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Interview with Charles Shirley - Alumnus

Charles Shirley
Nova Southeastern University

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JP= Dr. Julian Pleasants
CS= Charles Shirley

JP: This is Julian Pleasants. I’m at Nova Southeastern University and it is the 23rd of June 2010 and I’m talking with Charles Shirley.

Give me some background about you, where you grew up, where you sent to school.

CS: Absolutely. I am a native of Florida. I grew up in Central Florida, the small town of Fort Meade. I actually attended community college in Winter Haven, Florida, which was Polk Community College graduating from there with an AA in banking and finance. Went directly and started my banking career which, The Banking Group became SunTrust Banks and that started my career in 1972 and worked straight with SunTrust ending up in South Florida, but I worked with SunTrust for 27 years from that beginning point.

While I was in Central Florida, I began attending in the evening taking courses toward my graduate degree, excuse me, my undergraduate degree, taking those courses at University of South Florida in the business program. I completed several courses there and then I was promoted in
the bank and transferred to South Florida so I stopped that process and there was some time that went by. I didn’t pick that up again until I became aware that Nova had some courses—Nova University had some courses in the field that I was in in banking, specifically a commercial lending school and also a, followed by a commercial real estate construction lending school. And so, I took advantage of those, that opportunity to take those courses. Having completed the first one, I became friends and acquaintance with Bill Harrington, who was running the programs, and Bill approached me about becoming one of the first students in a new program that was the Executive MBA program with an emphasis in financial services. I felt like that would be directly key to my success and my future so what I did is I took, as required by the university, I took some prerequisite courses. They’re kind of abbreviated versions of some of the courses that I needed to complete to fulfill the requirement to be eligible for the MBA program. So I did that first and then followed up with joining the MBA program. It was an 18-month program. We, basically, I went to our classes on Saturdays, generally every other Saturday for a full day, usually four hours in the morning and four hours in the afternoon, and then a lot of course work outside of that, a lot of research, some group teams
on certain projects, so that was an 18-month program and I did that--

   JP: So, you were still working full-time, right?

   CS: Yes, exactly. Working full-time and so, I will mention to you I was single at the time, which probably helped.

   JP: Now, in the process, clearly full-time work is a burden in and of itself.

   CS: Right.

   JP: Working on weekends, nights, whenever you could get the time to complete your project takes a lot of commitment and discipline I would think.

   CS: Yes, it does absolutely. No question.

   JP: And, did you find that they were supportive and helpful in keeping you on track?

   CS: Absolutely. That was one of the things that I’ve taken away from that entire program. I have remained involved with Nova, now Nova Southeastern, since that time because I have this affinity for the university. I feel like that the university worked closely with me to enable me to be able to be part of that program and I gave back one hundred ten percent. I should— I wanted to mention at this point that I ended up graduating number one in my class with a 4.0 and there were no other 4.0s, so that was
number one and then, subsequently, the university put me on the National Deans List and so I have enjoyed that. I have, I brought the book that shows that I’m in there. I brought that today.

JP: Now, when you first came to South Florida, what was your knowledge of and opinion of Nova?

CS: I actually did not know anything about Nova South—Nova University at that time. I came to the South Florida market, specifically Broward County, I began working and then became aware that there was a large university or a growing university here and it really wasn’t until probably I had been in South Florida, not probably, but it was four years before I engaged with the university in this first course and I honestly don’t recall how I became aware. There might have been some material that was circulated to the banks that there were these programs, these lending programs available, but I immediately took advantage of them and they were convenient in that the time that these were held, being on the weekend on a Saturday, I would definitely take advantage of it. It would have been impossible to do it for me during the week.

JP: Do you think in any way, let’s just say you take the MBA that you did, if you went to the University of
Florida and took their MBA program, do you think there would be either a qualitative or a quantitative difference?

CS: I believe that we would be-- I would be successful there as a result of this experience as well. I would, I haven’t had any direct comparison with that program, but it’s my belief, and I believe that part of it is because I really bought into it and I really challenged myself to, you know, to dig and to do and to learn it. And the, I would say that based on the experience I’ve seen of success of people who have been through these programs and their careers that, yeah, we have to be doing something right here.

JP: There’s this sense by some people that, if you take weekend or night courses, they’re not as rigorous, they’re not as extensive and that, therefore, you don’t get as high a quality education as you might if you were a full-time student.

CS: Right. I would say that I really couldn’t hardly imagine it being more challenging. The-- I believe that there’s an advantage when someone can come in on a Saturday knowing there’s eight hours of course work ahead of them. Generally, I will mention that the quantitative courses were morning and the qualitative were in the afternoon. I think that helped. It’s the-- For example, maybe a human
resource behavioral-type class would be in the afternoon, but the, you know, the hard (oh, excuse me), the courses on business and, you know, managerial accounting and things like that are, were morning classes. So, for me personally that helped a great deal.

JP: Did you have statistics?

CS: I did not. I did not have a direct statistics course in this program. No.

JP: And, who taught the course?

