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J.M. "Sudsy" Tschiderer : USF 50th (2006) Anniversary Oral History Project: interview by Lucy D. Jones

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Lucy D. Jones

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USF Florida Studies Center
Oral History Program
USF 50th History Anniversary Project

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Current Position: Coordinator of Special Events at the St. Petersburg Campus	Location of Interview: USF St. Petersburg Campus
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TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

Arrival at USF

In 1969 she graduated from St. Petersburg Junior College and planned to attend the University of Florida to pursue a journalism degree. She failed to put in her paperwork in time and was visiting downtown St. Petersburg with a friend. They “stumbled upon these barracks in Bayboro Harbor” and her friend stopped to get a class schedule. Ms. Tschiderer did not know where they were. Her friend said that it was USF and she would be taking classes in the fall. Ms. Tschiderer decided to take some classes and then transfer to UF in January. She arrived at USF St. Petersburg in Fall of 1969 and took two English courses, one geography course, and one psychology course. Her “instructors were phenomenal,” her classmates were “motivating, classes were small it was an experience that had so much vitality in the classroom, even outside the classroom although we had a some what humble environment, it had a special charm all its own.”

She graduated with a degree in English and an undeclared minor in journalism in 1971. Ms. Tschiderer was decided what to do next when Director of Student Affairs Wayne Hoffman offered her a student affairs job. While an undergraduate in 1969 they were developing the programs because the campus was new. Much of the student body had come from St. Petersburg Junior College and she had been active in student publication and student government while there, these things were being established at USF St. Petersburg, started by the new students. This is something that she is very proud of even today, being able to see the evolution of the programs that she and her contemporaries started over thirty years ago.

In 1971 she was working as a recreation assistant in Student Activities, when they started to develop a student activities and student life program. She was encouraged to stay by her experience with the “wonderful environment,” the “incredible people,” and because the “collegial community was just so motivational.” She decided to start the graduate program one class at a time to continue her English education, it took quite a while to finish the master’s degree in English taking just one class at a time, but she did finish the MD program in 1983.

What is she doing now?

She continued in student affairs for twenty-five years. They accomplished a lot that she is very proud of. In 1995 a position was created “in the advancement area” and Ms. Tschiderer was asked to apply to the position. She had not really considered transferring from Student Affairs but the opportunity was good and she enjoyed working with Julie Gillespie, the supervisor in charge of the program. This seemed like a good time to look at other opportunities at the university and she was able to take her experience into the position of Coordinator of Special Events. This position was designed to work with the “increasing numbers of conferences, programs produced by our own people, campus faculty in particular.” Community groups and students were doing some work with the programs. When Dr. Bill Heller came in 1992 he “really elevated the community relationship with USF St. Petersburg.” The relationship with St. Petersburg had always been great and they had many great community partners, such as Nelson Pointer at the *St. Petersburg Times*, he and others were important in their support of the school.

They were also developing in their own academic world, they were developing an better and better curriculum but there was a lot of work to be done in regards to relationships with the people of St. Petersburg. Bill Heller was very important in doing this. They had added new facilities, including the Campus Activity Center, which opened in 1990. This was utilized both as a student center and an auditorium for larger programs and lectures. This was very beneficial to the university.

In 1995 Mr. Tschiderer moved to the advancement area as the Coordinator of Special Events. This means that groups that come onto the campus go through her, therefore there is no confusion as to who is the campus liaison for outside groups. The open forums and conferences would have just one contact person, Ms. Tschiderer. She would be the person they contacted concerning communication, how to use the school’s logo, taking care of audio/visual and parking needs. She was in charge of policies and procedures and “as point person it was my job to make our campus hospitable and professional and a good partner between the general public and the campus community.” This was an exciting and rewarding job, she got to meet many people and work on event production on campus. This work came from the dean (who became the VP) and projects that he would initiate. She would also be in charge of projects dealing with USF presidential visits for Presidents Castor and Genshaft. USF was the host of the NCAA Final Four at Tropicana Field and they were the host site for some activities. She was the point person for President Castor’s team on the St. Petersburg campus.

More recently they have had some shifts in the leadership, Dr. Wilcox was in charge as an interim for a year and now they have Dr. Karen White in charge. The advancement department has seen many changes, Julie Gillespie left just three months after Ms. Tschiderer took the job, which was unfortunate. Her husband was transferred to Phoenix and Mrs. Gillespie took a job at Arizona State. This was a loss for the school because she was “very professional and a good mentor.” Luckily Julie Gillespie is back at USF, they came back in August to be close to family.

