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Oral History Interview

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Hailey: Dr. Zachary, thank you for taking time out of your very busy schedule to met with us for a few minutes to discuss your history.

Zachary: Thank you very much for inviting me.

Hailey: I would like to refer to way back to your prior experiences long before you ever came to what was known as TCOM. Can you talk a little bit about that if you would?

Zachary: Okay. I am native Texan who attended the Kansas City College of Osteopathic Medicine from 1955 to 1959 when I graduate with my DO degree. I spend a year on an internship, a little rotating internship before starting in to General Practice in Richardson, Texas. I was in private practice in Richardson for 20 years prior to coming to the college for full time faculty.

Hailey: So along about 1960 to there about?

Zachary: I came to the college in 1980 because I was in practice for 20 years.

Hailey: You had, even up today, you had a lot of organization you have been a part of, TOMA and the AOA, why don't you go into some of the position that you have held with TOMA and so forth.

Zachary: Okay. Back in 1974 I was elected Vice Speaker of the House of Delegates of TOMA and served in that in position for two years and in 1976 was elected Speaker of House of Delegates of TOMA and served in that position for 17 years. Up in till 1993, last year, I was then elected to the position of President-Elect of TOMA. Hopefully, this coming June I will be installed as President of TOMA and will carry forward with those duties. In 1981 I was elected Speaker of the Congress of Delegates of then, American College of Osteopathic General Practitioners which since has become the American College of Osteopathic Family Practitioners and have served in that position every since. In 1982, I was elected to the position Speaker of the House of Delegates of the American Osteopathic Association and I have served in that position every since. During that period of time I was the only osteopathic physician that held both three elected positions in the history of the osteopathic profession. I am quite proud of that.

Hailey: Definitely, where do you see the organizations that you have since -- you have become of president of TOMA, president-

elect, where do you see yourself going in the other two organizations in the next few years.

Zachary: I would anticipate the opportunity to serve further in the American Osteopathic Association possibility as a member of the Board of Trustees and if things go well, maybe at some point in time moving up through the chairs including the office of President of the AOA.

Hailey: That would be an excellent accomplishment. That would put a quite a few irons in the fire, as they say.

Zachary: Well, yes I do.

Hailey: You came to the college in 1980, of course, serving in those particular roles at time as well, you had an impressive career at the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine, could you go into some that for us?

Zachary: Yes, I have been fortunate during the 14 years that I been with the college. From 1980 until 1984 I served as a Director of one the General and Family Practice Clinics located over on East Berry and Riverside Drive, called the Riverside Clinic. Then December of 1984 I selected to become the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of this institution and served in that position until 1st of July 1990. Since 1990, I have resumed my role

as a faculty member in the Department of General Family Practice which has become the Department of Family Medicine and my primary role in that department, at this point in time, is Director of the Preceptor Program for our department as well as working in our 4 Family Practice clinics, wherever I might needed.

Hailey: Director of the Preceptor Program? Can you go into a little what that is for me?

Zachary: The Preceptor Program in our department involves several different things, number one there are, in the sophomore year there are two preceptor programs or preceptor shifts that are required of our year two students to complete before they can advance to the third year. Those preceptor programs are 32 hours each and this program has to served out in the community with a community physician who is Family Practice. Then as they enter their junior and senior years then there is another preceptor shift that they must complete called the Junior Partnership which is a 4 week program, again has to be complete out in the community physicians office, so where in the State of Texas or some cases outside the State of Texas. So I am the Director of that program. We have approximately 150 active preceptors on our approved list and I have coordinate through my office the program with the students and what the various preceptors and at the same time try to keep those preceptors happy and keep the students happy and it is a quite a few balls to juggle in the air at the same time.

Hailey: I am surprised that I caught you at a moment that you had time for sometime of this type.

Zachary: I always try to make time for something as important as this.

Hailey: You also direct the 5 clinics now?

Zachary: No, I do not direct the 5 clinic, no I just work in them when they need my help.

Hailey: Oh, okay. Could you go into some of your experiences in some interesting events or so forth that you would like to go into while you have been here in the role as Dean and so forth and prior to that?

Zachary; The 5 1/2 years I have served as Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean, certainly gave me an opportunity to learn a great deal about how this institution works and also how the State of Texas operates and I think most of all I had the opportunity to learn about the other 7 medical schools in the State of Texas and how they operate and what they look like and how that compares to this institution. I was fortunate enough to meet some very fine people at other institutions and state agencies in the State in that period of time and work with them and learned a great deal. It was a very enjoyable experience.