CS: The different courses-- Different instructors for different courses. They, one of the things that was appealing to me was that, for example, in managerial accounting, a gentleman, I would be stretched to remember his name now at this point it’s been a number of years, but he was actually involved as a businessperson in the computer world, he was an executive in a computer firm that was pretty noteworthy down here and really just a really bright man and I felt like he really knew his stuff. I still use some of his techniques today when I set up a problem that I’m trying to resolve.

JP: So, what you’re getting is instruction from people who are in the business, who are currently working, as opposed to just academics?
CS: That is correct, yes. We had a great deal of the program was taught by people who were in the field doing the work, real life examples throughout the course and say, you know, “Here’s why it would be good for you to know this particular thing because here’s two or three examples of what, you know, you will need to know as soon as you start using it.”

JP: You’re going to have to use it.

CS: Right. Right. Right.

JP: So, as opposed to just abstract stuff--

CS: That’s correct.

JP: It was practical, pragmatic.

CS: Absolutely.

JP: How much benefit did you have coming from already some business experience?

CS: I felt like that the program that was available, since it had a leaning toward financial services, because I had already been in banking for, at that point, probably about ten years, that I felt like that I wanted to know more about that and I felt like it was on target. One of the things that I feel like was very important about this program to me was, I was able to use things that I would learn on the weekend, I’d go back in on Monday morning and use it in many cases. So, I felt like it was very on
target. The management of the bank felt that it was very--They were very supportive, very impressed that I was doing that.

JP: Now, did the bank pull away or give you time from work?

CS: The bank did have a smallish supplemental program that would allow me to utilize that to the maximum for my program and then everything else was out-of-pocket as I-- I paid as I go, and then the, the bank was supportive in the sense that if I really needed to have any time for a special project, but fortunately that didn’t come up too much. It was usually if there was a group of us that were getting together for a special project then we would do that in an afternoon late and work into the evening and then on weekends they were my time.

JP: Do you remember what the tuition was and did you think it was reasonable?

CS: I felt like it was reasonable. I want to say that I was probably all in around $15,000 to do that and I can remember that the tuition hour was $236 per credit hour. So, do the math and I guess we should get there with that.
JP: Now, when you started out here, could you sort of describe what the campus looked like? I assume that all your classes on Saturday were on the campus?

CS: For the most part. We had, at that time, there was still the, the business school had a campus over on, off of Highway 84 in East Fort Lauderdale and so there were some activities that took place there. I had some activities there, but most all of it took place here on the campus. I know that we spent time in the Mailman Building. There were a couple other of the really, you know, earliest buildings that we would just basically have a class in there.

JP: So you were in the Mailman or the Parker Building?

CS: That’s correct. Yeah, we knew those very well.

JP: And the campus, at that point, was first of all there was virtually no landscaping.

CS: That’s correct.

JP: It was-- It was pretty sparse.

CS: Right. It was, it was something where a person coming on the campus today might say, “How could it be different?” But, wide open spaces, large tracks of where there were no buildings and a tree here and a tree there. I will say it was nicely mowed, but no, no real landscaping
to speak of and then, you know, a few little lakes and things that were, I guess, naturally here but very sparse and, you know, just a few sidewalks to each building and, you know, that’s it. We just were mainly interested in the, getting to the classroom and taking advantage of it.

JP: One of the elements here is that, of course, Nova started out as a graduate program.

CS: Right.

JP: And so most of the people are highly motivated, not 18-year-old freshman--

CS: Correct.

JP: Who are sort of feeling their way.

CS: Right. Right.

JP: So clearly, in your case you wanted to get it now and get it done and so you were highly motivated.

CS: Correct. Absolutely.

JP: But, were there other people who found it difficult to manage family life, work and graduate education?

CS: Well, I think that there’s always someone who might feel like it sounded like a good idea to get started in a program and then found out, “Wow, this is really work.” And so, along the way, you know, I think that several of my classmates were struggling and I think
several had dropped out, you know, in the program. But, the majority were tuned into, to getting their education. I think that’s one of the advantages of getting that group together, it’s financial services, it’s, you know, here’s why we’re here, we’re all working. None of us were not working in that group that was already working.

JP: There must have been a certain amount of camaraderie.

CS: There was.

JP: People were in the same sort of circumstance.

CS: That’s correct. Yes.

JP: You would support each other.

CS: Right. Right. We, we would often do, you know, pair up and discuss, you know, assignments and maybe a hard problem that we were working on and things that-- and I actually still have some of those relationships today. I just ran into a fellow that was in my program that he and I hadn’t really had a reason to get together, but I saw him at an event recently and it was just like we collapsed in ten-fifteen years of time in a minute.

JP: And, did you feel like you got enough counseling from the faculty? Because, a lot of these people who are teaching you on the weekend, they’re working elsewhere during the week.
CS: That’s correct. Right.

JP: So, did you have support services? Did you have the ability to deal with your professor if you had a major problem?

CS: Right. We sure did. I would go back again to Bill Harrington specifically. I don’t-- I haven’t spoken to Bill in quite a long time, but he was, you know, in the business school and he was really on top of that program. He was often there to kick off the classes in the morning. He would be around. He was accessible. We knew where his office was and so, yeah, he I felt played a key role in keeping us on track and had questions, you know, he was my go-to person.

