual juried exhibit. One of my prints was selected in 1957. [It was] a highly respected show that I was selected [for] even as a graduate student. [I was also selected to] the Society for Arts in West Palm Beach or Palm Beach. There were numerous [ones] around the country.

I guess I suspect that in a way my artistic career really kind of took off somewhere around 1963 or 1964, [when] I won a Southeast regional painting exhibition, a first award, in Jacksonville. It was a painting award. There were probably somewhere around 1,500 to 2,000 entries that were reduced down to about 100 for the exhibition. My painting was selected for the first award. Thomas Messer, the director of the Guggenheim Museum, was the juror, so that was rather prestigious, to win the first award. I think the first award was a cash award of \$1,000. That helped me put a down payment on a piece of property that my house was later built on. So that was very significant. That, plus a gallery in Dallas, Texas, called the Chapman Kelley Galleries, represented my work for a good number of years.

Around 1963 or 1964 through the early 1970s, I was a productive artist. When I became heavily involved in administration, I was not producing at the rate that you really need to produce in order to keep a gallery interested in your activities.

I continue to do work. I have illustrated books, [and] I have designed a couple of covers for books and publications. I have done some illustrations for a book on industrial tools that are used in clock making. That activity is called horology, and our local Ted Crom, who was the president of the Crom Corporation, has probably the largest collection of clock-making tools in the country. In fact, he is a consultant for the Smithsonian Institution; they call him when they have a question regarding the tools that were used in clock making and so on. He published a couple of books on those tools, and he asked me to do a number of illustrations, which I did. So in a sense I have always had my hand in it, but not to the level of activity that I was in the 1960s and early 1970s.

I became dean in 1975, and I was the sole administrator in the newly established College of Fine Arts. I was the dean, and had two full-time staff personnel to help me. That was it. There was no assistant dean. So I was on the campus seven days a week, almost eighteen hours a day. That kind of curtailed my creative activity.

M: What were you trying to accomplish as the first dean of the fine arts college?

S: I wanted to give the college visibility on the campus. This campus essentially was oriented very strongly toward science and engineering. To put it bluntly, the humanities were tolerated but never really embraced with enthusiasm. The mind-set at the University of Florida had its emphasis on areas other than the humanities.

Florida State [University] had the corner on the visual arts and the performing arts, and [many felt that] we should not compete at that level. I felt that was probably prudent; we should not and do not. We do not have a full-blown opera program here, for example. But for a university of this size and magnitude, [we should have more than we have]. We are one of the major institutions, a land grant institution. The institutions that I am familiar with [are] in Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, etc. The program here, in terms of its support and its facilities were so far behind the times that I was appalled by it, and I wanted to do something about it.

Essentially, the way to try to do something about it is to make it important, [and] that is what we tried to do. We tried to become an integral part of the academic transaction on this campus. We did so by offering classes to a lot of students. We did that, opening the art history to students who were not only majoring in art history but to non-majors. Before I was dean, if you did not major in art, you could not take an art history class. Now the introductory classes are open.

We started a class called Introduction to Fine Arts, HUM 2510; we still teach it. We offered a class that was open to the general student, and we tried to offer classes that would satisfy the humanities requirement. Our Introduction to Theater was a class that was taught, in many cases, to over 1,000 students at a time. It was a very popular class.

Consequently, by developing student credit hours we gained recognition by the administration. So, in a sense, the number-one goal was to gain recognition, and in a sense through that to avert the possibility of not succeeding and then being very easily absorbed in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, which was a possibility. There were twenty-eight departments in liberal arts and sciences at that time. Two more departments--art and music--would probably not be that big of a structural change for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, but it would then have put the visual and performing arts in an entirely different kind of configuration on campus.

M: Around 1979 I found a letter about forming a museum. When did you first start to consider an art museum for the college?