Hailey: You brought an interesting point how this institution relates to the other 7 medical or health science centers in the State, how do you view this institution, do you see it being marketable different from the others? What do we have to offer then the others?

Zachary: Yes, there are so significant differences the main difference is we are an osteopathic institution and the other 7 medical schools are idiopathic in that they train students who will become MD's, our students, of course, become DO's or osteopathic physicians. That is the most significant difference between our institution and those others. However, in relation to the other 7 medical schools, we are young institution particularly in relation to the University of Texas Health Science Centers here in the State. Most of those institutions are much older then we are and they are larger then we are and with the exception of Texas A&M Health Science Center, I believe they all have probably approximately twice the number of students that we have. However, I think that Texas Tech is about the same size as we are. The UT Health Science Centers have probably twice to three times the number of faculty that we have and, of course, when it comes to funding they get a tremendous amount of money larger then what we received from the State of Texas. Those are the major differences between this institution and those.

Hailey: Did you see at that time a need for us to become a Health

Science Center at that point, was that the right time?

Zachary: The idea of this institution becoming a health science center was formulated during the period of time that I was in the Dean's office, the President and others felt like that that was the goal that we should try to achieve primarily because it would enable this institution to better compete for funding, not only at the State level for institutional funds from the State of Texas but also compete more satisfactorily in the arena research funds, particularly from the Federal Government. Additionally, the reaching the status of a health science will also enable this institution to be more competitive in its recruiting efforts for faculty, also reaching accreditation status with outside agencies such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools is another mechanism which will enhance our research funding opportunities as well as the recruiting of the notable faculty. So, I believe that the fact that we have reached the status of a health science center designated by the legislature and the State of Texas will enable us to do many great things in addition to those we have already accomplished over the last 23 to 24 years.

Hailey: So you kind played a multi large role then at that point.

Zachary: Not a large role but a somewhat role, yes.

Hailey: What other challenges have you faced in your time here at

TCOM and maybe in private practice in the organizations that you have been involved in, trying to juggle that, I know that it has probably been challenging enough?

Zachary: Well, it has always been a challenge to make improvements in whatever organization one belongs to, whether it be this institution as a place of employment or whether it be one of the organizations that I work for on a volunteer basis that I have previously mentioned. I think that one of the biggest challenges that I have had in my life is coming to this institution and leaving my private practice and becoming a part of an educational academic program, especially one that is so closely allied with the bureaucracy of the State of Texas. That was quite a jolt, a quite a difference in the way things are done.

Hailey: That does seem like a large challenge. Do you see yourself ever going into private practice?

Zachary: No, I really don't. I like what I am doing too much.

Hailey: So you have gotten used to the bureaucracy and so on and so forth?

Zachary: This is a very good institution and a very nice place to work and I enjoy it very much.

Hailey: What else do you see yourself doing here at the Health Science, what other things would you like to see done or what would you personally like to be involved in?

Zachary: Well, of course, I am happy to participate in whatever endeavor the institution that I could contribute. My biggest challenge I think the remaining time that I am employed here at this institution will be to constantly be on the look out for ways to improve my preceptorship program, as well as to constantly try to help my department and fellow faculty members make it a better academic program for the students that we teach not only in the classroom but in our clinical settings.

Hailey: So you definitely would like to keep doing what you are doing and just keep improving them.

Zachary: That's correct.

Hailey: In the organizations do you have any plans as far as what you would like to see as the upcoming President, soon to be, what would you like to see done in your extracurricular activities?

Zachary: Well, of course, I will reveal my plan at my inauguration which will take place in June in Houston at the annual TOMA convention, but just as a maybe quick brief view of what is going to happen, I think is osteopathic physicians in the State of Texas

are based with tremendous challenges at this time. And not only in trying to keep up with the every changing field of medicine and the exploitation of information and therapeutics and equipment that comes upon all of us on a daily basis, but we also have to cope with an expanding role that the federal government and the third party payers have opened up in the area of medical practice and we have yet to see what is going to be the outcome of President Clinton's Healthcare Reform. We are going to have to deal with that within the next probably 18 months which will encompass my year as president and hopefully with the aid and support of a lot of good board members that will be on my team and the central office of TOMA, we will be able to enable our physicians in the State of Texas to better cope with every comes down the road in the future.