In 1996 they began changes in the directorship of Advancement and Ms. Tschiderer has now worked under ten different supervisors between 1995 and the present. She is pretty sure there is “another one soon on the horizon.” This change can be refreshing, but some supervisors have different ideas of what is important and what is not, this makes for a “very adventurous work situation, all positive of course.”

The great amount of turnover is a combination of changes in the university and some things inherent in the position itself. In 1995 the Advancement Department was comprised of Julie Gillespie, the Director and her assistant Donna Knutsen. Marti Garret was hired from Kent State in 1995, an office assistant who eventually became the person with primary responsibility over the USF St. Petersburg Foundation work. Lisa Wharton Turner did the community relations and Ms. Tschiderer was in charge of the internal community relations and special events. Advancement directors must do a lot of fundraising and work with media relations people. Deborah Kurelick was in charge of media relations and public affairs. There were also many great student assistants who were an integral part of the program’s success. When Julie Gillespie went to Arizona State Lisa Wharton Turner became the interim director, the new director was Lee Mikell and he stayed for about a year and a half, they had another interim and then Carol Russell was hired, she was very active in community volunteering and was very energetic. They had worked with her before on a volunteering program called “The 25th Hour.” This was scheduled on the weekend of Daylight savings when you have an extra hour, they tried to get people to share this extra hour with USF St. Petersburg. This brought the community onto campus, Carol and her husband were the chairs and Dr. Ed Cole and his wife Martha were the co-chairs in the first year. They had a luncheon of about 300 people. The luncheon was “progressive” in that it started at historic houses for beverages and then tours moved on to the CAC (Campus Activities Center) for snacks, then the Marine Sciences for refreshments, then the recreational area, they then moved on to Davis Hall and then Pointer Library with a full luncheon. This was fun and a lot of work. It established their first major fundraising activity. The next year they had a luncheon and silent auction at the CAC. The year after they had a Halloween activity that turned historic houses into haunted houses and people came in costumes. The following year they held an event at the Mahaffey Theater, this was a sixties party with a Beatles Tribute Band. All of the people were dressed in 1960s inspired garb. There was always a community chair, these people worked hard to bring new people into the program. The program ended in 2001, they had planned a “Night in Casablanca” using a northern African motif like the movie Casablanca. After September 11, 2001, no one was in the mood for a party, so they decided to have the celebration be an “all-American country fair” motif. After this there was more transition in the department so they have not done the “25th Hour” promotion anymore. Carol Russell left because of family obligations, she wanted to spend more time with her teenage daughter. The people who work in the Advancement Office rarely work a forty-hour week, in fact, Ms. Tschiderer does not recall a time when she worked a forty-hour week. But she believes that if a person can’t volunteer extra time for their school or place of employment, maybe they should find another school or place of employment. They were sad to lose Carol, they had a few more interim directors and then John Collins came in last year. His focus has been on fundraising and refocuses the reorganized campus after some administrators retired. Ms.

Tschiderer is pretty sure that around ninety-five percent of the administration is “brand new, headed by Dr. Karen White who came to us in July 2003.” This is the time of the greatest change since the day she came in the late 1960s. They started in 1968 with an upper level focus. They focused on juniors and seniors and there was a graduate department in Marine Science. The previous years they had some freshman, the freshman class in Tampa was too large and some freshman were “farmed out to these facilities in St. Petersburg.” In 1968 the identification with upper division focus was very logical for students who had started at community colleges in the area. This way they avoided duplicating classes and avoided competing but still had a good opportunity. In the early years everything was experimental and in the intervening years there has been constant change throughout. Ms. Tschiderer is always amazed by people who come to the campus and assume that the school is very set in its ways and the people at USF St. Petersburg are not open to change. The people were working very hard to make progress and anyone who worked at the St. Petersburg campus was forced to work very hard in a variety of roles and capacities. This was appealing to Ms. Tschiderer because she was not forced to do just one thing, her creative capacity was tested because she did many different things in many different ways. She believes that to do the same thing over and over again becomes very boring. In her mind the mantra of her department and school has been “the one thing we are used to here, the one stability in our life at USF St. Petersburg has been change, adapting to change.” In her thirty-two years at USF St. Petersburg there hasn’t been a year without some kind of major change and this makes the work very exciting.