JP: What were the library facilities like?

CS: The library. Interestingly, there was a, in one of these buildings here there was a library that looked like out of a storybook. It was a lot of wood, you know, old as the hills and I spent of my time in there. It was a good place to study and sometimes I would just simply go there and study after class and just stay the rest of the day and, after class was over I’d just go into the library and get started on whatever it was, cause it wasn’t going to get any better the next week, so I would just start on it then. And, that was basically the library that I
recall. I think there was one other location, but it doesn’t even register with me. I do remember that one library.

JP: Were the resources adequate?

CS: The resources there were not, for me were not really utilized so much, the actual material. I used the course, you know, the books and, you know, the material that was available through the studying of those books.

JP: If you had research projects, where would you go?

CS: Well, I would end up going to the public library generally. I would try the Nova library and I will mention that I was successful in a couple of papers that I wrote on, for example, I recall one about testing the validity of testing and, you know, does it hold up as a measure of a person’s later skill, but I would actually utilize the public library and also the, that particular Nova library.

JP: Now, as you began you took a couple of earlier courses and one was in, I guess this is still the banking part of the university, but it was in commercial lending.

CS: Correct. Yes.

JP: And so, was that taught by the business school? Was that a separate course? What was it?

CS: That again was through the business school, but it was taught by professionals in the industry. Another
example of someone who can say, “I have made a loan like this and here’s how we did it. Here’s, you know, some of the things I did.”

JP: So, in a way, Nova was the facilitator.

CS: Right.

JP: They would give you the course, give you the credit and they would hire somebody who knew commercial lending.

CS: Correct.

JP: And you would go-- On those now, when did you take those courses, at night?

CS: Actually, those again, I recall those were very available, I believe again it was a Saturday environment. I do, because it wasn’t something where I had to spend any after hours doing that.

JP: And you also took real estate construction lending as well?

CS: Right, followed up after the commercial lending school. Actually that’s where I met Bill Harrington and he had mentioned that this second program was coming along and, being banking and lending and so forth like I had been, I felt like it was key to what I was doing and so I did go ahead and take that.
JP: Well, the MBA program, obviously, Nova was known for being innovative and different and not particularly a traditional school.

CS: Right.

JP: Was the MBA program traditional?

CS: I wouldn’t say traditional in the sense that of the during-the-week classes and so forth, but I believe the content of it was equal to any during-the-week regular, non-working type individual. I think we covered the ground that a similar MBA program would have covered.

JP: Now, when you were on the campus, did you have any opportunity to interact with people who were taking any other types of courses?

CS: Generally not. Generally not.

JP: So you were specifically with the business school?

CS: Specific for that, right. We were pretty much channeled into that and either I was in the library or off campus at home studying and in other possible libraries--

JP: So, one of the interesting parts of Nova is with the distance learning.

CS: Right.
JP: And the virtual classroom, there has not been what most people consider a core experience at a university.

CS: Right.

JP: There were not many undergraduates and so it’s not like you’re at FSU and--

CS: That’s correct.

JP: Football games and that sort of--

CS: Yes. You’re absolutely right.

JP: So, it’s much more based with the community and, at least at this point.

CS: That’s correct. That’s a very, very accurate assessment of that.

JP: Yeah.

CS: Yes. It’s, it was much more of being focused on why I was there for that particular program, but are we really-- barring other, you know, things that might be going on in the university if you just wanted to go to it, but we were-- This group, I would say we were virtually on the campus and then off the campus again.

JP: Well now, you may be different. I don’t know whether someone who would have come to get an MBA just on Saturdays would feel a particular attachment to Nova.

CS: Right.
JP: You obviously do.

CS: Correct.

JP: But, I was wondering in the context of the people you were involved with, did they stay in contact with Nova, or was this just a business proposition?

CS: Well, there is a way that we might measure that. There was a group of us that, when we graduated from the MBA program, we said, “Well, the first thing we need to do is join the Business School Alumni Association, so let’s go do that.” So, we went, we set out to join and that was a group of probably ten of us, so that’s a big part of the class and, you know, it was probably a third of the class, and so we set out to join the Alumni Association, the business school, and there wasn’t one. There was not an active one. There used to be one many years ago and it has, it was not active, so what we did is we just rekindled it. We got it going again. I served as one of the officers of the Business School Alumni Association. We got permission, of course, from the university to get it going again and we would meet—often, our meeting place was in the, at the business school campus in East Fort Lauderdale that I mentioned earlier and that group pretty well kept it going. We had that for, you know, a good year or so and it was continuing on and, not to get ahead of our discussion,
but it was from there that the university approached me about being President of the Alumni Association International. I was on that business school--

JP: So, you have kept up with the evolution of the business school?

