

TCOM MEMOIRS

Ray Stokes: This is Ray Stokes in the oral history section of the Health Science Library of the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine. Today, this is the eleventh day of September, 1985. I have a very fine friend of mine, former President of the Texas Osteopathic Medical Association who was instrumental in the establishment and construction of the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine. We are in the office, or the conference room, I should say, of the Texas Osteopathic Medical Association, 226 Bailey Avenue in Fort Worth, Texas. I would like to introduce Dr. Bobby G. Smith, who was President of the association in the year of 1970-71, and one of those responsible for our being today and that we're proud to be the seventh college of osteopathic medicine, the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine, and we're very happy to discuss your part in this project that we were so happy about in 1968, 69, and 70. Dr. Smith, you are a G.P. in Arlington; been very active in state politics and also professional politics. The last few years I believe though that you've taken kind of a back seat. It's good to be with you this morning. Dr. Smith, let me just start out our conversation by asking you just a basic question, and you take it from there. When and under what circumstances did you become interested in supporting the establishment of TCOM?

Dr. Bobby Smith: Ray, let me say that I am happy to be here to assist you in recording whatever minute contribution I may have made to the college, which I guess over the years only time will tell. I first became aware of the college, I suppose, while I was still in my training. I graduated in 1962 in the Kirksville college, and came to Grand Prairie to intern at the Midcities Memorial Hospital, at that time was called from 62-63, and so it was because that I was close by that I guess I became aware of things that were going on, and being sort of a person who always believed that it is better to give than to receive everything, that my Father once told me that when you are gone from this earth if it was said of you that

Dr. Bobby Smith, cont.: you give more than you took then your journey here was worthwhile, and maybe some of that rubbing off on me may have caused me to get interested in the college, and so, from time to time discussion would arise about the college. There was a committee in the association to study the establishment of the college, and I guess that came along, and there was some efforts on the part of the Des Moines college to move and there was some efforts out in our part of the country to try to get us to move here, and so, it was those things that caused me to become aware. So, I guess it was early in the mid-sixties is when I became interested in the college, and being one who had just freshly received the benefits of an education made possible through the sacrifices and contributions of my forefathers, I suppose it was those things that cause me to feel like that maybe in some way I ought to give back some of what I received in the way of efforts and so forth, to the establishment of the college; and then, I guess from there, I became interested or became involved in the political administration of the association by being involved in the House of Delegates. It was through the efforts of Dr. Dan Beyer, who is now deceased, that asked me one time would you serve as, I don't remember whether it was a delegate, or an alternate delegate, or something to the state convention, and I said, "yes, I would". So, it was through his efforts that got me involved there, and then every year at the House of Delegates meeting it would, we would receive a report about the committee and the college, and so forth. I guess by the time I was involved there the college actually had a charter and they were looking at some way to make that become a real thing. There was a lot of concern on everyone's part. It seemed that in those days we wanted to have a college; most of us felt that, boy, that's a lot of work; and its going to be a big effort, so there was kind of a thing going around then, well, let George do it... And, of course, our friend, George Luibel got that title later. Let George do it. And George done it of course, but he was a very shrewd, crafty sort

Dr. Smith: of person that knew who to call on to do such things to make it all come together. Then, I guess, my evolution then started; I think it was early in my activities in the association I was asked to be on the Board of Directors. I guess they were scraping the bottom of the barrel because we were running out of talent in those days, and...

Ray Stokes: That was about in what year?

Dr. Smith: Oh, I want to say it was '67 or 8, somewhere around in there. So, we felt, or I felt like at that time that I had a more direct involvement since I was one of the members of the board who had responsibility for making decisions about the college, and what the association would do, and how we would be involved, and so forth - in the efforts of the college. I guess how I got involved was a unique group of sort of circumstances. Some people over in Arlington where I practice I became friends with very early in my professional career; they were some influential people that knew about the osteopathic profession and several members of their family came to me for osteopathic treatment. And, I guess it was through those contacts that we've established long lasting friendships with these people. They were the ones that later ended up being very valuable as far as doing something that helped the college along the way. This was the Vandergriff family; and of course, Tom was Mayor at that time and had been for many years. I remember when I went to Arlington I was interning; just starting my internship in Grand Prairie and I had heard a lot about Tom Vandergriff long before I came to the area. While I was in college I took premed up at Wichita Falls at Midwestern University and I had heard about Tom Vandergriff up there, even. And so, it was through those things that I wanted to meet the guy that I had heard about. So shortly after I came to Arlington to live there, while I interned in Grand Prairie, I just called down one day to his office and told them that I wanted to make an appointment to meet the Mayor, that I was new in town. They just put the Mayor on the phone because he always had a policy that he handled his own