What allows the campus to thrive under this change?

The process of change at a regional campus (now a somewhat autonomous campus) is an evolutionary process. They started out as the first satellite not only of USF, but also in Florida. They were a prototype for the entire state and the tendency to reach out into communities. There were many students being served in metropolitan areas. Gainesville is a prototypical college town. Tallahassee is a combination of a “governmental and educational nucleus.” When you think of Tampa or St. Petersburg, you do not think of USF first. You think of a “growing and thriving metropolitan community.” Therefore the people coming to the area are not just eighteen year olds. There were older students to be educated. The diversity in the classroom was one of the things that she most loved about the school. People were able to test their ideas against other ideas, making for lively classroom discussion and debate.

When she began at USF many of her friends were in Vietnam and many classes gave her the opportunity to discuss the matter with Quakers or veterans of the Korean War or the Second World War, or Vietnam Veterans, or parents and grandparents of soldiers or people from foreign lands. Because of these different backgrounds and opinions there was a lot of creative discussion and debate. Having many generations in the classroom made it an even better experience, this has been one of the many strengths of the campus.

There was less conflict and protest on campus when she went here because they were a new school and those involved in political activism were doing it in the community, not

on campus, the venues existed so the college was not the “hotbed of activity” that other campuses had, but there were still strong views and strong activism in the student body.

The variety of students and small size of the school made strong bonds between students. There were similarities, especially because of the situation as upper level students. Many people on campus were aware of their connection with the community. They had families and social activities inside St. Petersburg, not just inside the university. The community was home and the campus was a reinforcing agent of this feeling of community.

Diversity in staff and faculty

Steve Turner, a sociology professor, was only around twenty-five years old. He was almost the same age as the graduate students, which was exciting. The older faculty were more experienced in college education than the younger professors. The interaction between faculty members was interesting. There were two professors who taught a class giving different perspectives on a similar topic. It was almost a debate between the two, they taught a class on the ancient world and one professor argued from the viewpoint of the ancient Greeks and the other from the Hebrew perspective. They would debate various subjects such as economics, warfare and creation. In this way you learned about the ancient world and could apply the debated issues to contemporary times. The class only had about twenty-five people, which made it interesting and easy to interact.

The younger teachers and the more experienced teachers all had something to bring to the process and there was “this wonderful cross-pollination in all elements of the campus community.” This even applied to staff. Ms. Tschiderer began as an employee at twenty-one in Student Affairs. Student Affairs got their first director in 1970, Wayne Hoffman. Ms. Tschiderer started the job in 1971, at that time the staff was Wayne, his assistant Adelaide Waterfield and Ms. Tschiderer. They eventually hired Fran Seagrave to begin the Financial Aid/Career placement office. Fran had come from Michigan, she had been a public school principal, and she brought a lot of information to the department. Adelaide Waterfield had worked at the Pentagon. Ms. Tschiderer was developing a new student activities recreation program at the age of twenty-one and such knowledgeable and interesting people surrounded her. Their experience and professional knowledge was great for her as a learning process and they were able to get information from Ms. Tschiderer concerning the ideas and direction of younger people.

“One thing that I think makes this campus really special, and as an old timer one of the things that I really hope for the future of the campus, is that as we grow and everybody leaves their footprint and their handprints, which I think is really important, that we will always strive to maintain that collegiality that allows us to interact, not in a superficial way, but really getting to know the people that we come into contact with, not just a quick hello to a student passing by with a cell phone in an ear.” This is a sad observation for Ms. Tschiderer, before cell phones, when leaving class you would continue to debate issues with student you bumped into, or you might just talk to them about anything. You might have lunch with faculty members or other students. This kind of interaction extends the learning opportunities past going to class, taking tests and getting a diploma,

“it gives you so many more opportunities to learn and I am so grateful” for the opportunities to learn in this manner.

Ms. Tschiderer hopes that the compartmentalization of the campus and the specialization of the programs still allow people to interact with one another. One of the saddest things for Ms. Tschiderer is when she is walking in a hallway or down the street and people have just come out of a class building with books and half a dozen of them are talking on the cell phone rather than talking to the people right next to them. This strikes her as sad because this was a great point to begin a conversation with someone else. Some people are missing these opportunities.