CS: Pretty much, yeah. I feel like that I’m still active. For example, I’m a member of the Planned Giving Council, which meets regularly out here and I know a lot of the people who are still around, you know, and I attend the Entrepreneurial Hall of Fame. I haven’t actually had any course work, anything I’ve searched out or taken advantage of, of any advanced type of course work, but just being here, being a resident of Broward and being involved in the few areas that I have been, I feel like I kind of have kept up with it. I know that the Huizenga School was built since I, you know, attended and I know that we have a new dean of the business school. I’ve met him and I would have to try to recall his name in a moment, but the-- I knew Randy Pohlman pretty well, and one of the, the-- And again, it might be something where I had maybe a particular passion for the university, but the, from, at the time that I was president of the Alumni Association I also was asked to join the Board of Governors of the Business School, so I was actually serving on the Board of Governors of the
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Business School, which Randy Pohlman came along about that time and invited me to join, and then I was president of the Alumni Association at the same time.

JP: Obviously, with the new DeSantis Building and the Huizenga School, the business school has changed pretty dramatically--

CS: Correct.

JP: Since you there. How is the assessment by business people in the community of the business school today?

CS: I believe it would be very positive. Almost anyone that has had an experience with it or intends to, I think the, the tone is very positive. It’s a success story, you know, when you see new buildings going up I that says there must be something going on there. And, so many people I believe have taken advantage of Nova Southeastern over the years in law and education and now the medical school and so forth that the business school is right in there. I think, if someone said, “I am a graduate of the business school at Nova,” that it would be a positive thing, very positive.

JP: Do you think that now 45-46 years after the beginning of this school that people in the community consider Nova as Broward’s university?
CS: I would say so, yes. Yes, I do. I do. Really, hardly anything would compete. You know, we have the University of Miami, of course that’s in Dade. We have the University of Florida and Florida State, but for Broward County, definitely Nova.

JP: Well, FAU has a campus here, so Nova--.

CS: Right. Right, but Nova will be-- Yes.

JP: And, do you think that people here have a positive view of Nova? Because, at one point, there was this image it was a diploma mill.

CS: Right, exactly. Exactly.

JP: And those, you know, attitudes sort of filter through--

CS: Right.

JP: The general population and some people retain that image without knowing what the circumstances are today.

CS: In the beginning, I think that that was, right or wrong, you know, I wouldn’t say that people who attended and got their doctorates and graduate degrees were any less educated having experienced this, but there was a feeling early on, and again in my alumni role I was kind of in tune with that as well and the-- That would be something that, Nova has definitely overcome that, but there are enough
people around that probably way, way back in their mind they say, “Well, if I spent, you know, $35,000-$40,000 to go school somewhere or send my children to school, what will it get them versus how are the comparisons in other universities.” And, I think we are at a point where that would be an equal kind of a comparison. There’s just too much evidence that people coming out of the programs are well equipped to do a lot of things.

JP: There are still people around here and, of course, obviously, a lot of people are not native Floridians, as you know, people who have moved from the north to South Florida who really don’t know anything today about Nova.

CS: Right.

JP: So, they know there’s a campus out here and they may know the Dolphin’s training facility, but they really don’t know much about the college and, as Alumni president, what would you suggest the university that they do to get Nova better known, not just locally but primarily in the state and in the nation?

CS: Well, the-- Nova was always unique in the distance learning area where as the technology has progressed so has Nova’s use of that technology and it was really very early on that, that Nova was doing the virtual
classes really pretty much as soon as the technology was there and one of the things that used to-- The way Nova was set up, there was the, I was president of the Alumni Association International, so the, kind of the top level, but within different pods and groups all around the country and even in some other countries, there were local alumni chapter presidents and we would have them come here every year. While I was president, we would invite them and they would come and they would spend two or three days here and we would immerse them in everything we could possibly do, because we felt like there was a connectivity challenge. A person might be the president of their chapter and they may be enthusiastic, but how do you get everybody else in that chapter who is just like we said a businessperson who is going to school in a classroom in some other state, why should they be all excited? So, what we tried to do was to give them a message, a theme, something that they could take back with them to say, “This is really, this university is fantastic, it’s growing. This is why you should be happy and proud of your degree.” So, what could they do? I would say that it would still be constant awareness, but the technology, the, you know, websites, campus tours, a lot, anything that maybe is more like a traditional university might do, just make sure everybody
knows that we exist through the internet and if you Google on something today--

   JP: Probably public relations--
   CS: Right, right.

   JP: Information services. Well, the concept now is branding, you know, that universities need a brand, and so Florida is now the Gator Nation.
   CS: Right.

   JP: I’m not sure how effective any of that is.
   CS: Right.

   JP: But that’s a tendency on the part and, from my experience, that a lot of people in the State of Florida do not know what Nova does and what goes on here and are surprised to learn that, in fact, they, they a medical school and a dental school.
   CS: Right. Right. Sure.

   JP: You know, they’re just not aware of that.

   CS: It’s one of those things where it’s a private university and the Florida prepaid college plan that a person might take advantage of, just knowing, “Well, my child is three years old, I’m going to go ahead and participate in this so that some day he’ll have tuition and room and things like that,” and what they may not be doing is figuring out a way, and I honestly don’t know for sure
how much, if any, of that prepaid college plan could be used at a private university. I don’t believe there’s much of any of it that can roll right over.

