

STOKES: This is Ray Stokes in the Oral History Section of the TCOM Library here in Fort Worth on the 20th of October, 1989. And I am just completely thrilled to have the experience the we're about to enjoy in talking with a very dear friend of mine that I've known since about 1969 who is a general practitioner over in Mesquite, Texas and has been very closely identified with the growth of the school these many years and it's a pleasure to welcome and to recognize my good friend, Dr. T. Robert Sharp and we're delighted to have you with you today, Dr. Sharp. We're remiss. We should have had to 10 years ago. We've been conducting this program now for over 10 years so we certainly should have included you among the first, but my apologies. But nevertheless, we've broken the ice now and we've told who you are and I've identified myself and we're glad to have you back on the campus. You've never been a professor per se; you're included, but what I mean is you don't come over here for class every day and so forth, you're on the clinical faculty. But let's start at the beginning. Where'd you grow up? Where did you discover America?

SHARP: Well, as my neighbors and all would have said, I was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1920.

STOKES: In 1920. We'll that means you're getting close to three score and ten, then.

SHARP: Oh, yes. I'm looking forward to that.

STOKES: Are you? Well fine. I'm going to ask you a little bit about what you might be doing in the future, but let's start at the the beginning. Now, what's your educational background? Of course, I know

you went to Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine and graduated in 1944. Go back beyond there a little.

SHARP: Okay. In those days I lived in Illinois, the very northern part of Illinois, in Freeport, Illinois, and there were four of we children, three of whom of us attended the University of Dubuque at Dubuque, Iowa, probably because they had such a splendid acappella choir of historical existence and my sister was quite a renowned singer and by her influence I was able to get accepted for a singing scholarship and my brother as well. As so we attended there. My younger sister was too young to enjoy the relationship, but anyway the three of us then did attend there and in those days, preosteopathic only required two years of premed. There were specified subjected that you had to have and I had those, but very pridefully, you see, my uncle was a very dear friend, and was an M.D., and of course he thought very much that I should become an M.D. And I asked him where he thought (he was a graduate of the University of Wisconsin) and I thought, well, maybe he would be able to give me some advice, and he suggested that the University of Iowa was coming on very strong and not only that they had a strength in the pediatric values, and he thought that maybe that would be the coming event. So I did not opt for being an osteopathic physician at the time; I was too proudful for that. I was going to be the real kind of doctor.

STOKES: Oh you were?

SHARP: Oh yes. But my brother, through it all, through I think...oh, I've forgotten that doctor that was there nearby that took care of my family, was a D.O. And he presented my brother with a lengthening

shadow of Andrew Taylor Still and impressed my brother enough that he, from the time he read the book until the time he had matriculated, he was going to go to an osteopathic college.

STOKES: Now was he older or younger?

SHARP: He was younger. So it was kind of turn-about and I usually led the way and here I was kind of following. Anyway we started off. It was just about the time that things got a little bit cozy in the European theater and I recall that we had just gone downtown and bought a new car. Well, we started out of time and the thing gave up the ghost, so we went downtown and bought a new car. And we were going to make a tour then to visit the University of Iowa and as well because my brother was along we were going to go down and visit Kirksville. We started out then and went to the University of Iowa, met with whoever it was, I'll say the dean. I think you could even get to talk with the dean in those days, and he reviewed my credentials and said fine, you qualify. My dad says now you know we have another son that's going to be going to college and we have an older daughter that is in college and we have a younger daughter that is coming up in college, so we need to be aware that this young man is going to have to have some means to be able to support himself. Well that was the last thing to say. You coming here to be able to come and work, don't you know that this work load is so heavy you'll never have time, he would never have any time and so forth and so forth. So it was kind of a dimish type of visit, it kind of put a damper on my enthusiasm, though I liked the school. Anyway we motored on down then to Kirksville which was maybe another 200 miles. Any gracious sakes, when we got down there there was not one of the people that we met that had horns. None of them had crippled

