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Bob and Dot Thrush : USF 50th (2006) Anniversary Oral History Project: interview by Lucy D. Jones

University of South Florida Libraries. Florida Studies Center. Oral History Program.

Robert "Bob" Thrush

Dorothy "Dot" Thrush

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

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TRANSCRIPTION

J: Today is Friday, March 19, 2004. My name is Lucy Jones, graduate assistant for the Florida Studies Center. Today I'm continuing a series of interviews in the Special Collections reading room at the Nelson Poynter Library on the University of South Florida St. Petersburg campus. Today I'm with Dot Thrush who ran the bookstore on campus for many years and her husband Bob Thrush who ran the audio-visual....

BT: I worked in the audio-visual.

J: Audio-visual for the campus at the same time. Good morning both of you and thanks for coming. Did you two come to the campus together?

BT: No, I started first. I started in 1968, part time in the little library in the A Building. That library was a circulating library. Mr. Gomez operated it. He had books that he would send to other universities. [He] would package them up and send them to Gainesville or where ever. That was sort of the nucleus of this little library we had at this campus. I started there. In the AV, when they needed showing a film,

they gave me a little place there where the projectors were, and I would provide what little they needed at that time. Each year it grew more and more.

J: So you've been here continuously since 1968?

BT: [I've been here] from 1968 to 1991; twenty-three years.

J: And then retired. Did you move over here to this library when it opened?

BT: No, this building was not here. The next building over was the library when I left.

J: Did you meet Dot here?

BT: No...

DT: Lorraine Mallue was in the bookstore, and I'm not too sure when she came, but it was the type of thing that I think started out [with them] just bringing the books over from Tampa. She'd be here to sell them. Then, as enrollment grew, in about 1972 she needed an extra pair of hands to shelve books, to help with the shipping and the receiving, and to help the students locate them. It was in a square room in the center of the east hall of A Building. Shelving was basically initially around the sides and a couple of stacks down the center. She had fashioned a very, very tiny little storeroom in one corner that were flanked by shelves facing the store for shirts and things, supplies. It had a sliding door that hooked to nothing, but it was an old piece of plywood paneling. The back of that was our backup stock and cash register number four that we would bring out during book rush. That was basically it. Then, of course, you just kept adding stacks as they were needed. We were based out of Tampa so there was never an overlay for Bob and I. My supervisors were all out of Tampa. It really worked out quite well. I started as OPS. Helen Sheffield was in charge of personnel. She hired me. I think that stood

for Other Personnel Services, I'm not sure. It would be on sort of a temporary basis, but my temporary basis went on for six years. I started out the first two weeks of a book rush for semester one and two. Lorraine just sort of hurriedly trained me, and I was really under fire and on the job. I had never done any of that before. [I had] never run a cash register or anything, but it turned out okay. Then it would see that it needed to be a two-person operation. I was hired as an official line item. I had to take a test to do what I'd been doing for six years. That was exciting. Part of the reason it became more full time is I was, at that point, coming back for book buyback at the end of each semester. That required buying book backs, getting them ready, and shipping them back to Tampa, which was more than one person could do. Lorraine had been taking six weeks off each summer for vacation, summer break. She closed up. We would come back one day during the six weeks and conduct buyback and get the books off. Once it became a two-person operation, we were always there. Our hours were nine to one with a break from one to three. We would come back three to seven Monday through Thursday for the six o' clock students to be able to get their books, notebooks, pencils, and things. Actually, we also had to take annual inventory once a year [on] June thirtieth.

J: It's stuck in your mind

DT: I could not ever forget. It was a major thing. We had to close the store for three full days right after summer session started. The only person allowed in, other than ourselves, was the state auditor. We had to count every pencil, every eraser, every textbook, every greeting card, every bar candy. It did take the full three

days, and then you had to be released by the auditor. That was really an inconvenience to the students, even though you tried to notify them. These were part-time students that always did not get the information. That was something you knew had to be done, and that was about it. We did that for a number of years. Lorraine retired in 1980 so I sort of applied for her position. They were changing things around, and I could only do it if I became a clerk four so I became a clerk four. I didn't get appointed manager until we moved into the new store that had been promised every year since we've been here. The position opened for supervisor, and you can become a manager if there is a supervisor in the store. We had a supervisor, a clerk, and myself. We moved into the new store, and I was there until 1991 when we retired. We retired April first so we left at the same time, but we did not come at the same time.

J: April 1, another date that....

DT: Oh yes, some of them are vague, but those two are really embedded.

J: When you say the new store, is that the store that's currently....

DT: Yes. COQ 101. Yes, yes, yes. It was a beautiful store. It was sort of frantic trying to move in. By then, we were having graduation on campus, and the president of the university would come over and personally hand out the diplomas. Lorraine and I would take all the orders for the regalia. Robert would video them. I guess that first one, they took it for granted that it wouldn't rain. They just had it out harbor side, and it was a gorgeous day.

BT: A number of years they had...

DT: And then they put up the big tent.

BT: Yeah.