JP: Well, there are, the state does provide money for private school students, you know.

CS: Right. Right.

JP: And that there’s other money and probably these Bright Future--

CS: Right, that’s the scholarship.

JP: They might well be used here as well.

CS: Sure. Exactly.

JP: I don’t know the details of that either. Well, if you see that this is a non-traditional kind of school, and they’re not a lot of undergraduates, do you see that that’s a focus for the university in the future?

CS: Yes.

JP: Should they get more undergraduates? Should they try to create a, you know, a sense of campus, esprit de corps?

CS: I think so. I do. I think that a person may want to have choices. If you want to maximize the capability of the university, I think it would be maybe a choice a person could make. If they have in their point in their life where they can actually come here and attend
school and be a part of campus life and be part of Fort Lauderdale, you know, there’s enough going on here that a person wouldn’t feel that they were isolated in any way, but they could come here and experience it that way and, especially in the undergraduate program, could be a feeder up into the graduate programs and doctoral programs.

JP: As a matter of fact, I think that’s part of what their goal is. If you, they’ve got a lot of, you know, you could come here and do a 3+3 law school.

CS: Right.

JP: So you could, you know, earn the admission to law school and finish in six years instead of seven.

CS: Right.

JP: So, I know they would like to tie in the optometry school and dental school to their undergraduate.

CS: To be able to do that. Yeah, it’s something that I think that once a person is engaged and they have the momentum and the familiarity with a school that for them to just continue on makes a lot of sense.

JP: Of course, one of the problems is that this in fact a public school, I mean a private school.

CS: A private school.

JP: And so, the tuition here, I’m not sure, I would guess $22,000. FAU is probably $3,000.
CS: Right.

JP: Of course, Miami’s probably $30,000.

CS: Right. Right.

JP: So, somehow to attract students who can literally go to FAU for nothing.

CS: Right.

JP: How do you get them to come to Nova?

CS: That’s-- It almost would need to be something where there’s possible, you know, the scholarship programs, some kind of tuition subsidy maybe, you know, working with another, I think you mentioned FAU, maybe get them started or Broward College get them started and then one year or two year and then kind of, if they’re doing well then they qualify to move-- I think there is a program like that.

JP: There’s a program at the law school where you can take two summer courses and if you make a certain grade then you can, you wouldn’t have otherwise been admitted.

CS: Right. It starts to open the door for them.

JP: Right. And, part of what this university has always tried to do is provide access.

CS: Right. Right.

JP: In some cases, both minority groups and others who would not otherwise have been able to get an education-
I was talking to somebody yesterday about a program they had for police. Well, police can’t get off.

CS: Right, no.

JP: You know, and so they were having these long distance programs and the police could get an undergraduate degree.

CS: Right.

JP: Which police departments around the country are supporting.

CS: Right.

JP: They would prefer to have better-educated police or firemen or what have you, and so there’s always been that niche.

CS: Right.

JP: But, because of the inverted pyramid it’s always been graduate as opposed to undergraduate.

CS: The-- Yeah, encouraging students to attend and have a campus life and create that environment, I think that there’s enough now in the way of facilities that are starting to do that-- Have the, you could stay in a dorm here or you can, you know, I know the law school is over, has the dormitory, which used to be Rolling Hills County Club over there, and I think all of that is, if you’ve been by that, that’s just beautiful.
JP: The student center.
CS: Yeah.
JP: They’ve got a great new library.
CS: Right.
JP: So the internal--
CS: Fantastic.
JP: Aspects of a “college life”--
CS: They could do that.
JP: Yeah, they would probably still have difficulty with housing.
CS: Right.
JP: But, you know, that’s long-term I think.
CS: And then the, for the students who, and again taking advantage of all opportunities for the students who may not be able to, either because of the time of day or because of the location that they’re at, but they, there’s a specialty or, you know, we’ve, we’re head and shoulders above somebody else in a particular field and they say, “Well, you know, I just want my degree from there.” And, their education, a lot of proof of the-- You know, all over the country, I know on the way back to my, the speech that I gave when Steve Feldman was brought in as president, I, this, the, in fact, if you watch that tape you’ll pick up some statistics, but what I did in that was I said, you
know, as representing the alumni of Nova, you know, it would be difficult for me to, as one person, you know, talk about everything that we’ve done, but, but I can share with you to represent, for example, area of education, I would be representing and I would give out the facts-- This many school district heads.

JP: Superintendents.

CS: Superintendents and then in law and the number of judges and the number-- And then we, you know, I just went down the list.

So it, when I finished that-- Just a little sidebar here, when I finished that speech that day and I sat down, David Rush, one of the trustees that I know or knew, he said that he would like to have a copy of the speech because he wanted to, they were talking to Southeastern University in Miami and he wanted to give them those facts.

JP: How important has been that merger?

CS: I feel like it’s been very positive. I think it gave a whole other dimension to the university in being able to say that there’s a medical school here and a dental and-- They were already, were pretty strong in the psychology business and education, and being able to have that here and the medical school alone, if you just said,
just based on the appearance, this place is, this is, you know, there’s something going on here.