backs. They had eyesight and they even spoke English and I thought, well now isn't this wonderful. And they were interested. And they were quite helpful and they said, absolutely, we can help you to secure employment, if no more than your board and room or something on that order, but yes, those things are available and we certainly will work with you. And just coincidentally, maybe two days ago I came across some old papers and it was the itemization of the cost of going to school. It was my brothers, it was not mine, so I sent it to him this past week. Anyway it was \$225 a semester I'm quite sure now. He matriculated in 1942, in the spring of '42 and I matriculated to Kirksville then. Anyway it turned my entire thinking around and we went out and saw the school and the way it laid out and went to the old hospital there, but it was great to me because I could walk inside as an observer and not a patient. And it was quite impressive. I did also have a cousin that was there and matriculated there and he was a senior as I came into school who is still in practice in Michigan. Anyway, that was kind of the background of how I got to Kirksville.

STOKES: Well, tell me, I know something else, that you did have a little bit of time because I believe you met your first wife, Margerie, at Kirksville.

SHARP: I did, she was a freshman.

STOKES: Tell us a little story. She was also a student.

SHARP: We matriculated at the same time, she being from Texas and I thought now isn't that funny, anybody that would come all the way from Texas. See, I'd probably been out of the state once in my life, and

that was in Minnesota where I was born. And so I thought, my gracious sakes, anybody that would be in Texas has got to be an awful long ways from home.

STOKES; What part of the state was she from?

SHARP: She was from Ellis county.

STOKES: Ellis county. Well she has something in common with my wife. My wife was born in Ellis county.

SHARP: She was born in what they call Palmer ("Parmer") if you can use the pronunciation, I presume. Anyway she at that time, however, was living in a little larger city called Ferris and coincidentally her mother worked for a Dr. George Luibel who I'm sure you're quite familiar with. If it wasn't for him none of this would be, isn't that right?

STOKES: Correct.

SHARP: Anyway he was quite a wise person and I recall that she was quite satisfied and Dr. Morrell Sparks and Sam Sparks were a part of that same scene. In fact, my wife was going to be just like Dr. Morrell. She was going to be the greatest female doctor that ever was. So we matriculated at the same time and married when I was a senior. Early we discussed it and I said well there's going to be one doctor in our family, my family, and so I opted to be the doctor.

STOKES; You opted to be the doctor, huh?

SHARP: She did go back to the University of North Texas and got her degree in foods and nutrition and was a registered dietician, so we had some kind of interplay there, you see.

STOKES: Well, then alright. You got out of school and after you got out of school in '44 you were going to heal the world I understand.

SHARP: Oh sure.

STOKES; Where did you start out healing?

SHARP: Well, I went to an internship with Dr. Kugler, Paul Kugler in the southern part of Wisconsin because my folks and we had lived, well, from graduation times in northern Illinois and so within maybe about 150 miles of my folks home was this osteopath that had a hospital and he had two interns on a regular basis and so I left to go up there. It was a small town. And about that time, you see, when I matriculated in the fall of '41, within just a few months there was Pearl Harbor, and then we continued as a class. I think we had roughly 100+ in attendance when we began and by the time we graduated we had somewhere around 33 because they were drafted from all different parts of the country to go into the armed services. At the time we were not given commissions in the armed services as physicians and so therefore the boards, by and large, were quite generous about allowing us to complete our training. And so at the end of my internship we had had VE-Day and of course VJ-Day was in the fall. We went six days a week, Monday through Saturday morning and we had Saturday afternoon and Sunday off. We had Christmas and New Year's and the Fourth of July,

I think as vacation days. In other words we went through the summer and through the winter without break. It was a long, kind of a difficult time for the profession. And it was for the entire nation, but I did not have to go to the armed forces.

STOKES: How many years did you practice in Wisconsin?

SHARP: 16 years.

STOKES: And you got...I use this word advisedly when I say "political" in a sense, but there are politics in any organization and you've been involved in the political aspect of osteopathy and the growth of the profession. When did you get involved in something beyond treating patients?

SHARP; I would think about 1950. At that time there was a young group called the American College of General Practitioners in Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery who had its base in the Los Angeles area and there were rumors that this thing would spread and so it did, and we made application from the Wisconsin group and most of us were general practitioners, though I think there were only perhaps 100 doctors there, D.O.s. We generated enough enthusiasm to organize the first affiliate group from Wisconsin with the national organization, the Wisconsin Society of the American College of General Practice.