Dr. Smith: phone calls and appointments, and everything. I guess he still does today, as far as I know. So, Tom came on the line and I said, it kind of startled me for a moment, and I said, "Well, Mr. Mayor, I'm Bobby Smith, and I just moved to your town and I've heard about you for a long time, and I just want to meet you sometime." He said, "Well, just come on down". So, he and I had a long initial visit we must have talked an hour, and later on I discovered how busy the guy was I felt kind of embarrassed that I had taken so much of his time, but we became friends, and then later; oh, I don't know how many members of his family I've treated-his father, I guess all of his children, and I don't know who all, from time to time for problems osteopathically that they've had. It was a natural for me to look to my close friend for some help with this college thing. And, so we did, and I thought that if the college is moving along, and wanting to get started if it can say "I've got a place I can hang my hat; I've got a home", then that was a beginning. And I remember that I said to someone, I don't know if it was Tex Roberts or Dick Stratten, or someone that I said, you know, I don't know what in God's green earth I'm doing this for; what can be worse than having a college in your back door to run you crazy with all of the problems that will come up.

Ray Stokes: Excuse me, now. Tex Roberts; he's the Executive Director of the Association.

Dr. Smith: Yes, Tex came along, I guess around 1968-69, in that era. He came here as Executive Director from the New Mexico Association.

Ray Stokes: And Dick Stratten is Dr. Stratten..

Dr. Smith: Was President just prior to me, and was a very close friend.

Ray Stokes: Right.

Dr. Smith: So, I said to some of these people, I don't know who, you've got to be crazy to want a college, especially in your back door. I hope someday they move to Houston or somewhere. But, I knew that I had this

Dr. Smith: possibility there, and we might as well grasp that. And, I said to Tom Vandergriff at the time, I said, "Now, Tom, I don't know what will ever happen to this, but, golly, I appreciate so much you trying to work out something. He said, "Well, it'll be no problem." So, we went to work on the idea, and as I discussed the possibility that I knew someone that had some land in South Arlington, that we could get a sizeable quantity of land to build a college. There were those who thought this is great; it's good; don't let the sun set until we get that signed over to us. Then there were others who said no; that's, we, you know, I know where that's at and it's no more than an unplowed cornfield out there and we don't want that sort of thing. Well, if you're involved in decision making somewhere you've got to weigh the odds - how many pluses and how many minuses here, and make a decision and go. So, I didn't want; the thing I didn't want to do was I didn't want to present a package of land to the college and then have the college turn it down. I felt like that that would be very embarrassing if I did. So, I felt around, and I felt that there was enough support that maybe we'd at least have a beginning. So, the college met, the board was having a meeting, I believe it was in February of 1970 at the Worth Hotel.

Ray Stokes: Right, now that was the college board.

Dr. Smith: The college board, yes. The college board was having a meeting. I believe Dr. Luibel was Chairman at that time and I don't recall who all was on the board. They were having a meeting and they always invited the association members to attend. Well, it was about that time that Dr. Richard Stratten, who had formerly practiced down in Quero, Texas, but he was elected to be President in '69 and '70 for the association-Texas Osteopathic Medical Association. And, because his father had retired, and he was there all alone he decided to come up and join me as an associate in practice. And, so he did, it was kind of rumored at that time that I would be the next President to follow him; and, I think that I had been elected President-elect by this time. That we kind of worked an arrangement okay; I will make us a living while

Dr. Smith: you're President, if you'll make us a living while I'm President.

Mr. Stokes: (Laughing) I see.

Dr. Smith: That's about the way it had to be for us, and I think it's been the same way for all the guys that I've ever, golly, watched go through as President of the association. Its a tremendous sacrifice...

Mr. Stokes: Yes, it is.

Dr. Smith: I'll never forget the note that I went down to sign for \$50,000 to pay my bills when I came home from El Paso after being President. So, it's worth it. I'd never, you know I'd never spend that...

Mr. Stokes: Don't regret it.