JP: And of course--

CS: It’s a beautiful school.

JP: You’re in the banking business, so you know that these professional schools can charge pretty high tuition.

CS: That’s correct. Yes.

JP: So, obviously, it costs a lot to get started.

CS: Right.

JP: But nonetheless, once they are established it’s a, it’s a good source of income.

CS: It is. It absolutely is.

JP: And, for this university, as I understand it, ninety percent of the money comes from tuition, so there’s just not yet, and this is an issue I want to bring up, enough giving from the alumni.

CS: Right.

JP: Because there are really not many alumni. However, most of them are now professionals.

CS: Right. Right. I think, yeah.

JP: So, how do you tap this, I mean, most of the people who graduate here hadn’t been out long enough to make their fortune, I guess.

CS: Right. Right. Right.
JP: How do you tap these alumni for giving to the university?

CS: That’s a tough, tough question because that was something that’s been a challenge all the way back into the, when, in the early 90’s, you know, when I was president then. The, I think it goes back to one of the things that you brought up, do you, does a person see their experience here as coming here, getting a degree and moving on or do they come here, get a degree and become part of something bigger? And, the alumni certainly are capable of giving back. I look at, well, what’s competing for their dollar? And, I think when they start to send their children here, that’s a vote of confidence and their tuition money and so forth and then they’re kind of in a giving mode there. So, it might be--

JP: That would be a critical way to determine--

CS: It would. It would. I think if you can get the Generationally, I know the University of Florida we’ve talked about here, the history there, and you probably have seen generations of students. You might have experienced three generations there, you know, which is a heck of a record. But, I think that’s one of the areas that would be important to engage, and it goes again kind of if you connect that up with the undergraduate question-- What
would happen if we facilitated more undergraduate study here? Then, you don’t have the parents so much sending the kids away to some other university for the undergraduate and then being local for a graduate or law degree. You know, kind of--

JP: There’s been some discussion about the significance of athletics at a university.

CS: Right.

JP: There’s this sense of school spirit and camaraderie with a football team and all that sort of thing and clearly Nova has stayed away from that at the present time. Do you think it would be important or wise for the university here to expand and ultimately say get a football team?

CS: Well, there-- The amount of resources to do, to go from none to something and then to have something be something special, I don’t know, there’s such a commitment. Would it pay off? I don’t know. I don’t know what the answer to that is, other than saying that the university has done quite well without it and then also leveraging somewhat, you know, the Miami Dolphins’ training facility we kind of, you know, we get a lot of play out of that and then they have the Sharks teams that are more locally known, but--
JP: Is there much support though for the basketball team?

CS: Not that I’m aware of in, from my world. Not as an adult out working. There’s probably some campus support, but-- But, is it something that a parent would look for in wondering whether they should send their children here? Maybe. I think there’s two ways of looking at that. One is, it’s good up to a point and then it’s just so over the top rowdy. Do you want party, party, party, party atmosphere or do want someone who’s saying, “Well, you know, I’m going to Nova, Nova Southeastern because that’s a serious environment. I want to get my education and I want to move on and do, you know, good things.” So--

JP: I don’t think the parents are too concerned about a good football team.

CS: No, they’re not.

JP: But the students are.

CS: Right. Right. It’s really more something to do, some connecting point and if something could be done where they were connected up routinely in any way, but to go from-- I look at the University of Florida stadium and, you know, Florida State’s stadium and wow, I mean these are
just, how many millions of dollars does it take to replicate that?

JP: And, of course, probably, I don’t know how many athletic programs there are in the country, but probably not 10% are profitable.

CS: Right. Right.

JP: So, and this is still a very young school. For them to get the land and build a stadium--

CS: Yeah.

JP: And hire the coaches, it would be a huge commitment.

CS: And think of the, maybe like some of the experiences with the baseball teams, Florida Marlins for example, you know, everybody either loves them or hates them and if they get to the point where they don’t want to go to the game, or the Panthers hockey team, you know--

JP: There’s a lot of competition for sports dollars around here.

CS: Right.

JP: One more team--

CS: Right. It just gets out of hand.

JP: FAU has a team, now Florida International has a team.

CS: Right.
JP: It’s sort of tough.

CS: I have some friends who, you know, they’re my age and that have tickets to the Panthers hockey, season tickets, and they said they just go to watch them lose. I mean, that’s, that’s kind of how they feel. They’re really going to support them, but their history is just not good. And so, I think if you lose support you’ve lost, there sits a stadium and now what do you do with it and it’s an albatross.

JP: And it can be.

CS: Right.

JP: And this school was not built on that concept.

CS: It was not. Right.

JP: So, it would seem out of character if suddenly you would shift the emphasis to athletics.

CS: Right. Probably, for similar dollars spent you could create, you know, a monster size undergraduate program that would probably be more beneficial in the way of having maybe activities, but also a dormitory, you know, lost of amenities. For those same dollars, think of-- You could truly turn it into almost a paradise and then they’d love being here every minute.