DT: They finally put up the big tent. I always came to graduation to help with the collars, the caps, safety pins, bobby pins, and things. Of course, he was always here. I gave out bumper stickers that said, "Class in St. Petersburg Compliments of the Book Store," to all the guests. Then we opened the following Monday for summer semester, which was a lot of last minute transition for A Building to COQ. It worked out ok, and it was a beautiful store. It is a nice store. We put a lot of planning into it, and it all paid off. It basically gave us more room, but we had already started ordering some merchandise, shirts and things, with the St. Petersburg campus imprint on it. [We started ordering the merchandise] in the old store, even. That gave us a little bit of identity. I think for years when you would say you worked at USF, everybody thought we commuted every day. You said, oh no, we go to the St. Petersburg campus. I think somebody mentioned one time that it was the best kept secret in St. Petersburg that it was here. [That is] probably so. That was our transition into the new store. By then, Bob was working out of the second library so we just sort of kept transitioning along. The beauty for us was, for such a long time things changed, but the people remained the same. We kind of tried to come up with some of the names of the people. Helen Sheffield hired both of us. Les Tuttle was dean. Donna Christensen was his secretarial assistant. I don't know the various designations, but she was in the office. Earl Bodie was the head cashier. Evelyn Mohler worked in the registrar's office. She was not the registrar, but she was the contact. She was there all the time. They had a secretarial pool upstairs, and that was Pearl Williamson and Mary Ann Harrell,

Khaleah Bryant. Marilyn Bach worked with the nurses. For a while they were in B Building. I'm not sure whether she was in A Building initially or not. They were on the second floor of A Building, upstairs in the very center. Then there was Betty Hodges and Doris Martin. Those were the ones that kind of came to our mind. I think there were probably a couple more. Mrs. Doris Cook was the head librarian when....

BT: When I started.

DT: I do believe Jackie Shumaker was there, and Betty Ferness, I think it is, or Ferris. There was Darinka [Bowen] in there, and I don't remember her last name, but she was there. Al Christian was in charge of the physical plant. Jean Overstreet worked with him. A retired white major and Whitman ran the Veteran's Affairs, which was pretty big. A lot of veterans returned, so she was in charge of Veteran's Affairs. Avora Smith and Ed McCarthy handled the custodial chores during the day. A lovely person, Juanita, and I have no idea of her last name, but because we were there until seven, we would meet her coming on for the night shift. I think she might have been the supervisor. [She was] just a lovely person. Bill Door was one of the people. Fran Seagrave and Nancy Teets were kind of connected to the student activities or student affairs areas. Nancy Teets, in all the closeness that was here, was the unofficial baker. She would bake birthday cakes for everybody, which was always a real treat. [They were] pleasant surprises and a real treat. That was just another thing that kind of kept things closely knit. I enjoyed her. The faculty names I recall – I've just put them down as professor, doctor, and instructor, because I never knew the designations that went. I think I

probably just called them all professor. Bob Hall was here, David Kenerson, Harriet Deer, Allen Blomquist, David Carr, Bill Garrett, Joy Klingman, Robert Fowler, Winston Bridges, Tim Reilly, Gene Towery, Harry Schaleman. I remember when Ray Arsenault came and took his things up the stairway to his office, moving in. He had one of the girls with him. She was a helper. There was Hamilton Stirling, Maryanne Rouse, Peter Betzer was here as a professor, prior to returning as director. Sonia Helton, she was Sonia Forseth then. Herb Carl, Eleanor Guetzloe, Robert [S.] Cline, Edgar Dunn, and then people that I probably just used last names. There was [Harold J.] Humm, [John E.] Kelley, Totten, [William L.] Stewart, [Thomas K.] Hearn, and [Walter J.] Musgrove. Then there were a number of adjuncts that would be on campus when their courses were rotated in. Sooner or later they all needed textbooks. You kind of talk to them on a peripheral basis. Usually the secretaries handle the orders. When there was a problem, and there were probably a couple of major problems.... I'll tell you my major problems later.

J: Never-ending audio/visual problems.

BT: No. It went pretty well. Perhaps the main challenge was when Sudsy would need PA systems for some of her programs. I had to learn that pretty quick, but it worked out well through the years. Sometimes she'd have programs outside, and we'd have all these cables out there, and the PA system would be going, and somebody would trip over the cable. [Then we'd have] no PA. So you had to run down where that had gone amuck. Then we put in a PA system for Sudsy in B Building where she would make her announcements to students about things that

were going on. That was successfully done. Just like Dorothy, we initially worked for the Tampa campus. My boss was over there. During quarter breaks, he knew there was nothing much to do here so he'd call me over to Tampa during that week or two break. Generally it was about two weeks at a time. I believe then they had four quarters in a year. You had a lot of breaks in between. [My boss] would send me over to help his needs, which were mainly – and they were challenging – checking on the inventory that he had given out to professors and classes, and to make sure that everything was still there. He had these young fellows that ran the golf carts. They were real cowboys. That's how I got my first grey hair, flying around. They were so good...up and down; they just kept it wide open going from building to building. They had a lot of buildings to get to. It would be amazing how the material would show up when we checked one at a time. That was quite often a quarter break job, having to go over there and work with Jim. Jim Haskins was my supervisor all those years. He just retired last year. [He was] a very capable person who really had a challenge of having to keep ahead of all their needs at the main campus, which is antennas for broadcasting, powering up bigger TV broadcastings, the whole thing. He was on top of that right up until the last year when he retired. We had quite an extensive library of film, 16mm film for classroom use. They also had a catalog and rented it out to other schools, high schools or whoever wanted to pay for it. It was very nominal charge that they charged. The film needed to be lubricated occasionally, or else it could become brittle and start breaking up. He had to devise almost like a torture thing where you dropped a solution as the film was running around. Drop, drop,