STOKES: You served as president of that association?

SHARP: Yes. We helped to organize it and I was fortunate enough to be the originating president and it is still existent.

STOKES: Well now you also of course are very active in the American College of General Practice and you've been the national commander of that organization. What years are we talking about?

SHARP: Well, I served on the board for a few years in the 68, 69, 70 variety and then in 71 became its president and served until 72.

STOKES: Let me interrupt before we get too involved in your activities there, let's get you to Texas. How did you get to the great Lone Star State? Of course, I realize your wife was a native Texas.

SHARP: There you go. That was virtually the reason, it was the reason. I was a small town practitioner. I was in a town of...there were two companion towns and their total population was roughly 1000. I was the only doctor there and the only doctor in a community within 19 miles any one direction and so you "borned 'em and buried 'em" as we used to say and that's the truth. I pulled teeth and I set dog's legs and such like. There was a dentist for a very short period of time and there was not even a veterinarian but this was, of course, right after the war and so you did what you had to do.

STOKES: What part of Wisconsin?

SHARP: The very southmost part just outside of Madison. Anyway, with that and the scarcity of intracommunication. We did not have great rapport with most of the M.D.s about, you felt as you developed in practice there were holes of information that you didn't feel

competent in, and so I suppose you became more and more interested in further and further information and education and that was one of the reasons why the interest in the American College of General Practice. They required 50 hours of postgraduate work every year. The net result was that few of us did that but some of us did and it was that that kind of created a yearning for more interplay between our fellow man, as it were our fellow osteopathic physicians and one of the reasons that compelled us to leave this small town knowing that that were so many things that we couldn't do well because we didn't have (1) time, nor the experience to do it well, and so we came down here to be near my wife's folks and their family and her family and my folks about that time had moved from their location in northern Illinois down to Florida, so there was really no reason to stay there, you see.

STOKES: Now where did you set up your first practice in Texas?

SHARP: Where I am today. I've been there almost 30 years, 29 and a little over.

STOKES: 29 years over in Mesquite, Texas.

SHARP: In Mesquite, Texas, correct.

STOKES: What's that address again?

SHARP: 4224....

STOKES: You've been in the same place?

SHARP: Yes.

STOKES: I interrupted you and you didn't get the whole street...you got the number but you didn't get the name of the street.

SHARP: Oh, Gus Thomasson.

STOKES: Gus Thomasson. That's the odd spelling of Thomason, too, I believe.

SHARP: Yes, Thomas son, so apparently there was a Thomasson in that area, I don't know who he is but I assume that that's how they got it.

STOKES: Well, now you have an associate that I know very well, Dr. Anderson.

SHARP: Yes.

STOKES: He occupies part of the building I think that you have, and didn't he also come from Wisconsin?

SHARP: Yes, we first became acquainted when I was a senior and he was then a freshman, he was an entering freshman. He was married to Bess Ann with whom he still enjoys his wedded bliss and I recall when the first youngster was born he was born shortly before he matriculated as a freshman and so we met then in Kirksville we kept kind of close tabs and he was a good general practitioner as well. So we corresponded through all these years, my years in Wisconsin of

course and then subsequently down here and he was looking for a place, so he removed from a suburb of Milwaukee to this area and we talked about getting together and building a building and enlarging and I had a building but we did enlarge it when he did come and we expanded the size considerably. So we have virtually separate practices but we share certain offices like the x-ray machine and this sort of thing.

STOKES: Do you know the first time I met you, do you recall?

SHARP: I don't suppose I do.

STOKES: Well, I'm not absolutely positive, but I believe that it was at a district 5 meeting. The state is divided into districts, TOMA, the Texas Osteopathic Medical Association that you are a part of, of course, but you had a meeting. I believe it was in the summer of '69 because Dr. Hart who was our first dean, he and I would try to go around to various district meetings and meet the professionals, and we had a meeting and I believe it was a rather memorable meeting. We were very discouraged when we left there, we being Dr. Hart and myself. I expect you were at that particular meeting.

SHARP: Yes, I certainly was.

STOKES: There were a number of people there who didn't think we'd ever make it.