JP: One thing I wanted to follow up on today-- You’re on the Board of Governors for the business school.
CS: Yes.

JP: Obviously, Wayne Huizenga and DeSantis and other people have given quite a bit of money.

CS: Right.

JP: Is it easier, therefore, to raise money for the business school or the law school than for the university in general?

CS: Well, I believe what happens there, and there were some pretty heavy hitters on that, real big names on the board— I used to kind kid with them a little bit, I’m like the little small wheel among a big, a lot of big wheels here. I was asked to join because of my, you know, involvement with the university, but not because I had any big checks I could write. But, you know, we had Dave Thomas, Ron Assaf was from Sensormatic.

JP: Dave Thomas was Wendy’s.

CS: Wendy’s yes, that’s correct and Ron Assaf, Sensormatic and then Tom Tworoger had a large, very very large, probably the largest Kenworth dealership in the country and sold that I think and then Randy Pearlman [Polhman] just as a dean of the business school, but just an incredibly intelligent man and— But the, and it just goes on and on and on. Well, when somebody like that, you know, Wayne Huizenga was on the board but, you know, really
didn’t have to attend a local meeting too often, but when somebody like that goes and they ask a friend for, you know, a donation they’re just going to get it.

JP: They’ll just write the check.

CS: They’ll just write the check and so, I think probably the same thing would hold true in the law school and so, on a targeted basis to raise money maybe not at a complete university treetop level, but more, “Here’s money for the law school, to the law school” and I think that’s pretty effective.

JP: One area where the university has, and understandably so, fallen behind is endowment.

CS: Right.

JP: There’s just not much on endowment.

CS: Not much.

JP: And, of course, the problem is you’ve got to have your physical structure, you’ve got to have your courses, you’ve got to have your faculty, you’ve got to have all this infrastructure, you have to build that first and they’ve really not had a chance to sit down and work on building the endowment.

CS: Right.

JP: But, it would seem to me long-term that would be an important real-- You’re a banker, so--
CS: Absolutely. Yes.

JP: It seems to me that would be an important part of the future of this university.

CS: It is. I think that it’s that, kind of that picture of success. People like to support something that’s successful and when, when a university can, you know, it’s pretty, it probably is, well, this a private, but I know a public university has to talk about how much, the size of their endowment, and then people say, “Wow, you know, a lot of people believe in that university by the size of that endowment, then I’m in.” And then they, and you get this momentum going. So, getting the endowment up there, you know, I participated in something that was really kind of just a trial and error, but at one point, Joel Berman I believe is still with the university here, and Joel came up with an idea to have alumni buy life insurance policies and we marketed that some. I bought one.

JP: Is the Planned Giving Council?

CS: No, this is actually—– This was when I was involved with the alumni.

JP: Oh, okay.

CS: Yeah, we actually put that out years ago and, for a modest amount of money you could buy a life insurance
policy and pay it up and then you’re done and then that, somebody when I die, the university is going to get $5,000 or $10,000. But, now it seems like a little drop in the bucket, but if that could be done at a larger level, bigger numbers, people can say, “Well, you know, I don’t have $5 million to give the university.”

JP: But that’s something you need anyway.

CS: Right. Right. Exactly, and it might be that a potion of that could be a bene-- The university could be a beneficiary of that maybe in their estate planning.

I know that part of the Planned Giving Council, now I’m putting on that other hat, the Planned Giving Council encourages anyone in that field who is a participant in this Planned Giving Council to encourage donations and writing in the university into wills and trusts and so, but I don’t know that that’s really happening a great deal. I think people need to have a reason to do that above, you know, if a person goes to the University of Florida and they had a great experience and then didn’t attend the graduate school, you know, and they’ve never attended anything at Nova, it’s really kind hard for them to take that leap and say, “Well, if I’m going to write a university into my will or a trust—”
JP: There is a tendency to favor an undergraduate school anyway.

CS: Right. Right, because that’s really, you know, that’s the growing up period in your life and you remember that experience.

JP: That’s where you met your wife or whatever, yeah.

CS: Right. Right. Right, and there’s a lot of, and maybe that’s where you’re going to send your kids.

JP: Who specifically is on the Planned Giving Council and who makes those appointments?

CS: Well, the-- Bill Snyder, William Snyder is an attorney of Snyder & Snyder, and he is chairman of our Planned Giving Council, but Eleanor Levy is the, here on campus as a paid, you know, Nova, NSU employee and, but she is the director of Planned Giving here, Eleanor Levy. So, she would probably be able to give you some color as to where that’s all going. But, it goes full circle back to your question about the endowment. How do we get a big number sitting there in some form or fashion? And maybe it’s through five or ten different ways.

JP: Nowadays you--

CS: Yeah, just leveraging.

JP: Can’t wait for one large gift from somebody.
Charles Shirley

CS: Right. Right. One of the things that people may or may not know is that a person can give not just cash. If you have a house in North Carolina that you don’t want anymore, but you don’t want to go through the effort of selling it, fixing it up to sell it or worry about any of the environmental issues that might be, any and all of that, you just say, “Well, look I’m willing to give that house to the university and I’ll take some kind of a beneficial write off on it.” You can actually, there are ways to give that through an intermediary to, you know, take that and sell it and convert it to cash and give it to the university at the right moment.