drop. It was amazing; it did the job. You would run fast speed, the film from start to finish with these drops coming down, and when it was finished, it would be lubricated. Then you rewound it, and it was all set. We did that one time, but that was amazing. Throwing up those films, getting them ready, and doing the program. He got them all done in the course of a couple of weeks with a number of his volunteers and me from St. Petersburg campus. Occasionally we would request films for over here. The runner that went between campuses was to bring it here. Occasionally it didn't make it to the drop point in Tampa. Dorothy and I, many times, have gone over at night just on our own and picked up the film rather than have to tell the professor that it wasn't going to be available. It just seemed so much nicer to have it.

J: I'm sure they appreciated that.

BT: A lot of times, I don't think they even knew that that's how the film came. Occasionally that breakdown did happen

DT: Every once in a while, when I was not working full time, if those things happened and somebody needed a six o'clock film and it missed the run, I'd run over during the day, pick it up, and get it back here by six o'clock at night. They all depended on it. We had two runs a day: morning and afternoon. It always seemed like you were pushing to get things for the runner and waiting for him to come back. He also ran the shuttle. There were a number of students on the St. Petersburg campus who didn't have cars that had to take classes only offered in Tampa. He'd run them over in the morning, and then make arrangements to bring them back in the afternoon run. Then there was a time that one young man...I think the van

rolled over, but he was all right. That worked out good. Initially, all of our books came over on one big run from Tampa at the beginning of each quarter or semester. The runner would bring in the additional ones that were needed. Then the Tampa bookstore would send over the big truck to take things back. Those were the problems I was going to mention. We were a small campus, so I don't know that they ever turned any students away. They would order books for one section, and then if more students showed up, they'd open a new section, but books were only here for one section. That was a panicky thing. We didn't have overnight shipments, or anything. Everything was very labored and slow. The saving grace was that I worked with Carla Bowman, Sarah Crum, and Margie Boyette, and Patricia Reynolds. Out of the UC Bookstore, which was where our shirts and all came from, and our supplies, there was Fran Bradbury, Lee West, and Charlotte Tumbleson. Then there was Kathy Mayo in office store where we got some of our supplies from. George Hardy was in charge of the shipping and receiving. I called Margie with my tale of woe, and quite often they would be in a position to share some of the texts they had on their shelves, with us until our shipment could come in. That helped a lot. A student without a book for the first two or three weeks of class has a definite problem. I know they think we don't care, but I just couldn't breathe until they were all supplied. One of the other major problems was that we did not have courses scheduled so that they could take a course semester one and somebody else who had just come to school could take the same course semester two. Here, they rotated in the second half of that course, so obviously you didn't need the book for the first half. When buyback

rolled around, it was not on the buyback list. That was a major frustration for the students. If they were teaching the course in Tampa, we could buy the book back for them, and we would be sending that with our returns. They would set a limit. They only needed to buy back so many, and their students were selling them back, too. When it went to a used book company, the price you paid was certainly less. It eventually got to the point of where you couldn't assure them that there wouldn't be a new edition out the next time that course was offered. Their availability picked up new editions by leaps and bounds. I'm sure that was always a student's problem. That also meant we had almost a total wipeout of textbooks on the shelf. When one semester was over, almost everything had to go back, and almost all new ones came in. You really were hard pressed to be ready. We never had vacations. Christmas holidays, the students and professors would be off, but we only had that amount of time to switch gears and be open January 2. They were ready. They needed them. They wanted them, and you needed to be ready. That was another thing that was part of the operation. You just knew that that wasn't going to be the way that would go. I think that those are the things that are difficult for a student to understand. I think they would have a tendency to feel that, for their monetary investment, we should be more solicitous. We were trying as hard as we could. The main thing you wanted to let them know was that, without a student, I didn't have a job. If they didn't need textbooks, they obviously didn't need me. I felt honor-bound to provide as best we could. We didn't have computers. We only had telephones to be communicating with Tampa. Sometimes those didn't work. Building A had a telephone room, but it

didn't always function. I think they said it was moisture in the air a lot. There wasn't a basement or anything. A lot of the decisions had to just come from homeport here. You just kind of had to go with the flow. You watched the campus grow, and you watched them graduate. I think the other thing that I thought made the campus so unique was the fact that there were non-traditional students here. The average age was older. We only had junior, senior, and graduate work. They were dedicated students, and a lot of them had already been out in the field. A lot of the ladies had gotten married, had children, and came back looking for a career. They were not your typical freshman or sophomore. They studied. You'd see little groups of studiers everywhere, study groups. They were here longer because they could only come part time. Rather than just be here two years, you kind of felt like you got to know them. They were here longer.