SHARP: Well I believe that the committment was, or the reason that you were there, was to see if there could be a ground swell of enthusiasm and maybe honored by the fact of laying down a few dollars.

STOKES; That had something to do with it.

SHARP: And I think the laying down of a dollars lost some of the enthusiasm but there were a few of us who stuck in there.

STOKES: Well, you're leading me right into the next question, because it certainly is a know~~n~~fact that you have been one of our greatest contributors, not only dollar-wise but also in time and interest that you have certainly made a strong contribution to the school. Now, you of course, I have you listed among some of our sustainers, TCOM sustainers. We had quite a group of those. We have a plaque, you know, on the 8th floor of the Med Ed I showing all the persons, not necessarily D.O.s, we did have some laity who were good strong donors, in fact I think our strongest donor was, or is, she's still living, is a woman who lives up in Amarillo. I'm getting a little bit off here, but we're talking about donors. You know people give to people, they don't give to things.

SHARP: Exactly.

STOKES: And the reason I'm bringing this up is because this particular person, who knows nothing about TCOM other than what she heard from Dr. Earl Mann, her doctor.

SHARP: Yes, I know him, or knew him.

STOKES: Right. And she's been a very excellent donor to the school down through the years, and so has the Sharp family, to which we're

certainly indebted. Now, you've gained a little recognition here locally. What are some of the honors that you have been given in this particular section of the profession?

SHARP: Well, shortly after I got here I had the privilege of joining with a becoming closer friends to Sam and Morrell Sparks and subsequently became the Chief of Staff for a few years. Coincident with that my interest with the general practice group continued and I became a president of the Texas State Society of the American College of General Practice and as one does you kind of hang in there and there was some good old names and there are still some good old names that were and still are a member of that body. There was a void after...there was a Dr. Walton who subsequently became a member of the TCOM faculty, was quite a good sustainer himself, and went out and did a whole lot of homework in getting addresses and people to join the organization and all that kind of thing and did a heroic work, but he was about to leave that and so I stepped back in as the secretary/treasurer and then I guess because nobody else would, I continue, but I'm not wanting to give it away, I want somebody to push me away and say, I can do it better, and that's the type of person we want for this.

STOKES; Well, you know, when we had our first graduation in 1974 we had one of our honors given away, was the Margerie Sharp Memorial, what's the complete name? It's an honor given to a student.

SHARP: Yes, Marjorie Sharp Memorial room, as it were.

STOKES: Well, I know, but you also give an annual...

SHARP: Oh, that's the undergraduate general practitioner...

STOKES; Maybe I'm getting things a little mixed up here, but let's take that. What was the first?

SHARP: In the beginning, it seems as though the students could be quite, well I'll say critical, of their fellow man, of their peers, and so we entreated that the students would be a part of the selection of the General Practitioner of the Year, a person who of their senior class, not necessarily the senior class, junior or senior class perhaps, that would show the most promise of becoming an excellent general practitioner and in an effort to try to prime the pump of contributions to the schools, Marge and I decided that if we were to present something in their memory and put their name on it, perhaps sometime they would do it on their own and so at times we've bought different equipment pieces for different of the clinics that were just opening at the time and at a time or two we even blessed them with an honorary either a bond or sometimes a watch or something on that order. So that that has kind of kept up and now maybe I'm a little disappointed because I don't know that I feel that the reason for our giving was certainly not to be any honor to us but to that student and to act as a primer to be able to cause others to think, by golly, let's give something back to the school, and especially the students. And I'm not sure, maybe I've not done...well I've not done any research. I wonder how those persons chosen as undergraduate general practitioners of the year have fared as their responsibility or their giving back to the college. I would like to determine that sometime and see. If it was phenomenal, in the back of my mind I would like to

have a particular time when we might could invite them all back and to have kind of a comradery with those persons.

STOKES; Why don't we work on that. You know, we're going to have...of course I'm going to be an outsider at the time, you know...

SHARP: You'll never be an outsider.

STOKES: We're going to have the 20th anniversary during the convocation in 1990, the latter part of September and Dr. Richards is working on plans now. He is calling in all of the origin people who had anything to do with the school, both staff, faculty and students, and we are going to have a two or three day celebration in conjunction with the convocation and also at the same time it will be the class of '80 who'll be the class that will be honored in that particular reunion year, so why can't we work out something on that to where we can get those people back.

