

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Ordell B. Griffith

COLLECTION: 4700.0462

IDENTIFICATION: Former Louisiana State University Director of Admissions, Office of the Registrar and LSU employee for over fifty years.

INTERVIEWER: Everett Besch and Quinn Coco

SERIES: University History – Distinguished Faculty & Administrators

INTERVIEW DATES: August 23, 1994; August 31, 1994; September 6, 1994; September 20, 1994; September 28, 1994; October 5, 1994; March 7, 1995

FOCUS DATES: 1930s – 1980s

ABSTRACT:

Tape 654

Living on Plank Road; why her parents chose to build a house on Plank Road; her father hunted in the Devil's Swamp area; Dr. Fulton Clark, founder of Southern University; the building of Airline Highway; Huey Long; Dr. Prescott, an early Baton Rouge veterinarian; "Easy Town" an area where African-Americans lived; memories of walking from Istrouma to town during the summer; shotgun houses; George Schwab; raising chickens; hog slaughtering as a community activity; her family's icebox and ice deliveries; house ventilation; streetcar in Baton Rouge; attending Istrouma public school; her first year at LSU; working a job through the National Youth Administration; working for the Student Employment Office; the campus moving from the downtown location to the present location; Dalrymple; the campus as Griffith remembers it during the 1930s; the building of Middleton Library; Smith Hall; the layout of the campus; LSU scandals and photo-stating documents; Foster Hall and cafeterias on campus; the forming of the LSU lakes; the cypress trees; the Works Progress Administration; mosquitoes; the original student record ledgers; Thomas D. Boyd; William Tecumseh Sherman; Dr. Fred Smith.

Tape 655

The LSU scandals; Mr. Heidelberg, the former director of the Student Employment Office; George Caldwell; previous names of buildings on campus; Wilson Thiede, former Registrar; Jordan G. Lee, former Dean of Agriculture; James B. Trant, former Dean of the College of Commerce; the start of Junior Division on campus; sub-freshman; assessment and registration during the 1930s; effect of WWII on campus; the day after Pearl Harbor on campus; Sergeant Smith; campus placement tests; campus business procedures; campus procedures and issues regarding soldiers after WWII; standardized tests, CEB, ACT, GED; memories of Sergeant Smith; Law School admissions; the confidentiality of student records and the Buckley Amendment; Griffith's first time going into Audubon; the effort to record where animals were being kept on campus; sexual harassment; valuable items on campus including paintings; Clare Chennault, leader of the Flying

Tigers during WWII, his time at LSU; Earl Long former Governor of Louisiana.

Tape 656

First Huey Long train trip where he took the student body to Knoxville, Tennessee, for a football game; honesty and student borrowing money; hitchhiking from LSU to downtown Baton Rouge; buildings on campus during the 1930s; Hill Memorial; William Bass Hatcher, former President at LSU; instituting an admissions application form; evaluation of transcripts for credit purposes; producing copies of transcripts prior to computers; grade points and quality points; switching from the three grade point system to the four grade point system; equivalency of grade points; evaluation of foreign student transcripts and qualifications; the influx of foreign students; fines for faculty turning in late grades; rules for determining residency; disciplinary action that was placed on the transcript; the Mickey affair, a former Dean of the Graduate School suspected of murder; General Middleton's impact of the acceptance of integration at LSU; bestowing the emeritus title on Theodosia Jones Gates former Registrar of LSU; the 1950s on the campus;

Tape 657

Albert Clary former Registrar; campus administration changes; Peg Crow; recruitment of students; changes in hour requirements for full time student status; racial integration of the university; Griffith providing court testimony; problems associated with the admission of foreign students prior to integration; federal funding and racial counts of enrollment; Mr. Hopper, former LSU campus post master; location of campus post office; Ray Sommer former director of Records and Registration; getting computers; selective admissions; standardization of credit hours; James F. Broussard, former professor of French and Chairman of the Athletic Council; former Dean of the Graduate School, Charles Wooten Pipkin; Former Dean of the Graduate School, Richard Russell; admissions to the Medical School and Law School; the General College; Stephen Caldwell, former Dean of the Junior Division.