BT: I'll tell you one story that we had. Sudsy would have Friday night movies at the auditorium in A Building. I'm not even sure if it's still an auditorium or whether it's been subdivided. It was a large room. It had a stage, and we had a big screen brought in. She'd have these movies every Friday night. This one time, the movie was packed. It was in cinemascope, which would be ok except we had a normal sized screen. This screen took care of only about one-third of the picture. We had one-third more to the right and one-third more to the left. I got some of our daughters' boyfriends come on down to help us. We pinned white paper down both sides of the main screen with duct tape and held it up to where we could fill out the film. Later on, Tampa sent us over a bifocal that we could use that would bring the film back to normal. In this case, we didn't have that so we had to go

with the white screen, and it did work for the film. As the evening progressed, it was starting to roll down on either side, slowly. Fortunately most of the action of the war going on with Patton was in the center state. Patton was generally in the center so you didn't lose any of the storyline. That was kind of where we had to use ingenuity. Some of the times, some of the young fellows that got the job of having to do the Friday night movies when I wasn't doing them, they'd get the film and it would not have been rewound, and at the last minute they were having to do hair raising adjustments to get everything done on time. The films were enjoyed by the campus. It was all part of this mystique of everybody feeling very much a part of a very small campus. All the activity [was an] unbelievable amount of activities that Sudsy would try to provide for the enjoyment of the kids, other than just studying. She had a little coffee shop, Mushroom. That was in the era when there were coffee shops, coffee houses. That era. She had her coffee shop and she [would] have posters up showing what the movie was going to be – Humphrey Bogart or whatever.

DT: She'd have live musicians come into the coffee house. I thought another beauty of the campus was that that was open to the community. The neighbors would come in to watch the movies and things. Every once in a while, if the distributors sent them out, they didn't send them in the right sequence so you see reel one, and they'd have reel two all ready to go, but it turned out to be reel three. Then they'd have to regroup and throw in reel two. [They would] have to like that up really quick. That was always interesting. That was all part of the sights and sounds around A Building. On Sunday afternoons, there was a band called the New

Yorkers. The fellow that led it, I think his last name was Volker [Charlie]. He and his wife would come down. All of the musicians were professionals that had retired from big bands so it was a big band sound. All the community folks would come in, and the students. Being among the older people, when the jitterbug was all the thing, they'd get up and jitterbug in the aisles. They'd have a wonderful time. It was just a fun afternoon when the New Yorkers would come. They'd put on quite a concert. Some of the other things that they did like that.... Just out of the clear one day, Al Christian and the guys from the physical plant somehow managed to get this ancient, old grand piano out on the cement slab in front of A Building. Skitch Henderson, who was a very well known pianist, came at lunchtime one day and just put on a concert out in front. It was hilarious because it's the narrows there in the water. It would reverberate off the buildings across the way, so it came and went. He was just terrific. A group called Gabriel's Brass just magically appeared one day and did the same thing. Later we saw them up at Disney so I think they were on their way up, but we got to enjoy them. That, of course, was open to anybody that came. Among the students who were returning over a period of time, we had a number of senior citizens who would take advantage of the free tuition and show up on a space-available enrollment. They would take literature, history, sociology...

BT: Geography.

DT: And geography, big in geography. [They] eventually got into some computers if they wanted to learn how to access Senior Net. That was another thing that made it seem a little different here. I always thought that added a lot to the classroom

discussions. It made it more intergenerational than the traditional student body. You had people who had practical experience in the same discussion area as people who had had book learning. When some of the local teachers would come back for recertification, they had already been out in the classroom. They could offer a lot of advice as to what really did work and what really didn't work. You're on.

BT: We had a number of these education teachers that would come on campus. [They had] had whole careers up north or in other states. When they would come on campus the last ten years of their career, they would bring in an awful lot of experience that they've already had. Dr. Totten had awards for some of the innovations he had done up in Michigan. They were interesting. Dr. Hern would invite people like the mayor of the city to come and give a talk to the class. There was an outspoken fellow in Tampa politics. He had something to do with the water supervision over there. He was controversial. I think Tampa is always having a vigorous time with their politics. He would come over and talk about his sanitation problems and what it is. He was very interesting. I would take those kind of shows. Also, in the little conference room 130, when they had the speakers come, there was an interesting assortment. Sometimes...Depaulo?

DT: Yes.

BT: I taped his little speech to the class. He was very entertaining. As a boy in his bedroom, he discovered that you pulled up on [the wallpaper], and there was white underneath there. He could pull it up, and he would do his drawing. He never had enough paper to do all the drawings he would do. So he'd do his

drawing, and then he'd pull the wallpaper back down so he had his little, hidden artwork in his own bedroom. He was just a delightful person. I taped Ralph Nader in A Building one time. [I taped] one of the beat generation [people], Ginsberg; I taped him. They have had quite an assortment of interesting people over the years. Sometimes just speaking to classes, sometimes it was for little public forums. The campus was always trying to promote interesting people for discussion and for insights, for not only the students but for anybody that wanted to come down. There would be a number of people that lived in the apartments around the downtown area that found this to be a very enjoyable thing to come to once every week.