SHARP; I think that would be excellent. Yes, wouldn't that be great.

STOKES: It really would.

SHARP: Let's...

STOKES: Work on that, we really will. Okay, let's go along now. You've been the president of the ACGP. You are also the secretary-treasurer of that now, aren't you?

SHARP: Oh yes.

STOKES: You're starting over again, are you, Dr. T. Robert?

SHARP: No. I think after about 20 years, though, I'm looking for that man or woman that's going to take it from me, and I hope they come quick.

STOKES: Well now, you're interested in sort of the archival aspect of that organization and we had an off-camera conversation recently about your search that you've been looking. Have you been able to come to any conclusion?

SHARP: I contacted the home office, and they in turn were gratified to have the name of the man that you gave us. We did call and we were given the name of a young lady that lived in the Chicago area and it was my understanding that George Niehart, who is our executive director of the American College of General Practice home office was going to contact them and then, having contacted them, find out what the cost might be and then help us get started in doing the same archival work that you have done on a national level. You know, there's a historian. I suppose when you finally get old enough and around long enough to become a historian, that means that they still say, Hi, I know your name, and that's about the last of it. I don't mean to take anything from you cause you've made quite a scene of it and that's good. But in most organizations that doesn't happen and I have been chairman of that for a number of years and finally I got a little bit provoked and we were given \$1000 and I said, well golly, we couldn't even call a meeting of the group of them together, of the committee people, that if we didn't have enough money to work with why

wait, I mean why start? Well, they gave us \$2500 and then after we got a little bit more steam going they gave us another \$2500, so we have \$5000 to start, but our prediction was that we would need about \$25,000 on a national level, to be able to do a reasonable job of being able to do the work that you have so well done. And you might recall that I called you and asked for your information and was informed that it is not a historian because they are different, but an archival person who are digging out those things that were and putting them in proper order.

STOKES; That's right. Okay then, now let's go back a little bit and discuss some of our initial activities that we had together. You and I used to attend a number of meetings and various district meetings and so forth and I guess you were out at the 1970 convention in Lubbock. That was a meeting that, well really the college really got off the ground because we did have a great deal of fund-raising efforts and achievement because we did, I don't know how much, but quite a bit we gathered there at that time and of course that was a meeting where it was kind of difficult to know exactly where we stood, but we were making progress, and I remember one particular doctor there who is ~~not~~ longer with us who died a few years ago, who was very active in the political part of the politics in the state who made the remark that unless we could get \$26 million together at one time we should not open the school. Well, of course that being the case we never would have opened, there's no question about that, and no disrespect to that man and his thinking. He was entitled to that, he certainly was. But then you and I had something else in common, back in the early 70s. We didn't have much money to help dole out or to help the students who were in dire need of some financial assistance,

but you served with me on a committee that I had the honor of chairing for a while in the Loan and Scholarship Committee of TCOM and then you succeeded me I think along about '73 or '74 and you stayed in that capacity for how long? Give us a little bit of a rundown on what the committee was able to do during those formative years.

SHARP: Well, having gotten off to a good start, we had probably about four or five committeemen, or committeepersons. Then subsequently I think we added a few more heads and enlarged the scope to concern itself with both scholarship and loan and there were a number of us that felt that in our own we paid for our own and we were a little bit adverse to some of this yes I'm going to come to school and I don't have penny one, but that isn't the way that you were supposed to conduct that thing and so it became increasingly evident that you had to disregard the particular need and my disenchantment began, I'll put it, and so I left it in good hands before I might could poison anything there.

STOKES: I wouldn't say that.

SHARP: But anyway, they are still certainly active and I think they have some fine people. There was a number of names but I'd hate to name them because it might embarrass them, but we had some good thoughts, some good strong intercommunication and we would meet on a regular basis and determine whether there were persons that were eligible and if they were eligible how much and how much did we have in resources and so forth. Certain of them were able to encourage others to donate to the school in the way of a scholarship and such like so that we might..