Dr. Smith: for nothing else, I'm tickled to death that I did, and whatever little bit that may...that the public and profession may have gained from my efforts, I gained a lot more. If you want to look at the selfish side of it I received values that money would never buy. That you couldn't see anyway. Back to the mainstream here - it was at that meeting in February of 1970, it was on a Sunday morning that Tom Vandergriff, the Mayor of Arlington, and I went to the meeting. And Tom had arranged through his father and a gentleman, an attorney who was close family friends by the name of Carlisle Craven, and so..Tom's father, Hooker Vandergriff, and Carlisle Craven owned this property in south Arlington and they agreed to give a section of it to the college. And, certain restrictions about what was to be done with it, and so forth, were put forth. Well, Tom came with me to the meeting and I introduced him to the board of the college and he made the offer and the board later accepted the offer. So, at that point, in February of 1970, the college had a home. As it turned out to be, it was a temporary home, but, you know, when a child is out in the street struggling for a living, if it's got just a tent to put over it's head or if it can land under a bush during some rough storms it's chance of surviving is much greater. I remember another thing that my dad told

Dr. Smith: me when I was a boy. He said that, "son, if you ever fall over the side of a cliff, or you get pushed over the side of a cliff, and you're falling down, and there's any kind of a little twig sticking out, reach out and grab that thing and don't ever let go. Because if you let go, you're just going to hit the bottom, and if you hang on long enough someone will come along, or something will happen that will actually relieve you of your situation." And, I thought about, well this is a home for the college, and ...I really felt at that time, well, I hope that it don't really come about out here. I mean, I have to say that personally, I dreaded seeing the college in my back door because of all the sacrifices that I would have to make. I don't know if at that time I was willing to make those sacrifices, and I don't know what pushed me on, but I did. So, the college had a home, and then from there I think we...the next problem was to try to get some money for the college. Or, I guess the college really had to get itself established and start a class. That was the next thing.

Mr. Stokes: Let me interrupt, if I may, Dr. Smith. You have pretty well covered very graphically, the narrative of your involvement of your responsibility of the Cravens-Vandergriff's gift of land, which was a must for our survival, no doubt about that. But, let's go in to what you are probably ready to lead into. Let me just review for just a minute because you were President of TOMA in 1970 and '71. Now, the records show that you spent considerable time and effort in behalf of TCOM to receive State financial support. Now, we have a home. We had no income, and so you are responsible to a great extent helping this school receive State support. Will you single out some of your Austin visits and the results that occurred?

Dr. Smith: Yes, there was a meeting, I believe in, I don't remember the year, but there was a meeting, like in December, between the college board and the TOMA board. And we had a dinner or something to bring everyone together. The college officially said we want TOMA to actively pursue and

Dr. Smith: and get college funding for us. And I would say it was in December 1970, is what I think it was. The seventeenth of December because we went to work on that effort.

Mr. Stokes: Now, let me interrupt. Now, we were already open at that time. I believe we were open in October of that year.

Dr. Smith: I believe your headquarters was in a garage apartment up on Montgomery.

Mr. Stokes: A little white house across the street from the Fort Worth Osteopathic.

Dr. Smith: Maybe the Anatomy Lab was in the garage, something like that.

Mr. Stokes: It was in the garage.

Dr. Smith: I knew it was a garage apartment involved, and later a bowling alley, and so forth. But, nonetheless, I believe it was George Luibel that often pointed back to the early days of now the great Southwestern Medical School over in Dallas at how they began in some old abandoned army barracks there around the Harry Hines area of Dallas. So, that gave us; caused us to have no shame about operating in a garage apartment. I guess that house was on Madison, was it?

Mr. Stokes: Yeah, right on 3600 Madison; right on the corner of Madison and Montgomery. And, of course they used it, the unused fifth floor, of the hospital for the classes and library and so forth.

Dr. Smith: Yes, and did we not at that time, did the college not lease the bowling alley?

Mr. Stokes: Well, we leased it the next year. The first year we didn't have any problem with the first class.

Dr. Smith: Just had a few.

Mr. Stokes: That's right, but the second year we had to do something with the first year.