DT: That was the lecture series. There was a great *St. Petersburg Times* columnist and cartoonist, Dick Bothwell. I think the League of Women Voters had always had the politicians up for election. That was always kind of open to everybody. Then there would be a foreign country week once a year. They would pick a country and everybody would rally around and come up with something that would be of interest. It touched on the costumes, the food, religion, and the cultures. It kind of tied in with history and geography. We'd get books in the bookstore to go with it. That was a pretty major thing. They would get dignitaries from the country to come sometimes. [They would get] ambassadors and things. That was another thing that was open to the general public. The Suncoast Writers' Conference, you did a lot of those.

BT: Everything progressed along to where there were a lot of activities going on. The Writers' Conference, they had Margaret Truman. I don't know what her married

name was, but she had just written one of her mystery books. She was promoting it and giving a talk on that. We taped that. For the Writers' Conference, some of them would have slide presentations. We would provide whatever equipment they need. Some of them would have video that they would want to play. Whatever they needed to support their lectures, we provided that. That went on year in and year out for probably twenty years.

DT: Tommy Depaulo, he came. I think that was sponsored by the elementary education area. Paula Danziger was another one that they had in, and she was terrific. They'd all do autographs while they were there and that sort of thing. It made it nice. You always felt like you were in a position to be learning something if you had time to concentrate on it. Robert was always running equipment. You always felt like you had responsibilities. It was not like sitting down and saying, see you next time. He'd be videoing kids out on the quad there, Bayboro Harbor side. In the marketing classes they would come up with imaginary products and have to put together a whole sell job. They'd do commercials. Along with that, they'd send people into the bookstore with surveys. Would you like this color green on a stocking wrapper? Something like that. They always had a whole list of things they were trying to piece together.

BT: It was amazing how many innovations that they've come up with to make commercials up that later became things. There's a Sea Bar. They had a song about it and everything. It was a nutritious candy bar. Then there was another couple that had devised a remote lawn mower. Of course, they've got that now. They had gone out to Honeywell and checked on it. They said, it's feasible. A

number of them had done research. One kid in one of Dr. Kenerson's programs was having a thing on the problems of alcohol. He had gone to the police station and asked if there was any way he could get to a cell and take a picture of it. He put himself in the cell. As luck would have it, the whole wing of the jail was being repainted. They gave him the whole wing. I went in and had to video him as the officers were taking him into the cell. Then you hear this clank. The funny thing about that was, he had been part of a group of four or five other boys. Kenerson had had them down in groups. Five and six clusters. This guy couldn't get along with the other four so they threw him out. That's when he did his own thing. I had to work independently just with him. I went to the jailhouse and videoed him getting out of the policeman's car, out of the cruiser and into the jail cell. That was his promotion.

DT: He went to court.

BT: Went to court. Dr. Reilly had a girl student who wanted to do an actual mock trial. She had a number of people and got them all together to do it. We went to the courthouse right here in downtown St. Petersburg and had it done right there. They had the jury, the judge, the prosecutor, the defense, and we went through the whole thing. It was quite realistic. It was when they were still discussing whether to have video in a courtroom. At the time it was still being kicked around. That was her program that should be done. It all went well. One of her people sees a button behind the judge's chair, and he just wondered what that was. He pushed it, and all of a sudden security comes rushing in.

DT: They were everywhere.

BT: He set off the alarm. That was the only embarrassment that we had on that one. It had been a good learning experience.

DT: Kenerson did the interviews for personnel when they first came in and then at the end of the session.

BT: He had a lot of patience listening. They would make presentations about themselves. We taped that, and then they'd get to see how they did. He did that session after session and took a lot of time for that. He sat back and graded and made comments about each and every one of them. It was really quite a dedicated effort that he made. The various students that came along, sons of local politicians here that were going through the course this year. Other name people from St. Petersburg, their next generation coming on through in business.

DT: One of the smells was right above his little office in the storeroom. There was a huge refrigeration unit that was ancient. I think it was put it when the marines...

BT: Freezing for the service when it was in the service. But they were old, old refrigeration.

DT: The marine science students would bring in coolers that they would get from out of the Gulf. [They] would put them in there and freeze it until they could do their research on a particular one. Every once in a while, the equipment broke down, and it would just reek. Of course, I'm sure that meant that particular part of their research would be put back quite a while. They probably would have to redo it, but you always knew when that had happened. On the bookstore side, Dr. Forseth had the art room on one side. That was so exciting. You never knew what was going to happen there. You'd go out to lunch, you'd come back, and there'd be a