S: I am probably not the first one to conceive of that. Roy Craven [director of the University Gallery and professor of art] was probably the first one. He and I had discussed it when we had early plans for the college, when the college was established in 1975. You make these long range plans and goals, and consequently I suspect that it was probably formally thought about and put into writing in 1975, when the goals of the new college were established, [including a provision that] we would someday try to establish a facility for housing the ever-increasing works of art that were becoming part of the collection that had no home. The University collection was stored in various areas around the campus, primarily in utility rooms and air-conditioning rooms, etc. [They were] places that you would never expect art to be stored [in] and kept. That is what the situation was. I compare an art museum on the campus to be a resource for art students as a library is for other students; the art students would have a "library," a museum, to go to in order to learn about their craft.

That is what I learned to be the case in almost every campus museum that I ever visited and attended. [At] the University of Illinois you almost had to walk through the museum in order to get to your classes in art. The Chicago Art Institute School, which is obviously not a public institution, was connected with the Chicago Art Institute (museum). It was a museum school, so to speak. [At the University of] Notre Dame, you walked through the museum in order to get to the art school; the arts are located in the liberal arts college. At Indiana the museum is right adjacent to the art school. At Iowa, [it] is the same thing. In every case, students that were majoring in visual arts were within short walking distance of the works of art that the university had assembled, so that if an instructor was conducting a class in basic

drawing, painting, design, or whatever, the instructor had the potential or access to works of art that were right there. You could walk over and take a look at existing examples. That was [our] goal, in some sense. At that time, that seemed to be way down the line. Of course it was. Nevertheless, here we are in 1993, and the Harn is already two or three years old.

The idea of the museum was thought of as unattainable for a long period of time. Then, of course, the community townspeople were very supportive of the University Gallery and the idea of a museum. The concept of establishing a museum really gained momentum when the townspeople became involved in that idea and that concept.

M: Around 1984 you wrote to Bob Bryan [UF vice-president for academic affairs] about the relationship between the [Gallery] Guild and the gallery, and between the Department of Art and the gallery, following a \$30,000 addition to the budget from two organizations: E & G (I am not sure what E & G stands for) and the [President's] Concessions Fund. Could you talk about that a little bit? Do you remember anything about that?

S: Yes, I certainly do. I do not know what letter you are referring to, but I suspect it was a letter of clarification. I was seeking to questions generated by the infusion of 30,000 dollars! As long as I recall, over the fifteen years that I was dean, the University Gallery's budget did not change. In fact, our budget for the college changed very little. It did have some increase, but our needs in the educational areas were so traumatic that I told Roy Craven he would have to seek funds by brewing up some external support. While I fully embraced the concept of the University Gallery and the important function that it was providing and the resource it was to the University, the community, and the state, the educational aspects had to come first. I would put emphasis there or try to support that to the level that we felt we had to support it, with the meager funds we had. Consequently, even though the departments were gaining support over the years (meager support as it was), the University Gallery at one point did have an assistant director, so in a sense it did receive some help. The operating budget, however, was maintained with some slight modifications here and there. They did get equipment increases some years and then not in others. But in the main, over the years, the expense budget for the operation of the University Gallery was right around \$10,000.

Consequently, when the Gallery Guild members were informed of the limitations that the gallery existed under, some members of the Gallery Guild went to see Dr. Bryan on a Friday afternoon to talk to him about the support of the University Gallery, or the lack of support thereof. Dr. Bryan arrived somehow at the decision that he would find \$30,000; he committed \$30,000 toward the support of the University Gallery. This was done without my knowledge; I did not realize that this agreement was being transacted. Therefore, when I heard from the gallery director, Professor

Craven, on Monday morning that he was told by one of the guild members, I believe (I am not really sure), how that came about, we were both astounded, because this money promised was equal to three years' support.