Dr. Smith: Yes, and so they had to go someplace to have their second year training. I believe it was December 17, 1970, that the Texas College of

Dr. Smith: Osteopathic Medicine Board of Directors asked TOMA to assist in getting State funds. At that time I was President and there was one thing that complicated this problem some. It was along about this time, and I don't know if we were aware of it at that moment or if it was within the next month or so, but we had kind of depended on some people to do our lobbying for us in Austin, and there arose some problems at that time that really troubled me, as the President, because here I was I think at that time the youngest guy that had every come along in the association as President...and youth has often times no experience or nothing to refer to and that was the case with me...Having not had the benefit of twenty or thirty years of decision making of others to rely upon and having to set on boards and boards and watch these things happen, I didn't have a lot of experience in making a decision to go in a certain direction. And, so when the news came that the man who was our "Lobbyist" at that time may be possibly named in some bank scandal, or something like this, and it was just possible that we didn't know or anything. And he didn't know exactly how he'd be involved, but he said to me, I believe it was something like he'd like to stand aside for the time being until the air was clear on that thing. So, that left nobody to do the lobbying for the association or to do the footwork in Austin; except myself, who was President, and Tex Roberts. And I had never involved myself in anything like that. I hardly knew my Senator and that was it. I guess maybe part of my reason for success was that I didn't know that you couldn't do it. And, I remember when we were celebrating back in Senator Tom Kraten's office in Mineral Wells, who was my Senator at that time, we were celebrating back in his office the passage of this bill to get funding for the college. And, Tom said to me, Bobby, the only reason you ever got this bill passed was nobody told you you couldn't. And I really believe that. Because if I had known all of the obstacles that one has to go through to overcome, to get something passed, I probably would have thrown up my hands and left the state, or something, because it

Dr. Smith: was just more than I ever could conceive that it could be. Well, we went to work, and Tex Roberts and I started out...mapped out a plan with the aid of the Board of Directors of our association, and we began our work in Austin, talking to people, and we used kind of as a guideline...Well, some leverage in the thing was at that time our association was receiving some scholarship funds to assist students pursuing an education in the osteopathic medicine, out of state, because we had not an osteopathic college in Texas. That came about many, many years before through the help of Dr. Elmer Baum, who at that time found out that they were assisting students who were studying forestry out of the state.

Mr. Stokes: Forestry?

Dr. Smith: Forestry. He found out that these students studying forestry got state funding assistance from the State of Texas to pursue their education in forestry because at that time there was no education offered in forestry by any of the state institutions in Texas. Because of that, then he came in and said, hey, fellows, let's here...Here's a group of people that's pursuing an education out of state. There's no osteopathic colleges in Texas; how about giving us some funding for this? And, so they began with a very token amount, and slowly it worked up to a sizeable quantity of \$100,000 a year. And so, then we looked at that, and then along about that time Baylor University College of Medicine in Houston were receiving funds to assist in educating their students there in some way from the State because they were providing medical education. And, I know not what the circumstances were other than I know they were, and so we used those two situations to kind of map out a direction to go in pursuing funding for the college. Then because of that we got a bill and our sponsor was Senator Tom ^{Creighton} ~~Kraton~~ of Mineral Wells because he was my Senator, and I was told by someone down there that the way you start out with a bill is you get your Senator to sponsor it,

or your State Representative to sponsor it. And, so at that time, I was kind of a long distance member of his district because it was such a gerrymandered district. And, so we went to Senator ^{Creighton} ~~Kraten~~ and he graciously helped us with this, and was kind of my mentor and director because I recall time and time again he'd call me on the phone and I'd be back in Arlington trying to make a living for my little children and wife at that time. And he'd call and say you'd better get down here now because this is what's happening, and so Tex Roberts and I would jump on a plane or get in a car and buzz off down there and do whatever he said to do. And, because of that, it was almost like a day to day sort of thing, with there was no real plan for tomorrow, because you didn't know what tomorrow would bring. You just had to wait until the sun came up and say, okay, the sun's shining or its raining and we either have to wear a raincoat or a parasol with us for the day. And it was just literally that way. Well, golly, thanks to so many people and because of their efforts down there, just the sheer grass roots show of strength. One of the things Tom ^{Creighton} ~~Kraten~~ told me was that you get somebody from every district, especially of these guys sitting on the committee here. And we carefully picked people from that guy's district and we, in every instance, picked someone who knew that person. And, so they weren't looking at strangers. When they looked out in the audience and they saw Dr. X from my time, in fact some of them want to introduce their doctor friends from their district at the committee hearing. And, so there was a lot of this going on, and I remember, oh, some of the strange sort of things that happened. But, it was because of that tremendous, overwhelming show of strength that that committee was impressed that these people care about what they're doing. And some of those people on that committee had been treated by some of these physicians and they were aware that these people provide a quality health care to people in this community. And that's what we need because at that time there was something that really helped us a great deal. There was a tremendous movement towards specialization