Tape 658

Griffith senior trip from Istrouma High School to LSU with Arden French as a guide; YMCA on campus; Arden French, former Dean of Men; Ira Nabors, former Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds; Ellenroy Jolly, former buyer for the LSU purchasing office; Agatha LaCroix, former director of the Highland Hall cafeteria; George Deer, former Dean of Junior Division; Charles E. Smith, former Dean of the University; academic bankruptcy policy; admission of students with felony convictions to LSU; dismissal of students for dishonesty on application forms; scholastic certification of athletes; the Board of Supervisors scholarships; Bill Frye, the first Chancellor of the Medical School; Joe Reynolds, physicist; Louisiana Senator Allen Ellender; Arthur R. Choppin former dean; Earl E. Klein, former director of the School of Social Welfare; Helen Gordon, former Dean of Women; the establishment of the School of Environmental Design; Gerald McLinden, first dean of the School of Environmental Design.

Tape 687

Milton Harrison, assistant to President Middleton; Dean Herbert's death; asking students on application if they had been involved in a felony; application procedures regarding race and felony convictions; interviewing students regarding involvement with felonies; committee appointed by Board of Supervisors; determining students' eligibility for admission; pre-trial investigations; expunging incidents from school records; behavior problems; working with Student Health

Services regarding psychiatric readmits; letters of recommendation; the Buckley Amendment; consideration of students with multiple in-state degrees; grade inflation and assessment of grades from other universities; application fees; non-traditional programs for women, starting a Women's Study program; lawsuit by the Board of Supervisors against the U. S. Justice Department; Carolyn Hargrave, former Associate Dean of Graduate School; aspects of the establishment of the LSU System; changing name of LSUNO to the University New Orleans; effect of the establishment of the system of admission requirements; campus hippies and Chancellor Taylor.

Tape 759

Administrator who questioned her over admitting a particular student; scholarships; requirements for out-of-state students; music and art scholarships; conversation with Paul Dufour on incoming art student; admission standards for athletes; problem of non-resident applications after WWII; arbitrary regulation that non-resident students needed a B average was unfair; rule that transfer students needed a C average caused problems for students who had bad grades in the past; ROTC or National Guard scholarships and fee exemptions; scholarships awarded by Board of Supervisors; students needed to come from state accredited high schools; after integration, many private schools sprang up, many were not accredited; she doesn't know what happened with Chancellor Wharton and a student who had been denied admission; Griffith explains how she got on the Teacher's Retirement system; explanation of how course compatibility was determined; problem in the 1970s when some state schools stopped accepting credits from other state schools; regionally accredited schools; always had problem with transfers from Delgado; Veterinary Medicine transfers; Ross University vet med program and complications with students who attended program; students from India attending LSU; student enrollment at LSU in the 1860s and 1980s; Admissions office normally handled 20,000 applications; students from North Louisiana; LSU president John Hunter; Martin Woodin; story about staff member who thought Hunter had a crush on her and was terminated; admission of A.P. Tureaud, Jr.; Albert Clary's hiring and background; Griffith amused by President Middleton; story about State Department of Education Superintendent who complained about admission requirements; story about Clary working with Middleton to get Griffith a raise; funny story about how Arthur Choppin was flustered by her bad definition of osmosis; more stories about Choppin; background on Joseph Reynolds; story about a coach who was harassing admission staff about a student who was denied admission and how Carl Maddox set him straight; background on Maddox; story about Paul Dietzel sending Herb Collier[?] to the Heisman Trophy banquet; Woodin and Griffith attended LSU together and both later worked there but Griffith was there the longest; Cecil Taylor and his interest in the campus; Taylor spoke French but had trouble with "the names of things"; different French dialects in Louisiana; J.W. Nicholson and faculty vote of no confidence in the 1890s; in the early years of LSU, many professors didn't have degrees; stories about Charles Coates and his absent mindedness; William Gates background and how he once called Griffith "a freak"; end of tape.

TAPES: 7 (T654, T655, T656, T657, T658, T687, T759)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 10 hours, 30 minutes

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| # PAGES: | Transcripts: | 494 pages | Tapes 654-658, 687 |
| | Index: | 8 pages | Tape 759 |

OTHER MATERIALS: Correspondence (2 pages), Obituary

RESTRICTIONS: None