Back to your question about E & G, that was one of the questions that I had: Where was this money coming from, and what was it earmarked for? That was probably the genesis of my letter to Dr. Bryan: where is this money coming from? As I recall, \$15,000 was coming from the E & G, the Education and General, which was the general support budget for the E & G part of the University. In other words, the budget essentially was--and I assume it is still that way--broken down into three major categories: E & G, IFAS, and the Medical Center. There may be variations to that [today]. These are tax dollars funded by the Board of Regents. The E & G, meaning the education and general, which means all of the colleges less agriculture and [the] medical center, are dollars that would be given in addition to our regular E & G budget. Later, we found out after the clarification that apparently \$15,000 came from the Foundation, which is, of course, private dollars. It is very important to know that, because there are limitations that one has to abide by--the E & G spending guidelines are different from the Foundation guidelines. So the reason for the letter was clarification.

M: A committee was proposed that created conflict for Professor Craven. Do you remember what the committee was about or how it proposed a conflict?

S: I do not exactly know. How did you get that information?

M: From some of the information that I have at the museum in old files. We can skip that question.

S: Well, I know there were a lot of philosophical perceptions that may have created conflicts for him. I believe what you may be referring to was the basic operation of the University Gallery. As any organization becomes stronger and stronger, it kind of takes on a life of its own, and I suspect that as the guild members change and metamorphose into other philosophies of operation, what you could be referring to [is] the conflict of the gallery schedules. I know that was a concern. Some members of the Gallery Guild felt that at certain times of the year certain shows would be more palatable to the general public than the way Professor Craven was scheduling it. I do recall in particular that some Gallery Guild members made it a very strong point to me that they felt the annual faculty exhibition, which has been an annual event for the last twenty-seven or twenty-eight years and, coincidentally, is going right now, could exist during the summer as easily as during the prime time of the year. Some of the Gallery Guild members did not fully understand that the University Gallery exists primarily for the students and the faculty and then for the University community. The general community [came second]. I was very confused about that idea [to move the time of the faculty exhibition] because it is primarily for

the students to see their mentor's work. For that reason and many others, [it was important to have the exhibition during the regular school year so the University community could] see what the artists are doing in the art department and accomplishing and creating. That is much more important to occur during a regular academic term, as opposed to a summer term. So you are possibly referring to that, plus possibly other operational activities that might have come up.

When you are dealing in a situation such as a public institution, such as the University Gallery, that is connected and directly supported by the College of Fine Arts, the needs of the students and the faculty must come first. That was my concern, as well as Professor Craven's concern. Possibly there were some differences in perceptions at that time.

M: I think some of the letter was about the proper place for the guild and the proper authority that the guild had. Back to the \$30,000: What became of that money? Did you have to use it for a yearly budget for the next three years? Were you able to use it for one year?

S: That is what created some consternation on the parts of some folks that made the pilgrimage to Tigert Hall and to Dr. Bryan. When you are dealing with an exhibition facility, a gallery's activities are planned two and three years in advance. The intent that we would use \$30,000 immediately was ludicrous; the year was already planned. In fact, the following year was already planned. That was one of the reasons for the clarification. In fact, Professor Craven and I had a session with Dr. Bryan in which we explained these issues and concerns to him. He understood then that it would be impossible to spend \$30,000 that year prudently. So he approved of a plan whereby we would utilize the E & G funds for Professor Craven to travel around the country to secure future exhibitions, in coordination with members of the Gallery Guild. Money that came from the foundation would be used in future years, since that money could be carried over, and the E & G funds could not carry over. So that is how that money was used.

In a sense, [out of] the money that was allocated, \$15,000 was spent that fiscal year, as I recall, because that is how you have to spend that kind of money. We were able to carry over the \$15,000 that came from the foundation for another year's use. A good majority of that money was used to attract more grants for exhibitions. So that was in a sense, seed money, and it helped us down the line.

M: This is about the Harn in particular. In July of 1984, you and the committee for programming drafted a document to format programming of the proposed museum. It appears to be consistent with the present museum's functioning. Are there any areas that you find better or worse than those described in the committee proposal? It is a lengthy document.

S: It is a lengthy document. Are you asking me if there are any differences?

M: Yes.