Dr. Smith: and super specialization within the medical world. Everybody wanted to be a widget 39 specialist or a widget 39-paragraph six or something. Everybody wanted to be a super deal. And so there was nobody out there to provide care, and for that reason I think that was on our side because we could go in and say that 70% of all of our graduates from all of our colleges for the last X, Y, and Z years have become family practitioners, serving the primary needs of people. And I think that was important to this committee because I think that there were people there who had been burned or there was some member of their family who had been burned by having some unsatisfactory relationship with some person who was maybe a heart specialist when really they needed a toe doctor, or something like that. And that helped us a great deal. And I remember the thing that caused me the most concern that night when we had the committee hearing because Tex Roberts and I were kind of orchestrating the...it was kind of like a puppy show or puppet show or something. Somebody had to pull the strings. And so, we were kind of marching and we had everybody lined up with the help of Senator Kraten and who comes in and talks when and I remember we had George Luibel and I don't recall who else, but we had everybody, we had the show lined up to come on in a certain order. Well, what really threw a clinker in the wheel was a Senator from Galveston at that time, who was on the committee; a very astute man and very observant and later became a great friend of our profession. His name was Babe Schwartz, and A.R., I believe, were his initials. As we had the hearing he asked some very pointed questions about this, that, and the other, and it appeared very quickly that we had a problem much greater than we realized because he had sat in the House, I mean in the Senate, for a long time and he was one of the senior members of the Senate. Therefore, he had very key committee assignments. Had, I didn't know at that time, but in looking back later I discovered he had allegiances from many members of that Senate that owed him favors that he had helped with many, many things; that he

Dr. Smith: could call on almost anybody there. Now, he was more of a liberal leaning, but he could even call on the arch-conservatives such as Senator ^{Creighton} ~~Kraten~~ and say I need your help in this, and they were almost obliged to do it or he would ramshack anything they wanted to do down the road. So, as we say in the political world, he had lots of pearls coming to him and he could collect these anytime he wanted to. And, so we recognized that we problem. And, his major concern was that they had earlier allocated funds to Baylor College of Medicine in Houston and he wanted someone to oversee those funds. He wanted the State Auditor to be able to look in and say, yes, the State's getting its money worth here, and this money is being used in accordance with how directions were given. And, apparently, someone at Baylor had kind of nosed him up a little and said, you know, you go jump in the lake, and so he raised questions at our hearing. Well, I don't want to give money to a bunch of doctors and have them go to Las Vegas and spend it. And, I could understand that. And, so we had a huddled meeting with Senator Kraten after the hearing was over and Senator ^{Creighton} ~~Kraten~~ said, "Well, you guys," talking to Tex Roberts and I, "you be at his office in the morning about seven o'clock, because he comes to work early before anybody gets there, and you resolve this thing with him. And, if you don't, well, we've got trouble." Well, we went over there, and I remember we were waiting at his front door when he got there and someone had left his newspaper at the door, and I picked up his newspaper and walked in and followed him right back through his office and he had a handful of mail, and so forth, and he was talking and we were going and Tex and I just went right on back in his office with him and he was the kind of guy that would have never invited us in, but he would have been insulted if you hadn't just followed him right on back. Well, we went back and sat down and started discussing and saying, well, we are here to try to deal with your concerns about our bill, and what is it about it that you don't like. And his comment was, well I don't want to do anything to

Dr. Smith: change your bill. It's your bill," and he started kind of backing away, and I just opened up the bill and kind of laid it out in front of him and laid a pencil there and said, "Now, you know if there is something you don't like about it, then maybe we can make it where it is better and maybe it is something that we don't know about that we've overlooked." And, so he started out saying, "Well, I don't want to change your bill," and while he was saying that he was lining out certain things and writing in certain things. So, I felt like we had someone then who was at least responding, and we were getting to the heart of the problem. And the problem was simply that he wanted the State Auditor to oversee and supervise and be able to at least audit those funds to where he knew the State was getting their money's worth. That's what we wanted, too, and we had not, in looking at Baylor's bill and looking at all that had transpired before, we had just sort of overlooked this thing. And I think it was a good thing for us, as a profession, to be answerable to the State, and it was a good thing for the State to assure their constituents that they were getting their money's worth. And, so that was an interesting thing. I guess that probably the most exciting moment was when the actual signing of the bill because it had really happened at that time. And, that, you know, Tom ^{Creighton} ~~Krahn~~ said at one point that we could probably get this bill passed. We've seem to overcome most of the hurdles. But,...

