

STOKES: This is Ray Stokes in the Rare Book Room of the TCOM Library in Fort Worth on the 18th day of July, 1989. I am very pleased this morning to have a very good friend that I would like to recognize and welcome at this time who is the Assistant Vice President of Administrative Affairs at TCOM and he is a veteran employee and I am going to clarify this term "veteran" because I know of three campaigns, building campaigns that is, that he has been through, so we will get him to identify those and verify some of those campaign skirmishes that he has had down the last fifteen years. He came to work for us here on the 2nd day of January, 1974. May I introduce to you Ken Coffelt. Ken, it's good to have you with us this morning.

COFFELT: Thank you Ray, it's good to be here. I'm looking forward to this.

STOKES: I would just like to ask you Ken, I know you're from Oklahoma and you came to Texas I guess 25 years ago or thereabouts. Where did you grow up and where did you go to school?

COFFELT: Well, a small town in southern Oklahoma by the name of Waurika.

STOKES: Waurika, that's not too far from Wichita Falls.

COFFELT: It's kind of northeast of Wichita Falls, just across the border, and south of Duncan. I'm trying to get you oriented there because not many people have heard of Waurika, Oklahoma. That's my little hometown, I grew up there. Graduated from high school in 1952 then went directly into the army at that time and served some time in

Japan, Korea, and Okenawa.

STOKES: As long as long as I've known you, I didn't realize.
Okenawa?

COFFELT: Yes, I finished out my tour of duty there.

STOKES: What year were you in Odenawa?

COFFELT: 1954, '53, '54

STOKES: I was a few days ahead of you; I was there in April 1
of 1945.

COFFELT: That was the big one, that was the big day. Then I came
back and I went to school. I started in the fall of 1951, I went to
school at Oklahoma University.

STOKES: I've heard that you played a little football there at "Big
Red".

COFFELT: Yes, I was fortunate enough, or unfortunate enough,
whichever, to have played a little ball there.

STOKES: Who was your coach?

COFFELT: Bud ^{Wilkinson}~~Wokes~~. But I certainly need to clarify the fact that
I was not one of the "All Americans" there. I simply did not have
that ability. I was just one of the "also run" players. But I

enjoyed playing there and it was quite an experience and it provided me the skills that I needed to go on and do what I wanted to do all my life and that was to be a coach and a teacher. That's what I wanted to be. My bachelor's degree is in education, with a major in biology. And I started teaching in 1959 in Oklahoma City at U.S. Grant High School where I was also assistant football coach and head wrestling coach. Wrestling is kind of a story in itself.

STOKES: It's very prominent in the state of Oklahoma.

COFFEELT: It's very popular up through Oklahoma. As a matter of fact, either OU or OSU has been the traditional NCAA power in that sport for years and years. But I started there teaching and coaching and enjoyed that. It was a good life, I enjoyed it but I could see that because of my nature I was not going to be able to pursue a lifetime in coaching, I simply could not leave coaching, the job, at the job. I lived it twenty-four hours a day and it was killing me. In the summers I had gone back to OU and was working on a masters degree and completed that in 1965 as well as some hours above a master and was fortunate enough to get a job down at the University of Texas at Arlington in the Biology Department, teaching biology.

STOKES: You still weren't in Biomedical?

COFFEELT: I had not gotten there yet.

STOKES: You had not gotten into communications.

COFFEELT: I started teaching there, well, it was Arlington State

College at that time, in 1965, we moved to Arlington. At that time they were experiencing a spurt of growth, in student enrollment and the Biology Department had a grave concern that the students in the basic courses were not getting the same kinds of material, particularly in labs because of different teachers teaching their different specialities so he wondered if we couldn't put together a laboratory introduction on video tape, which was a fairly new concept in 1965, particularly in schools. So he came to me because I had done a little teaching on television in Oklahoma City. I had been involved with the Ford Foundation grant there where we were teaching Biology over broadcast television, an educational network. So the head of the department, Dr. Meachum, came to me at UTA and he said, "We'd like for you to put together a television system for our freshmen laboratories." And I thought for sure he was joking, because I knew nothing about television other than the fact that I had been in front of the camera. And I told him I knew nothing about it and he said, "Well you know more than we do, so," he said, "it's your baby." And so I got busy and learned television as best I could, put in that system, and it worked very well. We were sure then that all the students were getting the same introduction, the same critique of the lab at the close of the lab, so I think it worked very well. I was there two years and it was at a meeting, a fellow was demonstrating television over in Dallas and I won't name the company but he had invited alot of people. And I went to this television and this guy was really saying some things that weren't quite cosure, in my minds eye he was misleading people and it was obvious that since this was a rather new educational tool that the educators in the audience didn't know that they were being mislead and so I began to question some of the things he has said. There was a great big fellow sitting behind