STOKES: Well they also about that time they started to establish certain rules on a national level. In other words, in order to get loans you had to come from a family that didn't have too much...

SHARP: Yes, you couldn't buy a student's underwriting as it were. Yes, that's very true and that really could have become a problem perhaps, but I don't believe ever did. I really think it did not ever become a problem. The people that wished to donate, they said well fine, maybe then they can earn it on their own right, and and sometimes they did. But we were able to go from a few funds, maybe what, maybe \$10,000 to I think maybe it's, I don't think it's \$100,000, but it could be approaching that by now. So we have something to work with now and it was our thought, most of us in the earlier years and I think yourself included, that they should have it not so much as a grant, though we were able to get grant money and give this, but that if we could prime the pump, they could pay it back and we set the interest rates at such infinitely low levels that we thought it would encourage them to pay back early before they got into paying too many percentage of interest, but we were outguessed. In fact, we had persons to apply and get grants because they could more cheaply borrow money from us than they could from...so that always it takes a few spoilers to interfere with what the plans are. And so, the rules were again modified and I think to a betterment.

STOKES: It's been. I want to get back to the late Margerie Sharp.

SHARP; Oh yes.

STOKES: She and I, we made a few trips together if you'll remember in fund raising efforts and so forth and she was a great assistant, or a great help, I'll put it that way, in some of the efforts that I tried to employ and I know one particular trip that we made over, we were mentioned the Sparks. Didn't they open the first hospital in Texas?

SHARP: Yes, they did and trained the first interns?

STOKES: Isn't that were George Luibel interned?

SHARP: I would think it was. It is highly likely and maybe one of the very first, but I think he could tell you better about that, but I do know that they, I think, continued for as long as they were active in the hospital business except for the exodus that they took down to central Texas to retire which they didn't do, they had continuous interns for those 20-odd years that I know about. And then, in fact, they were the first to train residents and in fact, the first osteopathic hospital in the state.

STOKES: In 1980 we had our 10 year celebration, the school had been open for 10 years and you were involved in the celebration we had at that time. Of course we had already lost Margerie. When did we lose her, in 1978?

SHARP: In 1978, uh-huh.

STOKES: Tell us a little bit about your experience on that occasion, the dedication of the Margerie Sharp Memorial Room.

SHARP: Well about the time that we historically became certified as general practitioners there was quite a coincidence as far as TCOM was concerned. We had an application for certification for general practitioners which fell on very deaf ears in the national A.O.A.

STOKES: I see.

SHARP: But we persisted and ultimately developed a program in residencies which required that there should be certified persons, and so in an effort about that same time there was an effort that was successful in presenting a residency in general practice and it was approved by the American Osteopathic Association which incorporated that they shall have certified people training them and therefore we born both elements, the residency and the ...well, at that time we were having our difficulties trying to get that through and Coy, Dr. Marian Coy, was the president of the American Osteopathic Association and gave our American College of General Practice, a hearing as it were in which we presented a minority report which was a most unheard of thing, and I'm not even sure whether it is constitutionally correct at that time or since, but in any case the committee was going to report that we not certified. Coy, however, was the president and could take some liberties and invited me to make a presentation as a minority report and we did present it in such fashion and we had persons there, quite a number from the American College of General Practice, that gave a very fine presentation and therefore swayed the board of the American Osteopathic Board to grant certification and therefore we were born. And that was in Hot Springs, Arkansas. So, coming..Therefore, as president of the American College of General

Practitioners on a national basis, Dr. Coy and I were commonly caused to be on the same junket. We had to go to Washington a few times and a few things, and on one of those trips it was Marge's hope that we might could do something. No, not Marge's hope but it was the family's hope, that in memory to my wife's death and her devotion to the osteopathic profession, that we might do something of a substantial nature here. So we suggested to Marian Coy had best would we be able to do this; would it be fine to buy something.

STOKES: Excuse me for interrupting, but in the meantime he was president of TCOM.

SHARP: Yes, he then left the American Osteopathic Board and president.

STOKES: So you continued to have a relationship with him.

SHARP: Right. And then he was chosen here to be their first president, was it?

STOKES: Yes, founding president.