clothesline strung between two palm trees outside. She'd have all of these wet tie-dye shirts hanging from it. They would be there to dry. Then you'd come down the hall, and she'd have the students all laid out on the floor on long strips of brown or white paper, and they were tracing around each other. Then they'd have to cut it out, and they had two sheets under each one, I guess. Then they'd have to draw in their face, hair, clothes, jewelry, and do a self-portrait front and back. Then they'd stuff newspaper in it and staple around the side. Then they'd be all propped up around the hall. It looked like the class was standing out there. That always got your attention. She'd have an art show at the end of the semester. They had kilns in the art room so they'd do clay things and turn them into ceramics. She'd take a picture, make it into a grid, and then she'd have a team reproduce that with the grid so that you always had variations of color and that sort of thing. She had some sort of scratch art where they have colors and put total black crayon on top and scratch a design. That was all part of her end of the semester art show. These young teachers must have learned something because when the grand children went to elementary school, they were doing scratch art, grid art, weaving with construction paper, and all that. You realize that it's all put to use when they graduate. It has to be learned. On the other side of the bookstore there was what they called the Ed. Resources Room. I think when some of these intern teachers went out into the classroom, they needed a place where they could get little story books, films, and things like that to take with them to class. They had a big old tooth for dental instructions and things. That was staffed by some of the students. They'd be there to keep it open certain times so that they could come in and make

that available. I thought another thing that was really great is that they took part of B Building and had a nursery there. The education students would put their time in, and the employees could bring their preschool children in. On their coffee breaks they could go over to the nursery and visit with the children. It just seemed like such a great opportunity for practical experience. Plus, it was just so convenient. I'm sure they all appreciated that. I thought that was a good idea. It did not survive, but it was a good idea, I thought. You realize how helpful it would be for students to have a way to utilize what they're learning and see for themselves if it's going to work. There's nothing like that. If you can't hone your skills, you're kind of in trouble when you get out in the real world. That was always their thought as the real world would be coming down on them. I think one of the times I remember being so unique [was] A Building had been built by armed services specifications, and the floors and the walls were unbelievably thick concrete. Golly dang, didn't they have to termite it. Apparently they thought they discovered termites up in the wooden rafters. We had to take all of the candy, all of the envelopes for the greeting cards, and everything that you would come into contact with you had to secure. Then they put up the big tent. That was a weekend to behold. It was a major undertaking. We had to do a lot of preparation for that.

[Side B] Some of the other things that I thought were really unique, being dockside like we were, are they had Jacques Cousteau's research vessel put in. They were doing a lot then on TV with his activities, and I thought it was going to be really great. It was all rusty. I don't know. It came in for repairs and had a teeny tiny helicopter

on it. It looked like a big dragonfly. All the sailors had bicycles, and they'd whip those things off and whip on into town. He was in for a while. That was something. Then at Christmas, British navel ships would come in. Golly, they'd have the whole crew in their whites standing around the top deck railing. Lots of times the Dunedin Bagpipers would come down and pipe them in. They had their kilts on. I think they allow fourteen year-olds to go to sea. They look so young. It would be Christmas, and they would be allowed this trip here. The local folk would come down and invite them to lunch, Christmas dinner, and things like that. Peninsular Telephone would put a pay phone out there that was always busy, so they could call. There would be canvas stretched over the back part of the deck, and they would have dignitary festivities. The officers would invite the local dignitaries over, and you could see that kind of activity going on. That was always pretty exciting. Then they had our Army landing crafts were out there. The National Guard would practice those on some weekends. That was kind of a unique sight. Some marine science research boats would come in from Texas and dock up front. Then some of our students would join them. It was kind of a combined effort there. I think it kind of gave you a little feeling of things other than normal college life. We didn't have recreation like they do on Tampa campus, so it was sort of a do it yourself thing. They'd have pickup volleyball games in the low end of the swimming pool at noontime. Golly, they were spirited. If it was too cold to swim, they'd do it on the grounds out there in front of the guardhouse. They were all pretty excited. You're on. I'm so glad you came, sweetie.

BT: One of the assignments I really did enjoy was Dr. Towery would have.... Much of her teaching was in elementary education. She'd get the kids to enact Jack and the Beanstalk, and they'd do that on the main stage in the auditorium. Some of those kids were fearless at improvising and quite clever. They had a ball doing it, a number of them did. In the classroom, we would tape little puppet shows. They'd have the little puppet theaters. Perhaps the most hilarious of that...you took a table and you put a tablecloth over it, dropped it down to the floor in the front, and the participating kids would be under the table with their feet up in socks. They had socks on. They had faces on the socks. They could write their script and read that in the back, and you couldn't see them. They didn't have to worry about memorizing. They'd have these hilarious dialects and the whole bit. To video it was just a lot of fun. They were very good at that. That was one of the perks of doing what we did.

DT: Another thing I thought was pretty swell was that Ken Pothoven came over from the Tampa campus in the summer. There would be local kids. He'd run a math camp. You had the school age children that would come on campus and he would have them a week or two weeks. They would be swimming in the swimming pool for their little recess breaks and playing volleyball, too, but they really did do some great projects. They'd have a sharing night when their parents would come. They were bright kids. They were everywhere. We had the Coke machine outside the bookstore, and that was an activity place. [We had] candy bars and things like that. Also, there was a communications.... Bob Snyder would come over with his colleague from Tampa. It was like a reading course so they would put on action

readings in the auditorium there, with just minimum props and minimum costumes.