me that I kept hearing clearing his throat, and I thought, "This guy is wanting to get out of here, so I am going to shut up after a little while." Well anyway that was Chuck McKinney, president of the Tarrant County Junior College South Campus, even before it opened, school had not yet opened. He talked to me after that meeting and just out of the clear blue sky, he wanted to know if I would be interested in coming to Tarrant County Junior College to be their television director. I was stunned. I thought about it for about thirty minutes and said, "Yes I think I would." Not that, I'm being a little facetious. I went over to Tarrant County Junior College as both a Biology teacher and director of their educational television system and was, incidently, the very first member to go to work at TCJC because of my part time appointment.

STOKES: You have something in common with me then in the sense of being first.

COFFEELT: Right, we share.

STOKES: How long did you stay at TCJC?

COFFEELT: I was there six and one half years.

STOKES: In other words you came from TCJC here.

COFFEELT: Right.

STOKES: How did you get interested in medical education?

COFFELT: Well that too shows how our careers are influenced by so many different things. I had a call one day there in my office at Tarrant County Junior College from a gentleman who identified himself as Marion Coy. He said, "I am the president of the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine," he says, "Have you heard of us?" And I said, "Truthfully sir, I have not, I don't know anything about you." Well, he said, "I wonder if I could come out and visit with you." And I said, "Most assuredly." Because Tarrant County was really known, nationally, for its media; television, photography, graphics and all that. We had developed quite a large reputation, so we had a lot of visitors. It was not unusual for this to happen. Dr. Coy came out and I thought he wanted to see the campus and we toured the campus and I showed him all of the media stuff that we were doing and we were at that time very deeply involved in self paced instruction so the students went to the learning resources center and retrieved the material. We called them packages, learning packages. We toured around and Dr. Coy was very interested and so we got back to my office and he said, "I'm going to come right to the point, he says would you like to go to work for me over at the college?" Which I thought was kind of neat, him offering me a job there in my office. So I said, "Well, I'd like to see what it's like, and so forth." Well, we set a date, I came out and visited and I'll tell you this, Ray, it was quite a shock.

STOKES: I bet it was.

COFFELT: You remember what it was like in 1974.

STOKES: Why certainly, you walked into the bowling alley, didn't you?

COFFELT: I walked into the bowling alley. And he said, "Now let me show you where we think we can make space for your department, if you will come out here and build a biomedical communications department." We didn't call it that then, we used "instructional media" because that was the preferred term at that time. So he took me across Clifton Street over to what is now the Medical Examiner's Building, right next to the autopsy theater and he said, "Now here are three rooms, now do you think you can fit your organization into these three rooms?" Well I was coming from one of the most modern, up-to-date, media delivery systems that there was in the country at that time, at least in the Southwest. I don't know what there was about it, Ray, the challenge. We were a private institution at that time and Dr. Coy told me that they were making every effort, and it looked good that they would become fully state supported in the near future. So I guess what I did is, I liked the challenge of starting from scratch. I liked the idea of medicine, with my degrees in biology, being associated with medicine. I've always felt like I'd rather be a big fish in a little pond than a little fish in a big pond, and I liked the idea of doing that. I agreed then to come over here, and as you said in the very beginning, I showed up for work on January the second of 1974.

STOKES: You are a fifteen year veterine now.

COFFELT: Yes.

STOKES: But you have more than that as far as state affiliation is concerned. How long have you been, between Oklahoma and Texas, how many years have you been with the state.

COFFELT: I've been thirty-one years in the business of educating. Well thirty years, and then I've bought from my military time so as far as teacher retirement, I have thirty-one years.

STOKES: When you first came to work, you had a little office there in what was part of the kitchen in the old bowling alley days and they had a restaurant. You had a little desk or something right there close to the admissions office as I recall, the way they had it organized at the time and that's what you operated from was just a desk. You did alot of drawing and planning and so forth. When did you actually move over into what was actually the central clinic, we called it you know, 3440 Camp Bowie, where they had the second clinic that we called the central clinic. When did you actually move into there and how did that develop?

COFFELT: It was a couple of months of after I arrived so that would have been March, I think around March or April because the drawing that you mentioned there, I was trying to put together how we would modify that area in the back of the old central clinic to accomodate a television studio, a graphics production area, a place to store equipment to check out for facility use and that sort of stuff. That was part of what I was doing in that drawing. I think we moved over there, if memory serves, in March.

STOKES: It seems like we had open house about the first of March, wasn't it?

COFFELT: I believe it was, along in there somewhere, yes. And I

think we were in over there at that time.