SHARP: Founding president. And so we continued to talk about that and he suggested, then, that we maybe consider something like outfitting a room, a study room, or giving something of some substance to the college. And that seemed to fit in to our mold to a certain extent, because prior to her death my mother and father had both died and we had established a certain fund to the school that I think was several thousand dollars and we bought, oh, a little viewing table, glass

table, glass top table that I think is still on display here, and then there was a..we had constructed an archival cabinet for rare books. And it was lockable and so forth and so that was the dedication for my mother and dad. And then when my wife died, then of course we felt that it would be wise to put some funds together and see what we could do. Well, that was a grand idea and the proposal was that we would outfit a room and we thought of audiovisual things, TV, slide projectors, VHS arrangements, and a counsel table and chairs and the usual amenities of a meeting room. And such that ultimately this was provided for. But before it could be condoned, you see, it had to first pass the board of governors of the coordinating board through the North Texas State University system, and they came back and said, yes, that is absolutely fine, except. No only may you provide all these lovely things that you have proposed, but you, sir, shall be charged for the cubic inch of room that it will occupy and therefore we had to go back and we had to buy the room, in fact. We had to buy the room space.

STOKES: I hadn't heard that little aspect.

SHARP: So I think some 20, oh, I guess maybe now it would be \$25,000, something like that. It cost to create, but it was worth it, and it was good and my brother, who is a D.O...

STOKES: Now where does he practice?

SHARP: In Wisconsin. In fact, he takes care of some of the patients that I used to take care of there some 30 years ago. And then my two sisters, one of whom has a daughter that graduated from this college,

and anyway we...

STOKES: I didn't know that, who is that?

SHARP: Oh yes.

STOKES: You have a niece who graduated from here.

SHARP: Yes.

STOKES: Well, somewhere or other our P.R. didn't function too well.
Or public information.

SHARP: Hyland

STOKES: Oh yeah, I know who you're talking about now, but I didn't
know your relationship.

SHARP: At the time I believe that my brother-in-law was the Attorney
General of New Jersey, and in fact, he was the man under whom the
original records were allowed to transpire to originate the New Jersey
School of Osteopathic Medicine. So he has been quite a figure-head
and I think quite a phenomenal one.

STOKES: Well, I tell you we got one more D.O. in your family we ought
to say something about.

SHARP: Yes, as a matter of fact my wife and I had...well, she had
three pregnancies, the first of whom died.

STOKES: I see.

SHARP: The second one was my older daughter who attended TCU and graduated as a nurse and subsequently was registered and she is now a school nurse in the Arlington system where they live. And then our third then pregnancy, I think the Lord looked down on us and said well you lost one, we're going to give you twins, so we'll make up for the time. So we had twins, and my son is in practice with me. He also graduated from Kirksville in 1978 and coincidentally had the occasion to write most of the orders on his mother's death process as it were, as gruesome as that sounds, but he was then caused to be involved in the management of a dear one during the most tender time, and the doctors that helped us from all aspects were so helpful and worked with him and I think gave him a reassurance of being able to participate in the management of this assured process. Anyway, his twin sister is married. My son first went to East Texas as did my daughter, and then subsequently she married a graduate of TCU, so I have three graduates in my family. My older daughter married another colleague from TCU, so we have a lot of representation there.

STOKES: We're having our homecoming tomorrow at TCU.

SHARP: Uh, huh. They could well be there. But the other one is married to a career officer who started her at TCU and he is now a colonel in the Army, just got back from his most recent command in the Mannheim area of Germany and he is now located in Washington, D.C. where he is attending the War College. These are preparatory steps to maybe a generalship or something like that.

STOKES: Well, that's very interesting. Let's go back now to T. Robert for a moment.

SHARP: Okay.

STOKES: You received a very, what I consider a very coveted award back about 1981. Tell us a little bit about the Founder's Medal that you received.

SHARP: I was most pleased to be named a recipient of that award and I feel that we stand alongside of names of persons who are really somebody and I don't include myself in that. I feel privileged to be a part of that.

STOKES: I can say amen to that myself. I surely can.

SHARP: But these are the movers I think, the people that have been such a creative giant together. They have just done tremendous work.

STOKES: Well, you've had a tremendous career now since 1944. Well you went into practice in 1945.