BT: That was really mind-boggling in that they were not part of the drama thing. Lighting was just coffee cans and whatever. It had to be improvised. No costumes. In a way it made it extremely more difficult. When you think about drama, you think the costumes add to the reality of it. The lighting adds to it. To give you an idea of what they did, they did *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

DT: Terrific. It was terrific.

BT: There was one scene that's in the movie [where] the hero takes them all out in a wild boat ride. So what they simply did was take kids and line them up like a teardrop with one person in the center. He was the captain. The rest of the inmates formed the point of each end of the boat. That was the way they did that. They got across the mystique of the drama by way of their acting.

DT: One year they did *Doonesbury Chronicles*. That was great. [They did] *Peanuts*.

BT: They did it with Duke. It's still very much a part of *Doonesbury*. He was out in the South Seas Island at that particular time.

DT: They managed to convey that.

BT: It was amazing what they did. He would start off the class and have the kids doing neck exercises, rolling their head and getting all loose. Then each one would have to get up and do their presentation. They were very good.

DT: We sold little plastic recorders in the bookstore for Janice Buchanan's class. That was *Introduction to Elementary Education Music*, I guess. That was ever so interesting. I think it was the first time a lot of them had ever.... She was just

terrific with it. [I think it was the first time] they'd ever tried to play an instrument, read music, or do any of that. You'd hear them practicing up and down the hall, trying to get it together. I think they had to play a solo for their final. At the end of semester one, they'd be learning Christmas carols. You'd hear Jingle Bells and one thing and another. Just where ever you were, you'd hear this music coming. We'd see students on the street or in a store somewhere, and they'd be all excited about that. I think that was another thing that was great, that they had an opportunity to help each other while they were doing that. We had block programs. There was a block education program. They went through in a block. [They] started out the same time [and] took all the same classes so they really got to know each other. I think they did that with the nursing courses, too. They would come in one day with the idea that they'd have all their nursing courses scheduled for one day of very concentrated. They just kept on their regular jobs, and they schedule their day off then. They were a very dedicated group. It was amazing how much so many of these students accomplished. Many of them were married and had families, full-time jobs, and they were still going to school and still learning. They may have been toward either upgrading their career or just changing their whole choice of things to do. I don't know. They were really [and] probably still are...It was not your average time spent. Parking would be a problem at night because so many of them came at night. Friday afternoons, it would be kind of quiet. Everybody would try to catch up what didn't get done during the week. They didn't have too many classes scheduled on Friday afternoon. I think one professor would come in maybe Friday night. That

was his night. He'd always have that. Not everything was laid out in very rigid things. It just kind of depended on the various situations. They kept changing. You could never think in terms of the fact that it's always going to be like this. It really was not always going to be like that when it came right down to it. In A Building, upstairs, there was a lounge. It had a stove, a refrigerator, and a sink. Most of the staff were brown baggers so you'd be up there for lunch. There were some tables, and there'd be some playing scrabble or cards or something. That gave you a nice opportunity to visit with somebody outside of your area. Most of the time it was just the two of us in the bookstore. You're looking at everything that has to be done and frantically trying to get it done. It's kind of nice to be able to visit with somebody in a little more relaxed situation. We did enjoy that. There was a snack bar in B Building where they had offered sandwiches and things like that if you wanted to slip over there and do that. It worked out pretty well. It gave you options. That was a nice little lounge. You kind of kept up with what folks were doing. I thought that was a good thing to do. We had our own little campus newspaper, the *Crow's Nest*. I'm sure Sudsy was the primary person for that. That just had our campus news in it. We kind of tended toward the nautical logo and things. Ours eventually became the seagull on the pilings. I carried shirts that had various types of fish on them and just had the imprint on the sleeve, St. Petersburg USF. We had a supplier from Crystal River for stuffed manatees and things like that in the new store. It seemed like that was our only opportunity to be somewhat different. It was certainly logical with where we were. There was a time we had our very own resident dolphin porpoise; porpoise, I guess it was. It was a

hysterical tank. I have no idea what they used it for in the service. It was outside of Building A. It was solid concrete, and it was not terribly large. There had been an injured porpoise that somehow they put in the tank. The marine science students were teaching it. They were doing their research. They'd ring a bell, and they'd know how many times the bell rang and come to the surface in this little limited water. Golly, he was just our resident critter. Unfortunately, it was just right out in the open, and I think they said some of the more mischievous kids in the neighborhood apparently had thrown in coins and things. It thought it was food, and it died. That was really something. You could go pet it. I don't know whatever became of that tank. DNR was a building that's still there. We did not have much occasion to go over there, but I think they utilized a lot of the marine science students in some of their jobs. One thing that we had was the work-study program. I guess they have that at all universities. Robert got a lot of really great students that would be his night personnel. Because we were retail, we did not have them for the whole semester. We could hire them for twenty hours a week for the rush week. I was just always blessed, and he was, too, with some really great student help. You rely on them heavily. They were just great. We felt that that was a good program incorporated here. Over a period of time I wouldn't have any idea how many guys you had. You had gals, too.

BT: Yeah.

DT: They had to get out the night equipment. If he put it all out at six, they'd have to get it back at night. That was another thing. I thought those kind of programs were

good. They seemed to work in a lot of the different areas. I know of nothing else.