STOKES: Yes, I know you were. Well, you have developed a great deal since that particular period of time. When did you begin to build your department?

COFFELT: Actually, from before I came, and that was in beginning to talk to some perspective employees. I had a fellow who worked for a contractor for me on South Campus of TCJC. I was very impressed with his knowledge and skill, particularly in television, but he had alot of other skills that fit right in the media field. For example, he was an excellent photographer, which he did as a hobie.

STOKES: I'm not trying to put words in your mouth, but you must be talking about Bob Cones.

COFFELT: You know exaclty who I'm talking about. I had talked to Bob about the possibility of coming over here with me and he thought about it for awhile and finally decided that that's what he'd like to do, he had been at Southwest Med School prior to going to work with this commercial concern. So Bob was actually my first employee, he came with me. Shortly after I was employed we went through the formality of getting him employed, then we hired a secretary. I think the next person we hired then was a lady, forgive me, I cannot remember her name, but she did our graphics drawings and that sort of thing for us. And then I believe we hired Bill Roberts next and Bill is still here. Bill was the guy that kept all the machinery running and working.

STOKES: You didn't have, at that time, too much machinery, did you?

COFFELT: We didn't have a whole lot, but I will say this, I was very pleased. Dr. Coy had promised me that if I came over he would do what he could. He never gave me a figure, but he said, "I will be as generous with you as the budget will allow. "Because," he said, "I want our faculty to have the use of this kind of material in their teaching modalities." Dr. Coy was true to his word and he gave me alot of support.

STOKES: When did you get a little beyond the work in your department? You got involved in campus growth to a great extent and I mentioned earlier that you have survived three building campaigns. When did you get involved in the first campaign, which we call Med Ed I, that was finished, I guess in 1978?

COFFELT: Ray, that's kind of interesting. Almost from the day I got here, I began to be called upon to meet and to work with peolpe here because I had had state experience. I had experience at UTA and I had had experience at Tarrant County Junior College, with state supported and/or publicly supported institutions. And we were moving toward "statehood", if I may use that term, the school was, and so there was a need for advice, counsil, whatever, so I began to move into those kind of administrative areas, purely by default or accident, simply because of the past experience. Then I was made assistant to the, I've forgotten his term, but Dr. Forrey came down from North Texas after we became a state institution. Dr. Gus Forrey recognized that I had been working in these peripheral areas, administratively, and he said, "I'd like for you to be my assistant." And I became his

assistant.

STOKES: Let me interject this question here. You know the year or so that Gus was down here, of course, he was known as "Jitter" Nolan's chopping boy or whatnot. You say you were his assistant, what relationship did you have with Gus and what contribution do you feel that Gus may have made, since we were an infant as far as a state institution was concerned?

COFFELT: It would be difficult for me to judge what his overall contribution was because in all probability I only saw a very minor part. I think the thing that he did do was to begin to move us in our thinking more out of private into more the one operates when one is state supported. Maybe even to the extent of some of the organizational changes that he made were designed to help us become a productive state organization. I had a very good rapport with him. We worked well together, I thought, and I had no idea if he had any hidden agendas. I have heard many things over the years, but I personally did not see any hidden agendas that I have heard others speak of.

STOKES: As we began to grow, and your responsibilities grew with it of course, when did you learn that you were commissioned to be in charge of building buildings. When did you start with Med Ed I? Of course, now we're overlooking just a little gap in there because in September of 1975 we became, we called it, the medical branch of North Texas State University.

COFFELT: Alright. Dr. Willard came on board, if you'll recall, as the first, I guess, president of the state school. He was not called

President then, at that time. He came as the Vice-President of Academic Affairs and then dean. Like I said, I had been Dr. Porrey's assistant. Well, Dr. Willard, shortly after he got here, said, "I'd like for you to be my assistant." So I served as assistant to him. Of course that meant that as his titles changed my titles changed. I continued to do my full time job as director of Biomedical Communication, but I was also serving as his assistant. One of the things that he said he wanted me to do was, to use his words, "I want you to birdog the construction on Med Ed I." The design and all of the control for the development of that building was done by North Texas people who were sort of on loan to us. I don't know what his thoughts were, but he definitely wanted his person involved and so he asked me to sit in on the meetings, to work with the planning directors up there and that sort of stuff and to keep him informed.

STOKES: In that respect, did you do any close work with Jack Robison when he was there.

COFFELT: Jack and I were very close, yes. I thought the world of Jack and I think Jack probably... Well, I mentioned a while ago that Gus Porrey was instrumental in changing our thinking from private to public and I think Jack definitely contributed to that.

STOKES: Jack preceded Porrey.