S: I do not recall the document in detail, although as I remember we tried to specify every aspect of it, such as staffing, budgets, facility, the general character of the facility, and the function of it. That is the one area I am probably sensitive to. The fact that it is no longer a part of the College of Fine Arts is probably good and bad. You could argue either side of that. The Florida Museum [of Natural History] is not directly tied to a college, but that history is much different than the art museum's history. I never envisioned that it would be an independent entity. [I thought] it would always be a part of the College of Fine Arts and, consequently, that the College of Fine Arts would have a major say or impact on its operation. As it was then subsequently conceived in terms of its structure in relationship to the rest of the units on campus, it was deemed appropriate and necessary to extricate it from the College of Fine Arts. It was, in a sense, taken from the family and made an independent entity.

That, philosophically, I disagree with. It strikes a very sensitive nerve in me. Nevertheless, I see the fruits and the benefits of its being over there on 34th Street. In fact, it was referred to as "The Miracle on 34th Street" in many of the newspapers. I never found much light-heartedness or much solace in the fact that [it was dubbed] "The Miracle on 34th Street;" I sometimes thought of it as "The Nightmare on 34th Street." [I felt that] it was the wrong decision to put it there, and I still feel that way. I do not disagree with the idea that it performs a very important function that was needed in this community, but it has become an entirely different kind of museum than what it was originally conceived as.

M: What do you mean by "different"?

S: Well, it is essentially a museum that is accessible by automobile. I do not know of anyone walking to the Harn. You need transportation to get to the Harn. By "walking to the Harn," I mean from campus. If you are on the main campus and you are a student [taking] classes here in the art department, you do not walk to the Harn Museum. There are buses; one can certainly get a bus. There are different and apparently relatively convenient ways in which to get to the Harn from the main campus. My point is that you just do not walk out the door and walk to the Harn Museum. You do not take the class [to the museum] on the spur of the moment. When you come across a discussion with regard to an aspect of design or an aspect of drawing, you [might] say, "If my explanation does not enlighten you, let's walk twenty-five yards and take a look at this Botticelli (or this whatever) to make a comparison." It just simply has a different relationship right now. One has to plan to go to the Harn; if you want to take your class there, you have to plan. That is essentially the difference.

M: Were you involved with the NEA [National Endowment for the Arts] competition?

S: Oh, yes. We created the competition. The NEA [grant] was solicited by myself and Craven; we wrote the grant. We knew Michael Petus, who was the director of the design arts segment of the NEA at that time; I had known him for a good number of years. It was from that relationship that we were encouraged to submit an application for concept ideas for the competition. In fact, the National Endowment for the Arts awarded the University \$25,000, which was matched by another \$25,000.

We conducted an international competition for the design of the Harn Museum. That was a year-long effort. The American Institute of Architects, the AIA, imparted its approval. In fact, it was conducted under the AIA competition guidelines. We had an AIA architect from Winter Park who was chairman of the design competition.

We had internationally recognized jurors. In fact, Thomas Messer was one of the jurors. Our own dean of architecture, Dean Mark Jaroszewicz, was one of the jurors. We had two other architects--one from Washington, and one from I think Virginia or Pennsylvania. So there were about seven or eight jurors on this national competition. We had over 500 entries from around the United States and a number of foreign countries. It took the entire dining facility of Turkey Creek Golf and Country Club to display all of the boards submitted for the competition. The jury lasted almost a week. It took us three or four solid days from 8:30 in the morning till 5:00 in the evening to go through these over 500 entries. Each entry consisted of 30"x40" boards.

M: To come to an agreement must have been really hard.

S: We boiled it down to ten finalists, and then we got it down to five finalists. These five finalists were asked to go to the second level of the competition. That was conducted as well. They turned in four boards with a model. I think in all cases a model was part of the competition guidelines. An architect by the name of Thomas Porter from Toledo, Ohio, was the winner of the design competition. It came down to the final days prior to signing a contract with Mr. Porter, and then a lot of things changed.

M: He still won the award, right?

S: He won the award, but he did not get the commission.

M: That must have been disappointing.

S: I am sure it was.

M: Did you enter into any of the fund raising that went on for the Harn?