Mr. Stokes: Who was the Governor at that time, Dr. Smith?

Dr. Smith: Oh, let's see...

Mr. Stokes: Was that Preston Smith?

Dr. Smith: I believe it was. Preston Smith was the Governor. Sure was. And we had some in-roads to Preston Smith; Dr. Baum and Preston had been long friends from way back when Preston was Lt. Governor, and I guess in the House and Senate prior to that. They had become friends, and so that gave us an in-road to the Governor. Well, what we had to do to really assure some funding right off the bat was we cut an agreement with the, in

Dr. Smith: fact, I think Tom Kraten was on the Senate Finance Committee. In the final days of all of the manipulating that goes on in that committee he cut a deal where we would sacrifice our four goals(?) of scholarship funds to out of state students and we could take that money and put it in the bill, the finance bill, the budget bill for the college, and they added to it an extra \$50,000 which gave us \$150,000 to operate with that year. And, golly, I guess this was a great feeling because there was literally no hope that we could get funding, but if we could just get our foot in the door, but, you know, at that time the college was just struggling something awful just to survive. And, teachers can't teach if they can't feed their families. And, so we had to have something to pay the teachers. I don't know, but I suspect the people at the college felt a great sigh of relief when they finally got a check saying, hey, here's some money to pay some of these people with. That was a good thing, and of course, the great thing was to see the Governor sign the bill and actually bring about something that had been, and so that came on May 17, five months later... after...from the day that ...

Mr. Stokes: In 1971?

Dr. Smith: Yes, five months from the day that we were assigned the job. And, Lord, I don't know how; I don't know how it came about in that period of time, because, golly, there's been other things I've worked on since that time, and I think I know a little bit more how to do it; you never know how. Now that I've had some experience, I've worked on things for two, four, five years and go down in defeat, and never bring them about.

Mr. Stokes: You know, in referring to that \$150,000, one thing that hasn't been publically known is that at that particular time, you know, I was the so-called Business Manager, because we couldn't afford a Business Manager.

Dr. Smith: Yes, you were everything, Ray.

Mr. Stokes: But, the point is that we had taken everything and had a record of all of the doctors who had donated their time because we had to

Mr. Stokes: have so many clinicians and so many clinical faculty, and so forth...Of course, we were paying the basic science faculty.

Dr. Smith: Yes.

Mr. Stokes: There was a measly amount that they had agreed to, but we were getting a great deal of input from the doctors...and we kept a record of it. And we did go back and pay them from some of the funds we got, you see..

Dr. Smith: Yes.

Mr. Stokes: from the State. We paid them at a \$50 an hour honorary. So, some of them did pick up something that they weren't aware that they were going to get...

Dr. Smith: And probably, many of them went back and donated their pay.

Mr. Stokes: They did, and I'm glad you brought that out because nearly everyone of them endorsed their check and gave it back to us.

Dr. Smith: Sure, sure...

Mr. Stokes: You're right; that's right.

Dr. Smith: And I, you know, that's...that's amazing. I am talking about you were the business manager. I guess between you and Dr. Hart, Dr. Henry Hart, ya'll were everything.

Mr. Stokes: That's right, we were. We wore a lot of hats.

Dr. Smith: You'd lay down one hat and pick up another one, and you'd run over here and fan a little, and put that one down and do another one.

Mr. Stokes: I hope I've got a hat on that this time it fits.

Dr. Smith: Well, it's, it was all...You know, Ray, I think so many of these sort of things like when you're struggling like that, that's really when life is most beautiful. You know, you look back and the toughest uncertain valleys that we walk through are the most beautiful things in life. So, I think probably establishing the college although my contribution was sominute compared to a lot of people.

Mr. Stokes: Well, you're being a little too modest there because your's was a pretty strong contribution.

Dr. Smith: I really look back on my life and now that I'm fifty years old and I am no means getting up in the years, but I know that my life doesn't hold as many days ahead as it did twenty-five years ago, and...