COFFELT: Right. He was really the one who began this whole thing of getting our finances straightened, or rather set up. That's really how I got into being involved in the construction program, and then the people at North Texas, their planning director, Larry Luce and

others continued to be involved in the construction of Med Ed I through its completion.

STOKES: Speaking of Larry, is he still at North Texas?

COFFELT: Yes, he's still at North Texas. In Med I, I was kind of peripherally involved and yet I was right in the center of it. I was the one who made the reports to the president and the president's counsel. I learned a lot in that building. I had a lot to learn. I think though in retrospect, that of the three building, Med Ed I was the smoothest. It came in 18 months ahead of schedule. We couldn't believe that we were thinking about occupying that building in such a short amount of time. The general contractor did an excellent job.

STOKES: Who was the contractor?

COFFELT: Rooney and Associates, with headquarters in Florida. They did an excellent job. One of the things that is rather unique about Med Ed I is that it is one of the very first large precast buildings in the Metroplex.

STOKES: Right, I had forgotten that.

COFFELT: There have been many precast buildings in this area. By precast I mean all the concrete parts are all poured somewhere else, trucked in and put together like a giant erector set. This was one of the first of the large ones and there were quite a number of people upon its completion who came by to take a look at a sizable or a larger building which had been totally precast. The fact that this

one was precast, I think, is one of the reasons that it came in ahead of completion schedule. Mike Miller was the general contractor, the building superintendent for the company, and he really did an excellent job.

STOKES: Do you know what that building cost?

COFFELT: Alright, taxing my memory here. I want to think it is in the \$12 million bracket.

STOKES: I think that is close.

COFFELT: It was partly federal funds and partly state funds.

STOKES: How were we able to get federal funds? Do you recall?

COFFELT: I truly don't. I won't even hazard.

STOKES: We need a man who is retired now, who was head of our fiscal affairs that you worked with for several years, L. L. LaRue. He might could tell us something about that.

COFFELT: I'm sure because he certainly had a good memory and he was involved at that time in getting the grants. I forget now how long we stayed before he came.

STOKES: He came in 1977 so we had had a couple of years behind us but he came at a very crucial time in our history. People had mixed feelings about his reputation, but he made an excellent contribution,

I feel.

COFFELT: I think the record will show that your assessment is absolutely correct. He brought with him a tremendous amount of state experience.

STOKES: And he really knew how to...

COFFELT: How to use the system, work the system as it should be worked. I don't mean that in a derogatory way. He was a part of our history and a vital part of it.

STOKES: Well then, how long had you been with Med Ed I and got things cleared up with that when you started thinking about Med Ed II?

COFFELT: Well, let's see, we finished Med I in 1978 and we had started planning Med II, I believe it must have been about that time of shortly after that because we started construction on Med Ed II I believe in 1982. Ray, you're going to have to help me here.

STOKES: I'm going to rely on you there. It was 1981 and our Lt. Governor broke ground.

COFFELT: Yes, Governor Hobbie came to break ground and I might mention that the weather was a little bit nicer than it was when we broke ground for Med Ed I. Do you remember how cold that was, rainy and cold?

STOKES: Well, I wasn't here. Dr. Willard and I had both gone to the

AOA convention in San Francisco and he had to fly back for that so I missed that cold day. It was about the 16th of November if my memory serves me correctly.

COFFELT: Well, I will rely on your memory again in that regard. But it was a very cold and rainy day when we had groundbreaking ceremonies. It was a marvelous time. There was the excitement of building and moving into new quarters and our school. As I look back on it I say that was the beginning of this.

STOKES: Before we leave Med Ed I, tell us a little about the destruction of the Basic Science Building known as the "bowling alley".

COFFELT: Boy, that was something to behold. It was one of those things. The staging of this construction was critical because we occupied and we had to continue to operate as a school while we were building our new building right next door. And Med Ed I sets in a location that used to be occupied by a motel called the Colonial Motel. The bowling alley was just to the east of that motel, so we had to build a building while we still occupied the old bowling alley which was the school, and so that was in itself quite a feat. But then when we made the transition, when we moved into Med Ed I and that move had to be done almost overnight. We had to shut down on a Friday and open up again on a Monday. So we tried moving everything over a weekend. We weren't successful but we got close. Then I guess it was like one of those greatest shows on earth. We all got to sit around and watch the bulldozers and things come in a start wrecking the old bowling alley. And I think there was some degree of feeling

of loss.

STOKES: I think you're correct.

COFFELT: I remember, Ray, that you and some of your people selected a number of bricks from that building and cleaned them and made mementos of them.

STOKES: Right about 150 of them I think.

COFFELT: And I think there was sense of excitement moving in but there was also a sense of loss, as if we had lost some of our heritage.