Does this interaction exist off campus?

It has existed over the years and in some cases it does now, but she is not aware of how universal it is on the campus. In some senses the interaction is not as strong as it was, but some things are expected to change over time.

One of the great professors on campus was Harry Shaleman, who was a lot like Professor Ray Arsenault in that he was accessible to his students and he enjoyed the students. There was a certain “basic vitality for living and experiencing everything you could experience.” He was a geography professor and “he could bring his lessons alive.” He was the advisor for the University Lecture Series for a number of years and they would have weekly eclectic lectures or presentations. Harry was “a true teacher in that every moment of his life and every fiber of his being was devoted to teaching and not just a one way street, you don’t teach unless you have a student and a student doesn’t learn unless a student has a teacher.” He felt that the interaction between the two was, at its best, a creative environment.

Students, faculty and staff might go to the Mahaffey Theater and see a play, or play on softball or flag football teams together. They played water volleyball in the pool. The pool had been a city pool that opened as “The Sunshine Pool” in the 1940s, but by the time Ms. Tschiderer arrived in 1969 it had little to no water, with a lot of dead animals and leaves in it. They wanted a pool so many students and Wayne Hoffman went out cleaned, painted and redid the plumbing on the pool with mostly volunteers. They got the pool up and running, from 12-1:30 at lunch time there would be a great conglomeration of men and women, young and old alike, students, faculty and staff members who would come out and play water volleyball. They did this religiously until 1990 when the CAC opened. So water-volley ball has been less and less popular, but they used to even run tournaments and Student Activities had a team, the Water Buffalo, the faculty had a team, and marine science had a team, the Mullets. This was a lot of fun and you got to spend a lot of time interacting with peers, staff members and professors and you interacted in a fun setting, which allowed for greater development of personal relationships and learning in a different environment from the classroom. Harry Shaleman was very involved in this, as was Harriet Deer, Dave Carr, Margaret Hewitt, Winston Bridges, Ray Arsenault and Bill Garrett.

Bill Garrett is a great musician and people would go see him play with his band “the Red Hot Profs” a group of professors that played Jazz and Dixieland music and they still play to this day. Bob Hall, Ms. Tschiderer’s graduate advisor and a personal hero of hers performed in “Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?” and this is the kind of fun thing that they could do on and around campus. These kinds of experiences are very enriching and she hopes that the campus will continue to have such opportunities.

In 1975 Jacques Cousteau, who brought ocean research to the public, brought his ship *Calypso* to Port at Bayboro, it was there for about four months. (She later says it happened in 1995, not clear which it is.) This was a lot of fun, they hung out on *Calypso* and the crew would come over the campus and take part in activities. John Denver came and brought Mr. Cousteau his new song called “Calypso.” Madame Cousteau lived aboard the ship while it was in port.

The British Navy would come into port every year and the Dutch Navy would come sometimes. The women’s soccer team, USF St. Petersburg women’s soccer was the first women’s soccer team in St. Petersburg. This was 1975-76 and they were the “Sandspurs.” Their motto was “Pain in the grass.” There were no high school or junior high school teams for girls, so the people involved are very proud they’ve been a part of the evolution of women’s sports around the area and are happy to see women the women’s world cup and other opportunities for girls. These allowed people to meet other people outside of their own disciplines.

Her office, the Snell House and the Williams House

The campus is in the Bayboro harbor area, which is a historic area in the community. At the time the campus opened it was a working harbor. The shipyards were in use, although this has changed over time. Adjacent to the campus were two houses, one the Potter House, the other the Black House. The Potter house was on the National Register of Historic Places and the Black House was eligible. In the late 1980s there was a move for campus expansion and the houses were on city property. At that time if you wanted to expand a campus land had to be given to the Board of Regents for the State of Florida. Someone had to give the land to the state for USF. This was the period of the development of downtown known as Bay Plaza. Ms. Tschiderer believes this was a “first class disaster” because they were giving up “their history in downtown St. Petersburg to put up faux buildings.” There were many people that argued against this since the city was barely one hundred years old and many wanted to save whatever historic places they had.