S: Oh, yes, I did. I did so by travelling, by talking to numerous groups regarding the funding of the Harn, and so on. I tried to do whatever I could to entice funds for it.

M: How long did you fundraise?

S: Well, it was an ongoing [process]. We were trying to raise funds for the museum before it was even known as the Harn. It was this incredible gift that made it all a reality. Prior to that time, we were trying to develop funds for a museum which was at one point considered in a much more modest way than the \$8 million that was finally attracted for the facility that we do have now. The most serious estimate that was developed was \$4.5 million. That is what we were shooting for. Then when it became a much more magnanimous ambition, the opportunities were such that it could attract much more funding because of certain legislative situations. The stars were in the appropriate configurations. The decisions at that point were made in Tigert Hall with regard to how the strategy would go. It apparently worked out very well, because the University attracted a considerable amount from the legislature; we received special funding from matching funds. So instead of \$4 million we got \$8 million for the development.

M: When it came time to hire a director, what were your objectives, and what type of search was conducted? [Was it] national or international? How long did it take?

S: Well, I was asked by Dr. Bryan to be the chairman of the search committee. This, of course, occurred after decisions were made to make the Harn a separate entity. Consequently, I entered into that transaction with much ambivalence. It was a national search, not an international search. It lasted approximately, as I recall, eight months to a year. We went through a very thorough procedure, advertising in all of the appropriate publications. We [also] went through a number of interviews. There were ten finalists, as I recall, and I believe we interviewed four or five of the finalists.

M: So you did not interview everyone?

S: No, you could not interview everyone. Goodness, there were probably sixty or seventy applicants for the position.

M: What attracted you to Budd Bishop?

S: Now when you say "you," you give the connotation or implication that I was the principal hiring person, and I was not. I was facilitating a search, and Dr. Bryan was doing the hiring. Since it was a director, it was just like hiring a dean. Of course, our committee would make recommendations to him, which he undoubtedly followed--at least he followed them in this case. But in a sense the hiring authority

did not lie with me. I was primarily the facilitator of the search. I was to quarterback the search so that it complied with all of the rules and regulations of the University in that we would find the best candidates available, and we would try to select the best of those candidates that we attracted.

First of all, I had a good friend, Dr. Andrew Broekema, who was the dean of the Ohio State University in Columbus. He and I had a very close and long relationship.

When Budd Bishop's name turned up on the list, I simply had to pick up a telephone and call Andy Broekema to find out about Budd Bishop. [Prior to coming to the Harn Museum, Bishop was the director of the Columbus Museum of Art in Columbus, Ohio. Ed.] So I learned a great deal about him through a colleague of mine. They were all very strong and positive recommendations. Of course, we did the same thing to others; we would make phone calls trying to garner as much information about all of the candidates as we possibly could.

Using your words, what "attracted" me and what sensitized the committee toward this individual were good, strong recommendations. In this case, it happened to be a very strong recommendation from a professional that I had a great deal of respect for.

M: An article from the [*Gainesville*] *Sun* quotes you as saying, "With the funds from the Harn and the state, UF could build one of the most significant facilities for arts in the southeastern United States." How do you feel about the museum now? Do you think it is quite significant?

S: Yes, I certainly do. I think it provides [for] an extremely important need in our community. I think it still does what I thought it would do at that time. As I indicated earlier, my only reservation is that I wish it were located physically closer to the activities of students and faculty in the visual arts.

M: What do you think of the exhibitions themselves? Do you think that they run along a certain line consistently?

S: I do not have any strong opinions regarding that. I think that what I have seen there appear to be very outstanding exhibitions. I really do not have any strong opinions regarding the conduct of the exhibitions. I fully realize that any museum is constrained by its collection in its budget to be ongoing. Changing exhibitions are dependent upon your funding and who you can arrange to contract to get certain shows at certain times. I think that is probably where Mr. Bishop works very well, because he does know all of the major directors around the country and elsewhere. I suspect that he uses those acquaintances and that information and his knowledge about different exhibitions and opportunities to the benefit of the Harn.