STOKES: Our campus was spread out considerably at that time, wasn't it.

COFFELT: We had some of our operations located down where the Texas American Bank is now, down there on that corner in a vacant bank building. I know that our business office was located down there, purchasing office, and I believe that our Manipulative Medicine was down there and you were there in development. Yes, we were fragmented. We simply did not have enough space to locate all those things on our campus.

STOKES: You never had an office down at the River Plaza, did you?

COFFELT: No, I've always been here at the main campus. We leased some space at River Plaza to do a couple of things. One was to begin to

teach more of our basic science courses down here which had been taught at North Texas and also to locate the library. If you will recall our library was located down at River Plaza. People have to get ready for that when you stop and think about it. Our college library was 2-1/4 miles from our campus and that takes some getting used to.

STOKES: It sure does.

COFFELT: Then there were some basic science departments that were located down in the River Plaza building. Then our physical plant operation began to grow, naturally. Our Purchasing Department grew, Central Supply, Central Receiving, then we got into the print shop business. All of that had to have a home.

STOKES: There is something unique about that. You remember we were in a bowling alley on Camp Bowie. We were below a bowling alley if you were over across the street there at River Plaza. The bowling alley was on top.

COFFELT: We have an affinity for bowling alleys, don't we.

STOKES: I guess we must have. How long did it take to build Med Ed II? You had the same contractor?

COFFELT: Yes, they were a different name. This was Great Southwest, however, it was a subsidiary of Rooney, so we had the same general contractor and the same superintendent, Mike Miller, who built Med Ed II for us and again he came in a little under schedule but not 18

months. I think he was six months under schedule in Med Ed II. Now, the difference for me in Med Ed II was that in Med Ed II I was totally in charge of the planning; that is, working directly with the architect and our own family here at the institution.

STOKES: In other words, you had no particular assistance from North Texas except for a Denny that came down.

COFFELT: Don Denny came actually in Med Ed I. He actually was an engineer that oversaw the construction; that is, to make sure that the things were built according to the specifications and he brought a fellow with him, Milton Shultz, and Milton is still with us. He retired once and we brought him back out of retirement to do Med Ed II and then he just stayed on to do Med Ed III. He has been a tremendous help to me.

STOKES: How large is Med Ed II?

COFFELT: Ray, I should have done my homework. It is roughly 25,000 feet per floor times five, or 125,000 square feet, something like that.

STOKES: What did that building cost you, do you recall?

COFFELT: I think it was around 16. It was more than Med Ed I. It came at a different time. The cost per foot for the Med Ed II building was more expensive than I because there was a lot more plumbing and that sort of thing which is very expensive because of the research aspects and because of the fact that it was a teaching

facility.

STOKES: It is a basic science building?

COFFELT: Yes, it is the basic science building, so the cost per square foot was considerably more although I don't recall the exact amount. Then, when we had Med Ed II we truly then were able to bring together all of the basic science into one basic area with the exception that we continued to have a close agreement with UNT, particularly in Biochemistry.

STOKES: Let's focus our attention now on Biomedical Communications that you developed and fathered it all the way through. When did you begin to expand? I mean, after you were in a very fine space there in Med Ed I, you began to have innovative ideas about certain things that you could do with television and teaching and so forth. Give us a little run down on how you developed that, because you and Bob played a very important role in that. Along about that time you became an author, didn't you?

COFFELT: Well, I had written a book on the installation and utilization of instructional television while I was still at Tarrant County Junior College and it had been published by the University of Texas Press and I don't know whether it was an authoritative book or not but it had wide audience and was rather well received and used by a lot of people who were contemplating putting in little educational television systems. After I came out to the Medical School I got a notice from the people at the University of Texas that it probably needed to be updated since this field changes so rapidly. So I told

Bob, I really don't have time to go through it from top to bottom and particularly as it concerns the technical aspects, so why don't you coauthor it with me and so he did. We really just revised it. I don't know if that book is still in press or not. I kind of think it's not because this field has changed so quickly.

STOKES: You mean I should have it in the Rare Book Room here.

COFFELT: I don't even have a copy for it. The thing about the growth of Biomed is that we provided a service. I want to make that clear, that what the people in my area and that department did and the thing that we talked about constantly is to provide a service and if you are doing that, if the thing you are providing has value, the people will gravitate to that service. That's how we built our department. We did not go out and try to sell it per se. We did not corner people in the hallway and say, Hey, have you thought about using a couple of slides here. What we'll do is produce quality slides for you and we'll provide quality video tapes for you and if you find a way in your teaching methodology to use those, we'll support you 110%. I think it was that alone, because the one thing that we had going for us here is that doctors realize the value of time. If anybody does, it's doctors. What we were proposing was, if you'll use our methodology, our tools if you will, we think that you can cut down on the amount of time it takes a student to learn a given block of information and that's to your advantage and our faculty grasped that very quickly. The old adage a picture is worth 1,000 words, well they would rather show the picture than repeat the 1,000 words. It really grew of its own volition after it had gotten started and the credit really isn't mine at all. The credit for the growth of

that department are the good people that we had working in that area.