The student government led an initiative with local preservationists, faculty, architects, professional people and university staff. They all tried to save the Black and Potter houses. The school did not want to be responsible for saving the houses and the city did not want to move the houses. They did not want to take a leadership role in historic preservation and at the time preservation was not of the utmost importance. The group worked hard to save the houses. They even had PTEC offer to use the renovation of the houses as a learning process for their students. Student electricians, plumbers and carpenters would come in and work on the house. It would probably cost about \$55,000

per house to come in, do the work on the house, preserve the house and have the university maintain the houses. Ms. Tschiderer still has folders full of documentation for this monetary figure.

They were misled, they were told they could have more meetings before the houses were demolished. They came to campus one day and bulldozers had knocked over the houses. She saved some pieces of the houses and pieces of a retaining wall with decorative features that they hoped to work into the historic district.

This “left a bad taste in a lot of people’s mouths and we felt defeated in our attempts to be good conservators and partners with our community.” Many people felt that it isn’t good to “just bulldoze over your history, especially when your history is less than one-hundred years old, or marginally one-hundred years old.”

Bill Heller arrived in 1992 from Alabama and North Carolina university settings, where historic houses were very important and “incorporated into the fabric of the collegiate experience.” They preserved the houses and used them as living museums. The houses are used for practical purposes but when you walk into the Snell house or the Williams house at USF St. Petersburg you are reminded of Perry Snell building his house in 1904, or John and Sarah Williams’ house without thinking about 1890. John Williams is the co-founder of the city of St. Petersburg, even on an unconscious level your environment affects you. Using these houses as living museums has a great deal of academic potential and Bill Heller had worked in a similar environment. He had an interest in history and using the school to preserve history. He was also interested in obtaining more buildings and living museums. These sites could make the experience of the school and the students better. Because of this he was received very well by Dave Carr, Ray Arsenault and Julie Gillespie and people like them, especially the preservationist group, who were interested in conservation and history.

In 1993 the opportunity came to get Perry Snell’s first house, built in 1904. The house was about ten blocks north of campus and Bay Plaza was using it, Bay Plaza made many people mad by destroying the Soreno Hotel, the subsequent footage was used at the end of one of the “Lethal Weapon” Films. Ms. Tschiderer is pretty sure it is either the third or fourth movie but she has not seen it and can’t bring herself to watch it. Bay Plaza had the Snell house, which was also in danger of demolition. The house had been lived in by the Snell’s then sold to the Fogarty family. It became a boarding hotel and then fell into disrepair, it was going to be demolished. They were able to work out a deal to move the building to campus. People stayed up all night to see Toby Thomas House Movers move the home. Florida Power helped move streetlights that had to be moved to get the house through. It is a three story, Dutch colonial house, “a monster house” and “a true fortress.” The house arrived and was positioned in a great display. The campus would conserve the community history and would use the Snell House as offices after renovations. They got a grant from the Florida Board of Historic Preservation to renovate the home. There were contractors, including Barry Flaherty, who donated a lot of their work to the university. Linda Forsche Wimmer was an interior designer who had graduated from USF St. Petersburg, she worked with Randy Wedding Architectural Firm

and Phil Graham Landscaping to make this a great place to help draw people to the campus.

When the house was restored they moved many offices into it. The Advancement Team moved into the first floor, so Ms. Tschiderer's office moved into the building because their work incorporates both outreach and inreach. To have a presence right off campus, but still close by, was good. The alumni association was there and had a base to call their own. The upstairs was used for meetings and social activities and committee work. They gave tours and have period costumes that they can wear for the tours.

In 1995 they had the opportunity to get the Williams House. They were not the only ones with the opportunity, but they were selected as the best option because they had done such a good job with the Snell House. The Williams House was built in 1890-91 and is right behind St. Mary's Church at the intersection of 4th Street and 5th Avenue South. The house was a residence for the Williams Family. John Williams and his family moved into the house in late 1891 and he died in April, 1892. He was thirty years older than his second wife Sara she was supposedly on site during the building and her influence is fairly clear in the "Queen Anne" style of the house. This is one of the few houses of this style still in existence in the Tampa Bay area. Sara lived in the house for a while after and married a third time, the gentleman she married became the mayor of St. Petersburg; she lived in the city until her death in 1917. In many ways she is the mother of St. Petersburg. This house has a lot of historical significance and its care being entrusted in USF is a "great honor and a great responsibility." This is part of the community and the university acts as a conservator for the community.