Mr. Stokes: You mean you've got more of a past than you have a future.

Dr. Smith: That's right. And because of that probably if the day, if this was my last day and, Lord, I don't know if it is, I hope it's not. But, if it is then I'd have to say that my meager contribution to the college was one of the highlights of my lifetime.

Mr. Stokes: Well, in that particular vein, Dr. Smith, what single experience do you consider paramount during your term in office?

Dr. Smith: As president?

Mr. Stokes: Yeah.

Dr. Smith: Oh, I think no doubt although...You see, when the bill was signed by the Governor, no doubt that was the single greatest thing although it was, I don't know, maybe it was a few days before or a few days after my term had expired, but it was right around that time, and that was the greatest thing I think that our profession because it done a number of things. It gave us a way to reproduce our kind in the future. And, it gave us financial base to do that with. But, I think that far more greater than even all of those things; our profession was sort of divided at that time. Because there was a lot of uncertainty; and I say in the state of Texas; there was a lot of diversity and a lot of indecision about should we do this college thing or should we not. And there times, frankly, that I felt like during my administration, boy, I've just pushed this thing over the hill in the wrong direction and it's going to haunt us all. Well, thank goodness it didn't. But, there was a lot of diversity among the profession. Well, this thing kind of brought us together. There was a; you know, when the times are the toughest; I remember my father talking about during the years of the great depression of the late 20's and early 30's. He said this brought his family closer together than anything that had ever happened to them. And, he said

Dr. Smith: if there was anything good from that that's what it was. Well, I think if there was anything good from this, maybe it was a beginning of a bringing together of the profession, because I think we have a very harmonious profession today.

Mr. Stokes: Right.

Dr. Smith: Maybe that was the beginning because it give us something at least to rally around. Either you were for it or against it. And, but, it was a rallying cause and it was a worthwhile cause. So, the greatest thing that I think that happened to me that I was the most excited about was seeing that bill signed and saying, "Hey, we've got some money now, and we can go and it has some hope for the future."

Mr. Stokes: It certainly opened the door for the current condition that exists today as our being a part of the state system.

Dr. Smith: Well, it was a beginning.

Mr. Stokes: It was a beginning and making it possible for us to be accepted into the state community. What would you say, Dr. Smith, for what would you best like to be remembered?

Dr. Smith: That's...

Mr. Stokes: And, I don't mean that in any egotistical point of view, or anything of that nature, but..just...

Dr. Smith: I guess if there was anything that...it'd go back to my...something that I remarked about earlier. It'd be back to my...I was very, very close to my father, who has long since passed on to his great reward in the sky. But, I guess it would be what my dad had told me when I was a boy growing up. Just that statement that I made earlier. He told me, "Son, if it's said of you that you give more than you receive while you're here on this earth, than your journey will have been worthwhile." And, I think..my little contribution to the college...the profession has been so good to me and my family. It's allowed me to provide a comfortable living for my family, and it's allowed me to do it in a way that I can say I have truly helped others. Now, I

Dr. Smith: haven't helped everybody that's ever come to me, but I don't know any physician that ever did.

Mr. Stokes: Right.

Dr. Smith: Except the one that they hung on the cross. But, I; it's allowed me to help people. And, in doing that it's allowed me to provide for my family, and I think that what little part I had in the college maybe carried some of what my father said. And that is as others come into the profession then they have the same sort of opportunities that I had... and, so, its a way of perpetuating my kind, I think is what has been an outstanding sort of thing to me. And, again, I say...I reemphasize that compared to the whole thing mine was oh, so, little. But, it was a part at a time that it need to be, and I'm sure it was something that anybody could have done that came along if they didn't know it couldn't be done. If they didn't know that it probably couldn't be done they probably could have done it. But, I'm just grateful that, you know...that I came along at that time. It was a time that, you know, and I'm a great believer that there is a master plan in all of our lives andthat was part of the master's plan for me to come along at that time. And I'm grateful that I just had enough insight to vaguely respond to it and be a part of something that will live on and on. I guess the only two ways we have of passing our life on to others is by what we give to the earth and in through our children. So, that's where I see the thing at.

Mr. Stokes: Well, thank you, Dr. Bobby Smith, for this very fine interview. We're grateful to you for your taking the time and consideration in giving us this opportunity.