STOKES: In that respect, it has grown considerable. What is the number of personnel in that department.

COFFELT: You know, I have no idea how many. There are about 15 or 16, along there, now. And of course that started from the 2-3 that we spoke of a while ago. They are the people that made it work.

STOKES: They are very talented in their field, too.

COFFELT: They are indeed. They are experts in their field and they are the ones that make it work. Over the years we have had a number of people who we have had employed in that area and then they went elsewhere. You expect that.

STOKES: Well, I know nothing whatsoever about television other than just being able to turn the television on then I have trouble sometime, but I have had the pleasure on a number of times taking visitors and friends through the department and even when we were on the seventh floor. I did more then than I do now, actually, but people were amazed at the setup that we had to compete with channel 8, 5, or 4 in this area if we could. Let's see Ken, we've taken pretty well care of Med Ed I and II and you were involved in both. Now, let's turn our attention to Med Ed III. Can you think back on some of the factors that were instrumental in that?

COFFELT: Well, first of all we selected the same architects, Fisher and Spillman, out of Dallas for all three of these buildings. There

was that commonality, that thread of continuity in the architectural concern. In company with members of that staff, from Fisher and Spillman, Mr. Carter, who is director of Library Services, and myself in both the role of planning director as well as Media Biomed Communication director, we visited a number of other institutions and medical libraries here in the state; San Antonio and Galveston are the two that I recall, looking at now only what they were but how they were set up to serve the patrons. This room that we are in now is what we call the Rare Book Room is very similar to the one in Galveston Medical School. I recall that Mr. Carter and I and the people from Fisher and Spillman visited that. We were just so impressed with that Rare Books Room. But that is just an incidental. I think the main thing that we were trying to achieve was a functional operation and we were also trying to achieve flexibility in future growth. We could expand as we know a library will always expand. And of course I had the good fortune of having constructed or built kind of from ground up two other media applications, Biomed communication type application. So the building of this one, and again I relied heavily upon the people who worked for me at that time to design the Biomed communication part of this building and they did an excellent job, I think, in terms of functionality, how the various pieces fit together to produce a functioning, efficient department. I am very pleased with it.

STOKES: How large is this building?

COFFELT: 110,000 square feet and it cost \$14 million.

STOKES: Well, I want to talk a little bit about your involvement in

this building in the second segment of our conversation that we're having here today. Ken, I guess you remember in the discussion about the library, and all of the politics involved, and there was quite a bit of politics involved in it, and in fact I think that's one of the reasons why Dr. Willard might not still be here because of some of the involvement that he got into that was in disagreement with some of his superiors and I won't go into all that detail, but nevertheless he was instrumental in getting us some funds, you know, that we might not have gotten for a while. How much involvement were you in in that particular aspect?

COFFELT: Just peripherally. Simply with an understanding and knew what was going on and what we were attempting to do and I think that the whole thing was we went directly to the legislature for the funding to do Med Ed III.

STOKES: How much did we finally wind up with?

COFFELT: I believe it was \$14.3 million, something of that effect. So that came directly out of the legislature and I think that perhaps Dr. Willard did, I don't know exactly how to say it, he was deeply involved in getting that. He felt strongly that we needed a new library and I'm not sure he was able to convince others of the need.

STOKES: The others were not opposed so much as they felt we were a little early to make that attempt. I understand of course, and you know Dr. Balm, Elmer Balm, down in Austin. He played a very important role before the governor, he had the opportunity to do a little line vetoing, as I understand, and Elmer Balm had a very important role in

helping us to keep that. Okay, we got the money now and you got a different contractor entirely now. You're starting out with some new international company from France, I believe, wasn't it? You had a lifetime experience with this one.