Both houses were renovated, the Williams house required a second renovation grant. There were a lot of people involved to save money. There was a designer show house in the area in 1997, so they moved out of the Snell House for six months. The designers took over and redid the rooms in the Snell House. They refurbished it in a period style. They moved back into the Snell House and the renovation of the Williams House slowed until they got the second grant.

Then they "realized we had two independent free standing houses, one Queen Anne and one Dutch Colonial and they had steps," therefore the school needed to make the houses handicapped accessible. They discussed the possibly options for accommodating the people who had limited access to the houses. They were not required by law because the houses' ages meant they did not have to comply with current accessibility requirements. The administration and task force committee got together and agreed that it would be important to let everyone who wants to see the houses see the houses. Much of the second grant money went into the creation of the breezeway that connects the two houses.

The Williams house did not have plumbing or electricity when it was built. Over its existence it was turned from a residence into the Manhattan Hotel, because it became a hotel rest rooms were added on. There was also a wing added on. This is where Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig and all the politicians that came to the area stayed. "Anybody who

was anybody stayed at the Manhattan Hotel.” It eventually became an “old hotel” and then became more of a boarding hotel. The Flint family owned it for a while. Louise Flint Slansky was getting on in years and her family lived out of state so she was in charge of the hotel. She was at retirement age and had just gotten remarried. She did not want to spend time running a hotel. All Children’s Hospital wanted room for parking, so the hotel was demolished, but the Williams House was preserved and came to campus in 1995. Both of them were returned to their original plans. The added plumbing was taken out of the Williams House, although the electricity was saved. There was no running water or electricity in the Williams House as it stood in 1995.

They decided to add the breezeway, which was a connection between the two houses and lift that provides access to the houses and upper deck access so you can go up the lift and get to the second floor of the Snell House and the Williams house. This took a lot of money and put them back a little in some other renovations, but was important for allowing access to all. In just the last few weeks the vast majority of the Williams House has been finished and is now open for operation. During the 1998 period, Dr. Ray Arsenault, who had just become the John Hope Franklin Professor in Southern History, moved in. Dr. Arsenault’s office was relocated to the Snell House and John Hope Franklin has come to visit the office. Dr. Arsenault wrote the *City of St. Petersburg Through 1950*, which was published in 1988 as part of the city’s centennial celebration. Having an eminent professor, community historian and respected scholar in the house can help link the house to everything else in southern history. He is also the head of the Honors Program on the campus, he has added a lot to the “vitality of the Snell House.” This brings in honors students and other people.

They can also offer classes in the Snell House. There is a seminar room upstairs and they are offering five classes this semester. This is really exciting, Dr. Arsenault and Dr. Mormino have their offices in the building and just the interaction with students coming in to get advising is exciting. The program has been designated a program of distinction and there is a new wave of students enrolled in classes and use the Snell House as a base for graduate assistants.

Doug Steel is a student in “the vanguard of encouraging access for all people.” He is an “incredible, remarkable individual.” He has overcome great odds, goes to school in a wheelchair with his companion and service dog Gibson, and takes care of his ailing, elderly parents. A student in the honors college, Doug had to meet Professor Arsenault in the courtyard. The courtyard, by the way, now uses bricks taken from the streets of the historic houses and in alley’s next door. This is “another piece of history that we walk on every day.” The courtyard is new, Doug had to come up the sidewalk and ask someone to go get Dr. Arsenault. Doug was “patient, understanding and optimistic that one day we would get an opportunity for him and others to have access to the houses.” The day Doug could get into the class on the second floor of the Williams House was one of Ms. Tschiderer’s favorite days on campus.

The Williams House breezeway was the last major addition. Many people who were preservation-oriented were worried that the breezeway would detract from the historic

houses. Ms. Tschiderer believes that the people who supported the breezeway were insistent that it would look great and they were right.

The houses allow the community to have a something akin to what they have on the waterfront, when someone has a bad day, they can sit by the water and calm down, the water is such an integral part of the community. They have seen manatees give birth, they have seen porpoises jumping alongside ships, they have seen a six-foot leopard ray. On the other a city community and the “hustle bustle of a revitalized downtown St. Petersburg” and then there is “the charm and the civility of the historic houses and the lifestyle that the houses might have engendered by virtue of being owned and operated by very prominent citizens.”