Hailey: So do you see TOMA and the Health Science Center in good positions right now to weather whatever changes come along with the health care plan.

Zachary: Oh, I think so, yes. I think that we have prepared for well and we are adequately prepared, not just emotionally but number wise and so forth to cope with whatever comes out the legislation that is going to come of congress.

Hailey: You mentioned the way that the standing is with the osteopathic field in Texas, do you think that the Health Science Center has helped that change, people's perspective a lot as far as

the view of the profession?

Zachary: I think that at one point, maybe 10 years ago, maybe less, this institution was Fort Worth's best well-keep secret. We have heard that comment made many times, I have made it sometimes myself. I think that the administration of this institution over the last 8 or 10 years has done a very good job in letting the community of Fort Worth and Tarrant County know that the Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine is in assistance what it does and what it stands for and what benefits it brings to those residents within the county. And I think that we have done a good job at that.

Hailey: Do you also in your time as Dean and even today, do you see the relationship with the main campus up in Denton, has that been pretty good or have there been some problems?

Zachary: Well, historically during the time I was Dean, yes there were a few problems but they were of a minor nature that we were able to iron out pretty satisfactorily. I think that there is an important relationship between the two institutions that is significant. I think that having a close relationship with a University is a tremendous asset for a medical school. Likewise, I think having a relationship with a medical school is a tremendous asset for a University. I think that this is evident all over the country. They supplement and compliment each other very well and in

a lot of different ways and the most important probably being in the field of academics.

Hailey: So you do see the relationship at this point strengthening and being a very good relationship?

Zachary: Yes, I do.

Hailey: Would you like to see the other changes come along for the campus in the near future?

Zachary: It would be wonderful if we could find the funding to build some new buildings and add some additional programs to our curriculum and even to encompass some of the things that the Health Science Center would like to do in regard to opening up new programs in addition to the college of medicine.

Hailey: What programs would you like to see added in the next few years?

Zachary: As you know we are currently working diligently to institute a program in public health. I think that at some point we need to consider creating a program in nursing, possibly in allied health in regards to a PA program. Maybe even an improvement or an increased emphasis on clinical pathology, such as lab techs and medical technicians and that sort of thing. I think

that there is a lot of opportunities for us down the road.

Hailey: Forgive me, but PA stands for...

Zachary: Professional Assistant.

Hailey: Thank you. I was not familiar with that term.

Zachary: These are individuals that work in doctors offices in the role of an assistant to the physician.

Hailey: Kind of a right hand person. If you will. We have covered a number of things, here, Dr. Zachary. What other things would you like to bring up... we have covered about the Health Science Center and some of the other experiences, I am sure that we are missing a lot. What other things would you like to mentioned?

Zachary: Well, I would certainly like to see this institution be able to create some endowments for scholarship programs. It is unfortunate that we do not have a lot of money being given to the foundation and to the institution for that purpose. Because I think that there is a lot needed students out there, or potential students out there that could benefit from this type of program. But being as young as we are that, of course, has not had a opportunity to come to past. I am hopeful that within the next 20 years or so that there will be a number of scholarship programs

instituted and maybe some endowed chairs in the various departments of the school.

Hailey: Hopefully, you can make some of that possible then. What other things would you like to see or mention?

Zachary: Well, I just wanted to continue to be the good institution, the finest institution that has been up to this point. However, I think it is going to be constantly challenged to be better and any improvements that we can make in our program from the admissions program all the way through graduation is going to be a plus for us as well as the profession, not only in Texas for the profession nationally in the United States.

Hailey: Dr. Zachary I do appreciate the time that you have taken to meet with us this morning out of your busy schedule and I also am very much aware that the Health Science Center is fortunate to have you as a faculty member here in all the various roles that you have served and what you are doing now is been one of the most fulfilling for you. Keeping up with all the organizations that you are a part of and do wish you luck as president coming up for TOMA.

Zachary: Thank you very much. What I do is fun. If it weren't fun, I would not do it. So I enjoy the association work as well as my role here as faculty member.

Hailey: It seemed to be that since I get from all the people that I have interviewed is that you really enjoy what you do and it is not a job it is more of a life-love then a career or a job to you.

Zachary: That is correct.

Hailey: Again, thank you for taking your valuable time to meet with us.

Zachary: Thank you very much for inviting me.