SHARP: It's been 45 years since I graduated from Kirksville.

STOKES; Right.

SHARP: But I'm going to wait until my 50th anniversary and then go back and visit the old folks.

STOKES: Oh, you're going to wait until your 50th. Well that won't be long at all. Before we leave TCOM and the contribution that you've made and you have made in all your humble ways and your personality and so forth, you've been just a standout in my memory, because I've identified TCOM and T. Robert Sharp almost from the time we opened the doors at the bowling alley because I remember meeting you in some meeting that we had one night there right after we'd...and I remember you had on a bow-tie then and you've worn a bow-tie ever since, not the same one, but nevertheless, you've watched us grow and you've helped us grow and you have been a great tremendous help. Can you give me just a summary of what your critique about the school is.

SHARP: Well, I am so fortunate that we had a number of the people that we did have in places of authority. At the times that things were needed, just as the coincidence of Dr. Marion Coy in our appeal for general practice, he came here to us, shining with the excitement of having just served as the national president. We have had other persons who have dotted into and out of our scene either constantly or repeatedly in giving an impotence to this school, and I suppose it jelled with the foresight of those visionaries that were able to conceive Med Ed I out of virtually darkness as it were and trembling fear of the future, we grew to such mightiness. Granted it was with state support and it was with the North Texas State University. But anyway, the right people at the right time, I think is what has happened. And this, of course, is evidence of it. The people that helped to garner about themselves these other exciting folks that were informed and make them a coalition of very great positiveness. There is just nothing like it in the osteopathic

profession. All other schools bring with them a history of don't do that because we can't do that, we never have done that. And here, I think maybe in a more true tradition of Texas, we'll see if it can't be done, and it usually is done, and it's been that sort of thing. And we have done so very, very many things and I just can't believe but what this is the base, and when we feel secure then we will branch out into the educational possibilities in our affiliate hospitals like Corpus and Houston and those in the Metroplex area, of course, and I'd like to see something in the north part of the state that would be an educational schema that would be directly tied with the college. In part it is. One of the great things that has come out of some of the visionaries has been the development of a rather large, I think something like 18 segment general practice residency under the tutorship or the umbrella, if you please, of the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine. And it is that type of growth that we have to have to be creative. We certainly, and I think you told me, that a year or so ago over half of the practicing D.O.s in this state are graduate of this college. Obviously in another 10 years or 20 years certainly, those of us who aren't are going to be in the very, very small minority, and that's where it should be. It is creative. We've taken on people. It's just kind of like what has happened, what happened to our United States. We took in all these diverse folds. We coalesced them, put them in together and just came out with a tremendous growth pattern and I think quality growth pattern. I can't imagine that there is any other school that is not totally envious of us. We don't have to tear down something to build it up. We don't have to throw away time honored rewards or ideas and then instill new ones. We don't have that two-way street. We have a positive type street. Tremendous. I hope that the other colleges in like

circumstances like New York and New Jersey and the California and Florida, and New England, and so forth, I hope they have that same impact on their community. But we certainly have it here and I think my observation is that our observance by others both allopathic and osteopathic look back at us as being the front line organization to emulate. We just do it right. We do it the Texas way.

STOKES: Well you have had a great deal to do in making it possible for us to do it right and we sure appreciate that. What would T. Robert Sharp like to be best remembered for?

SHARP: I would hope that the general practice image would be so polished as to stand, if it has to, stand apart but stand as the emblem of what other schools should be offering. I think we can do that. We have such a great start. We have such a great faculty of nonaffiliated TCOM faculty, but still very interested all over the state, and I would hope that we can keep an image of general practice both at our college here and as that that people would love to become like throughout the state. I think that would be it and if I can have a part of that, then I would say maybe I've helped to get that started and that would be it.

STOKES: Well good. Well, T. Robert, Dr. T. Robert, it sure has been a joy and a privilege to visit with you and kind of reminisce and go down memory lane with you and come up to the present, October 20, 1989. We certainly were delighted that you could come over from your practice today. I think you're off on Fridays.

SHARP: I have just gotten smart.

STOKES; We're glad to have you with us today.

SHARP: Thank you very kindly. Appreciate it.