Three years ago the second floor of the Williams House was refurbished to hold offices. They had always intended that there would be a practical application to opening the houses. There were three faculty members with offices on the second floor, Herb Karl, Rosanne Blass and Barbara Hubbard the next year Bill Heller moved in. Last year the advancement team moved in, which is nice because although she no longer works with them, Ms. Tschiderer has remained close to them. She is still in the Snell House and hopes to stay there indefinitely.

Ms. Tschiderer’s office is in the “Breakfast Room.” The first floor of the Williams House was meant to be versatile community space. When Dr. Wilcox was here last year the administration considered making that into office space, she is happy to say that the change has not occurred because this would take away from showcasing the house as a historic landmark. Both houses are multipurpose spaces now, which is in keeping with the original vision, especially given the lack of space on campus.

Perry Snell had married three times, he was a very prominent businessman but had a love of the arts also. He and his wives traveled widely. His first wife Lillian was a financier and he parlayed her money into a wider fortune. They would bring things back from Europe. They had no children, and no heirs showed up, so there was little historic information concerning family life. While doing the historic show houses a man from Sarasota called to ask about the Snell House, show houses originated with the American Society of Interior Designers, they had been doing show houses in Sarasota so there was a lot of publicity. The man that called from Sarasota was Perry Snell, the grand nephew of C. Perry Snell, who built the Snell House. Getty Snell, the grandfather of Perry Snell and brother of C. Perry Snell, did for Ft. Myers what Perry Snell did for St. Petersburg. Perry Snell went through some old lockers that he had in his office in Sarasota Airport. He found a treasure trove of family items about C. Perry Snell and family. They made photocopies of a lot of stuff and the portrait of Perry Snell over the mantle is from his Grandnephew’s collection. Some family went to tour of the Snell House in St. Petersburg, Francis Pruitt gave them all a tour of the last Snell House on Snell Isle. They went to the house on Brightwaters that was owned by Wally Bishop the cartoonist and Louise Bishop, his wife still lives there. Mary Joan Mann, the Bishop’s daughter gave them a tour of that. Perry Snell had spent a lot of time visiting his uncle and he has memories and pictures of the homes and remembers the setup on the inside. They have

an expanding and evolving archive that may be a part of a living history of St. Petersburg and some of the families in the city.

Limited Space on the campus

This has been a problem and has been discussed. There is a space problem and will probably always be a space problem because the campus is situated on the waterfront, everything that grows around the campus has to grow in partnership with others. This constricts the space that the university has. The initiatives of the faculty to get partnerships in the community and they have “realistic face to face” relationships with the community to they deal with difficult issues. All Children’s Hospital worked out a great relationship with USF pediatrics. They have a shared building which is difficult to accomplish because both groups have different goals, funding sources, and plans of action. As long as people discuss these things realistically and interact with one another they can get in agreement or compromise. This is one of the great things about USF St. Petersburg because they try to work in partnership with the community rather than hole themselves up on the campus and refuse to interact with the people of St. Petersburg. The partnerships are “essential” and Bill Heller, along with faculty and staff, saw that these interactions were essential and tried to continue and expand university-community relations.

The “partnerships with the city can never be understated.” The long range plans discussed in the “20/20 Vision Seminar” that was held at USF St. Petersburg also underscore the importance of community-university interaction. The city owns the Bayfront Center and the Mahaffey Theater and the municipal airport, so therefore the dialogue and discussion needs to continue because they need to keep in mind what is good for the community as a whole and the citizens. The administration is ninety-five percent new and hopefully they will use the resources available, including retired administrators such as Lester Tuttle the founding dean and Herm Brames, plus Winston Bridges and Bill Heller.

She hopes that the new people will bring enthusiasm and ideas to the school but they use the foundations of other people and the changes that have impacted the history of the school and the culture of the community to make it an even better place. The campus has grown, they use Bayboro Station for the college of business and this has helped the space problems a little bit. The negative of this is that the college of business is far away and interaction is difficult.

The airport issue is more difficult, hopefully the ballot will be clear and the citizens can answer at the polls as to what should happen with this issue. She hopes they ask what are the best options for the community and school for the future. She hopes that the campus continues to work with their community and interact with their community. She lived in the Bayboro district as a grad student and lived four blocks from campus in the early 1980’s on the site that is now the Ronald McDonald House. On that block there were old houses with apartments in them. The hospitals are coming from one direction and the university is coming from another and they are able to interact in a productive manner with one another. The Ronald McDonald House is also a great way for the university

community to give back to the overall community. This should give people an idea of how the community has changed.