What about you?

J: I actually had a couple of questions.

DT: Why not?

J: I was wondering what your experience with audio/visual equipment was before you came to the university.

BT: Not a bit. I was a furniture buyer. [I was] a furniture buyer for twenty years at the largest furniture store in St. Petersburg at the time, Lester Brothers. Then I left there, and Dorothy and I built a dormitory for JC students, the first one of its kind.

DT: [It was for] boys.

BT: It was while we were running that that Helen Sheffield called and said, did I have one of the boys that could come and work in the library? We sent one down, and he worked that period of time. The next year she called again. By then, we were finding some of the financial shortfalls of dormitories so I went down myself. I thought I could do a part time job and it wouldn't disrupt our managing the dormitory. I came and applied for that. That was a very fortunate step for me. I was just part time from 1968 to 1971. Then I came full time on to the campus. I learned running the projectors kind of cold right there. Then Jim Haskins was very good about bringing over and getting me started on any new thing that I needed to do. When they started asking for video equipment here, he would send equipment over for the first several years until we had a chance to get our own program going and buy our own equipment. He was always good about backing up what the need was and advising me about the PA system. I kept just a little

step of the demand, the challenges of it. That kind of kept it stimulating, to say the least. I did enjoy it. I learned to do an extensive amount of videoing of the various programs: in class, in the lecture series, and whatever needed to be done. I think the culmination of what video I had learned [was put to use] the very last month. Dr. Betzer said he was having a big seminar of international marine science, people coming to give talks about their various fields. It was going to be at the Bayfront, and [he wanted to know if] I would tape it. When I left there it was still a small department, so if it was to be done, I was to be doing it. The last week that I was on campus, I was over at the Bayfront doing this from morning until night. Dorothy came extra time, hauling in extension cords to help me along on that. A lot of it was French, or...

DT: Russian, even. There were Russians there.

BT: [There were people] from all over the world doing their thing. It was a good lesson for them. Some of them told Dr. Betzer later that they wanted copies of the tape to see how boring they were. So much of it was just data, and they would just go on and on and on. That was my big finale doing that about four days in a row from morning until night, taping all these people. I think it went quite well. We got just about everybody. The equipment has gotten a lot better in more recent years. That's the thing that fascinating when you get into video. All the technology keeps improving upon itself each year. You just get more capabilities. It's just wonderful. That was my finale.

J: Going out with a bang.

BT: Going out with a bang, yes. Sure did, sure did.

DT: They had a very nice retirement party for us.

BT: Yes they did. They were very nice to us.

DT: People came over from Tampa, my coworkers. It was really just very nice. It was the kind of thing I really felt fortunate to have had backups over there who were very capable and also very helpful. I couldn't function without them. I felt like that's part of what made it work, to be able to coordinate things like that. Of course we progressed to computerized registers. There was always an upgrade, always an upgrade, and always an upgrade. You just about learned to do it, and there was one more. You really never felt as though you had everything down pat and squared away. Something was bound to change just about the time you had that feeling. You had to keep up with what was happening, but they were very helpful to me, too. Question number two?

J: I just had recalled that before we started taping, we had talked about how your children were quite familiar with the campus. I was just curious as to how that came to be.

DT: We've kind of always been a closely-knit family. Everything we did has always involved – we have two girls – it always involved the two girls. Although, they were each away from home for a little while after high school. We were very fortunate that they came back to town. Our older daughter Linda graduated from USF. She had gone two years to JC, then one year to Florida Southern in Lakeland. Then, that being a small school, she changed her major, which is fairly normal. In order to get out on time, she needed to come to USF to get the required subject she'd need in the last year. She spent one summer on our campus. She

graduated from USF and did some graduate-level work. Our younger daughter was at Disney for a while. She opened Disney up and met a nice young man there. They moved to town, and they have two daughters. Like I say, while we were working it was sort of the kind of thing that there were things that they could enjoy around campus. I always think it's kind of nice for children and young people to be exposed to campus life. The younger daughter did not elect to go to college. I kind of laughed. She thought she was through with school at eighteen when she graduated from high school, but she went right to work for Disney. When they were opening up, you went to WDU, Walt Disney University, to learn to do what she was going to be doing. I said, who ever thought? There's still that need to be exposed to it whether or not you ever want to do it or not. The older grand daughter had her four years undergraduate work at Tampa. She's into graduate level work now there. The younger grand daughter goes to St. Petersburg High School in the IB program. As much as you can assume, there may be a college in her future. We just kind of always thought of education as being pretty important to an individual. It's kind of nice when you can do it in this type of surrounding that was here at the time. It doesn't make it seem like anything overwhelmingly huge [or] mind-boggling. It just is a way of life. That was kind of where we were coming from with them. The girls had been around when we had the boys' dorm. That was very interesting. They saw several sides of college life under those circumstances. It's kind of nice for them to see the more frivolous side. That can be so appealing to a freshman who has not seen the bigger picture.

That had its place, kind of like everything else. That had its place. Question number three?

J: I've probably worn you guys out, but thanks for coming in and talking with me.

DT: Yep.

End of Interview