COFFELT: That one I hope to never ever repeat again. I'm having the hardest time remembering the name of the company. They were from France, their parent company was located in France and they were a company that was headquarters in Dallas. At the time Texas was experiencing a tremendous building boom and the parent company wanted to get in on part of the American market and they felt that Dallas was a good place. So they established a subsidiary here and they were the ones who got the low bid. They had prequalified for the bid and they had done some good work here in the U.S. We began construction of the building and at that time there were no basic problems. But as we began to progress in the construction of the building, the fellow who is the president of this local subsidiary indicated to me that they had made a corporate decision that upon the completion of this building they intended to close their office here in Dallas because the construction industry was falling off. I asked him at the time to be sure and keep this under his hat. In other words, don't broadcast the fact that you are going to close this office because we'll have trouble with deliveries, we'll have trouble with everything. In his wisdom he elected to make it known publicly, and perhaps he was right, I don't know, I'm sure it would have gotten out anyway. But in my mind's eye that was where our real problems began. Then we had subcontractors that were leery of doing the work for fear of not getting paid. Really, before it was all over with, during the final stages of construction and so forth, I felt like my only job was to

counter the flow of paper that I was getting from the contractor which I readily knew and I think anyone would readily see, was simply laying a paper trail for any future litigation. Now these guys were far beyond their completion date. They were over that date and there were penalty clauses, you know liquidated damages and that sort of thing that could become involved. They were far over budget. They were losing money. Of course it didn't bother us because we had a contract that says we will pay so much. But then again, when a company starts losing money they start trying to cut corners and goodness we had a hard time working with those people toward the end of that contract. They truly did go bankrupt. They got out once they finished this building. And then we had to rely, they left a holding company here, to fulfill their obligation for the one year warranty at the completion of the building. Sogetexas was the name of the company and their parent company was SGE in France. They have since packed their bags and left. Again, I hope I never have to go through that kind of turmoil again; internal turmoil as well as trying to see that this institution, that we were doing what we were supposed to do and in the proper way so that we did not run any risk of getting, first of all, inferior work, but beyond that that we were not in any kind of litigation and there was an implied threat of litigation because they, the company, was contending that we had done certain things that held them up. Nothing more than paper trails. Their attorneys and our attorneys would have had field days with it. But as it turned out we even called meetings with the company, had our own board of regents there so they would become acquainted with what was transpiring. It was not pleasant by any stretch. Personally, I think that we did get quality construction and I will give the credit for that to Milton Schultz. He was on them day and night. He bird-dogged them on this

building, it was unbelievable how closely he stayed tuned in to this thing. If it were not for that I think they would have cut corners. I hope I'm not saying something that is libelous, but they were interested in making money and they were losing money. They told me how much they had lost and I paid no credence in it, but it was beyond a million to complete this job. They even brought their vice-president or something from France over to meet with us on two different occasions to meet with me.

STOKES: In other words, they did not finish before their agreed date.

COFFELT: Oh no, they were far beyond past the date of completion which had brought into play the whole concept of liquidated damages, in other words, penalties for being over contract. Oh, it was a horror story. I think that we still got a quality building out of it, a beautiful building.

STOKES: The occupants of the building, in addition to the library which covers the second, third, and most of the fourth floor, the Biomedical Communications, you share that with the computer people to some degree. I'm not sure just where they fit into the picture, but they're here. In fact, they are on the fourth floor too, I believe.

COFFELT: They are both on the first and the fourth floor.

STOKES: I still associate you with the Biomedical Communications, but that department, compared to what you had on the seventh floor, is much larger, isn't it?

COFFELT: Yes, probably four or five times larger.

STOKES: The Graphics Section I'm sure is much larger.

COFFELT: Yeah, it is. The whole area, I'm sure, is four to five times larger than what we had over on seventh floor and again, I think that is an example of how it grew over the years.

STOKES: Do you have any particular experiences, I understand, in fact I witnessed I think all three times, didn't they have what they call "tree topping"? Do you recall any particular anecdotes or any unusual episodes that occurred during any of those "tree topping" experiences that we had?

COFFELT: Not during the "tree toppings". I didn't know what in the world "tree topping" was. We did it on Med Ed I. It's a ceremony, tradition, that goes back many, many years. I'll tell you one of the things that stands out in my memory on Med I is the lifting of, as I indicated before the building are build kind of like in block pieces and giant erector sets, well one of the very largest pieces that went into Med Ed I is the great big piece right at the very top of the south end, right up on the eighth floor, the south end of the building. The largest single piece of precast concrete that went on that building. And it took two great big cranes to lift it. Most of the time the pieces are lifted by one crane and set over and the workmen tie the thing together. This one required two cranes and everybody at the school, there was some thought that the two cranes simply won't be able to handle it and that there was this thought of getting it up so high and it tumble or whatever and the whole school

turned out to witness it. We were all standing around looking and everyone holding their breath, particularly the contractor. There was a lot of smoke flying, and it was set in place. I remember that one. That always sticks out in my memory. The "tree toppings" or the toppings out ceremony, nothing in particular stands out. That is more a tradition for the builders, the guys who are building it than it is for the owner.

STOKES: I made notice of that particularly when they were finishing this building.