Her greatest achievement at USF

She came to USF as an undergrad almost by accident, she was given a job and had other opportunities over the years to go other places to work. Many of the people who got these other job opportunities chose to stay at USF because they believed in the mission of the school and the St. Petersburg campus. They felt this was a good resource for the community. They believed that they had a chance to be creative, scholarly and develop and alter programs. She saw the newspaper develop from a once a week or once a month publication with typographical errors to a better and more modern publication. She saw the beginning of student government and student organizations, she helped build opportunities for the campus community to interact and she is honored to be a part of that. She is honored to have had the opportunity to work with the students, faculty and staff at USF St. Petersburg because they are genuinely incredible people. She has met many great community people that have made differences in her life. She wants to tell students that “you don’t know who you touch and how you touch them, but you do and it’s a two way street.” She is flattered that students thank her for helping them out and she is happy to see their development over time. Her hope is that the encounter with her and her programs in some way added to that. She also hopes that a contribution to the campus culture is another legacy of her time here at USF. She has encountered a lot of people and hopes that the things she brought to the table contributed to an environment of free expression. The lively disagreements are very important and then you move on to something else and this helps the institution allow students and staff to learn outside of the classroom as well. She hopes that she has contributed to a campus environment that is scholarly and friendly.

Final thoughts

“After thirty-two years there are a whole lot of things that you want to say and I hope that I haven’t left any things out that I really wanted to share.” Community service is one thing that she wants to touch on. The USF St. Petersburg singers, started in 1974, a collection of students, faculty, staff, families, friends and alumni, they started as a group that likes to sing dance and tell jokes. She was used to community service when she arrived at USF and a group would go to hospitals at holidays and sing and what not. They found out that Graham Park, a senior center near Tropicana Field, which is now an apartment building, had no restaurant facilities and Meals on Wheels did not go out on holidays or Sundays. Mostly everything was closed up on Sundays in the 1970s. The group decided to go out and do a Christmas dinner for them. Her parents gave them money to get food, the group cooked and served the food and did a little show with about thirty to forty people and the USF St. Petersburg singers has done it for thirty years. They have gotten bigger and better as the time has gone on and they do forty-five-minute skits. They might write and perform, juggle or sing, this was an opportunity for people who had performed to continue to perform because they did not have a fine arts program at the school for a long time. They do not have performing arts there. This is also an opportunity for people who had never performed to try their hand at it. They would do twenty to twenty-four shows around town in costume for free every year all around town.

They do an Irish show in the spring. They do holiday songs around the Christmas season, they did Mr. Dickens' Christmas. They had a marine science major who looked like Charles Dickens named Michael Moyer, he had a long flowing beard that he started growing when he began his Ph.D. He did not cut it until he finished the Ph.D. twelve years later. They had a show in which Michael played Dickens who fell asleep on Christmas Eve and Ms. Tschiderer played Georgette, Dickens's sister who ran the household. In his sleep many character collide. The artful dodger from Oliver Twist meets Scrooge and they form a partnership in the dream. The Artful Dodger picks pockets and Scrooge invests the money. The three ghosts of Christmas past present and future came out as he was falling asleep and sang "Mr. Sandman." The purposes of the shows are to be wild and eclectic. They have done forty shows. In 1995 they did "Peace on Earth in 1945" to show how a family celebrated the end of WWII and they incorporated the movies playing and songs played at the time. They always have fun with these things, they do art fairs and sang at the Gasparilla Art Show. This is an opportunity to do community service and have a creative outlet for students, faculty and staff. They are actually on the second generation, there are people that have grown up working inside the troupe. Some people come and go over time. They do a Sea Shanty Show, which teaches Sea Shanty's to people. These shows have been done at Eckerd College and elder hostels. She is very proud that the USF St. Petersburg Singers received the 2003 volunteer of the year award in arts and recreation from the United Way of Tampa Bay. She is proud that the group can go into the community on behalf of the school and let people know that the school cares about the community. This is a way to thank the taxpayer for the opportunity that she has had to go through public education, receive a scholarship and get an education at USF St. Petersburg. "I think it is great that we can do that."

End of Interview