COFFELT: The contractor usually would provide the workers with refreshments and a meal and that sort of thing, so for them it was a milestone.

STOKES: Okay, we've talked a little bit about the past and the present. How about the future as far as building and expansion of the campus? I haven't been there to see it myself, but the physical plant is in a building all its own now down on Darcy Street.

COFFELT: Yeah, we have a 4800 square foot building which was really kind of a way to get the physical plant department up on campus and out of those leased facilities that we spoke of a while ago down on River Plaza area. But we intended at the same time that we brought those people up we knew we were going to have to use some of those old houses that were still located down on Darcy Street. We are now at a point where it looks as if we need to be thinking about additional parking. Our parking situation has reached almost critical mass here, so we are thinking that what we need to do is to develop another

building similar to the one we built for the physical plant; put the things that are currently housed in the old homes into this new wing, new building.

STOKES: Where would that be located?

COFFELT: Probably at the very corner of our property down on Darcy and Bolen on that corner.

STOKES: Is that as far down as we go?

COFFELT: Yeah, our property line to the eastern boundary, is along Bolen street, and probably will remain the boundary for years to come.

STOKES: Along West 7th Street, do we have everything except one building there.

COFFELT: In the 3500 block we do. We have half of that block I would say. Luellen still owns those old apartments that are there as well as his basic building on the corner of 7th and Montgomery. In the 3500 block we own half of the street front.

STOKES: What do we have about 12-14 acres now?

COFFELT: We have 15.3 acres, which is not a large campus by most measurements, but after all, it is sufficient to educate the 400 medical students that we have. Now if we get another school or something, it may be that there will be a need to expand our construction of other buildings, but right now we don't know that. We

have a need for clinical space and as you know we just, February 24 of this year, our board of regents accepted and approved a new campus master plan which we had worked on for considerable amounts of time in conjunction with Parker Croston Architects here in Fort Worth and that plan shows the mechanism by which we can expand the new buildings when that need arises. We think that our clinical need is our greatest need, space for our clinical operations, because we are the only publicly supported medical school in the state of Texas that does not have an affiliation with a publicly supported hospital and so our need to create patient flow upon which our students learn is different from the other schools who have a publicly supported hospital. They seem to generate all the patient load they need to educate those people and we have a different problem in getting the patient flow. The clinic need is large. We are looking now at the possibility of renovating the two buildings that are down on Camp Bowie and Clifton streets, the old what we call Medical Examiner's building, which the county Medical Examiner occupied for a while. Incidentally, the old central clinic as you recall, and what we call the piano store and then of course, sitting between those stores, is our current police headquarters station.

STOKES: Is that as far as we go east?

COFFELT: No, that vacant lot east of the piano store belongs to us and that is the eastern boundary along Camp Bowie there. We are developing a plan now that we hope to present to the board of regents next month for approval to do some renovating there on that corner for clinical use. The exposure to Camp Bowie for our clinics is very desirable. There are a lot of people who travel Camp Bowie each day

the number, but it didn't take very long to do it.

COFFELT: It didn't take very long with our 18 graduates and probably that or fewer faculty/staff.

STOKES: We had two years graduations, didn't we, in the Scott Theater.

COFFELT: I think then the following year that we also had it there, yes.

STOKES: The third year I believe we moved down to Will Rogers, didn't we?

COFFELT: I believe so.

STOKES: Wasn't that the year that Jim Wright was our speaker.

COFFELT: I believe that that's correct, so that would have been 1976. Again, I look back on that rather humble, modest beginning, and I think of those 18 graduates, many of whom I see now coming back at our alumni functions and continuing medical education functions, and they are very successful in positions. They have been out now a number of years and I think of how they received their training, in almost primitive circumstances. It's easy to get on the soapbox and start talking about how those people went through a very primitive system and have turned out to be excellent physicians. I'm not saying the ones we turn out now are not, I don't mean to imply that at all, but I think those 18 graduates sure had a high level of desire, those students, to have committed to a four year curriculum in such

primitive circumstances, and not even knowing if it was going to continue to exist. In other words, this place could have closed its doors.

STOKES: Particularly the first year or two years.

COFFELT: They didn't know at the time that they enrolled that it might have closed after they had graduated, then what would their degrees have been worth, you know, figuratively speaking. So, I greatly admire those first people who pioneered this. I admire people like you who came here early on.

STOKES: Well, I had a little finger but you had a whole hand, and I commend you for the efforts that you have performed, and again I want to thank you for giving me your time this morning to reminisce and be a little nostalgic about the past and hopefully we think about continuing the future and I think we have a great growth to look forward to. Good to see you again, Ken Coffelt.

COFFELT: Thank you Ray. It's been a pleasure.