JP: How many people are on the Planned Giving Council? Is it a broad-based thing, or is it--?

CS: Pretty much, yeah. They’re, well, broad-based in that when we have our meetings usually in attendance I’d say 15 to 20 in attendance.

JP: Okay.

CS: As far as the membership, it’s probably larger than that, but regular attendance is probably 15 to 20.

JP: So, there may be 50 on the Planned Giving Council.

CS: Maybe.

JP: And half of them show up for those meetings?
CS: Yeah, right. Right, and then periodically--

JP: And the idea is to have you sit down together and come up just these ideas like life insurance?

CS: Right. Right. Exactly. It would be--

JP: And then to go back out into the community and encourage money. For example, would you go to SunTrust or banks elsewhere and say, “Look, we’ve got a new MBA program at Nova and we need corporate contributions?”

CS: That is the idea of it, and it’s one, that would be one direct way to an institution like that to say, “We’re looking for a contribution.” Another is, in our daily lives many of the members of this Planned Giving Council are in some form of wealth management, either managing assets for people or creating wills and trusts or, you know, doing something that involves where there’s interaction, where two people at one point are sitting down together on a personalized basis and saying, “Here’s what I own, here’s what I’d like to do with it when I die or while I’m still alive.” So, in those moments this, the Planned Giving Council continuously emphasizes when you have that moment or that opportunity, you know, mention Nova Southeastern as a possible beneficiary.
JP: Um-hum. Well, let’s go back and get you to tell me a little more in detail of how you got involved as the president of the Alumni Association.

CS: Okay.

JP: You discussed briefly how you got started--

CS: Right.

JP: But go back and give us a little more detail.

CS: I sure will. The-- As I indicated I, we talked about I took a couple of courses and that led to me being aware that this Executive MBA program was available and then with Bill Harrington’s help he was able to help me fulfill some prerequisite requirements for my undergraduate and then enter into that program. I went through the program as I indicated. Upon graduating, we created the Business School Alumni, reestablished it, it was dormant, and then after a period of time with that, I guess being involved in the university and, you know just, I was asked to become the president of the Alumni Association.

JP: Who asked you specifically?

CS: Well, it actually was a combination, it was through Bill Harrington, but there was a gentleman here, Ed Manson--

JP: Okay.
CS: Was director of Alumni Development and Ed was with the university a long time. He, again would probably be a-- He would be a good resource probably as well to talk about the history of the university. But Ed was, I don’t if Bill directed him to me or what, but he, when he were involved in the Business School Alumni, he was active with that and so I got to know Ed and, when it came time for a new Alumni president, they just came straight to Ed and said--

JP: Was there a very active Alumni Association at the time?

CS: Well, basically no. It was modest and his discussion with me was, “The University wants to step this up. This is something that where we see it as a resource and it’s just not being leveraged like it should and are you (kind of) are you up for that?” And I said, “Well, yeah.”

JP: Did they have a director of Alumni Affairs? Did they have an office?

CS: They did have. Ed, Ed Manson was that person at the time and he was, you know, I guess wanting to raise that up a notch like I mentioned and then we had the discussions of distance learning. We had so many mini campuses all over the place and, were those people feeling
connected and how can you get beyond one person, maybe how can you get them enthusiastic about supporting the alumni? And so those were the-- That was kind of the play card.

JP: There was at this time an alumni magazine or a bulletin that went out?

CS: There was a, there was a newsletter that we beefed up that, and it wasn’t, my recollection was it wasn’t being sent out too regularly. I think it was, I’m just guessing now, but I believe it was either every six months or maybe quarterly at the most, and then, so it became sort of a glossy, newspaper-like, unfolding-type newsletter and we started, we put a lot of interesting articles in there, a lot of activities of the university, where we were excelling and then every, every time we would do it, I think we ended up doing that monthly. My recollection as we started to increase then I would write a column from the president of the Alumni Association and we’d talk about, really enjoyed talking about how we had the alumni presidents here, we interacted with some president in another state and they’re doing great things in, you know, that state and so I think people started feeling a little more connected.

So, the other thing that, when we invited the alumni chapter presidents here, it was really probably like you’d
see today more of, if a company brought in people from, it would be a brainstorming session, there would be a lot of camaraderie, but we, we started having the flipcharts and taping them to the wall, let’s get all the ideas out on the table, anything that will benefit the university.

JP: This was really the first time that this had any impetus?

CS: Right. That’s right. That’s one of the things that I was so pleased about was the response I was getting because, at the time, being Alumni Chapter president, you actually sat on the Board of Trustees in an ex officio capacity so, so I was attending and being part of, and being very well received I should mention as a ex officio member of the board, but actually in everything that was going on, sitting through all the trustee meetings, going on all the retreats, anything that we did. So, from that, encouraging all that brainstorming from the Alumni Chapter groups they then we would put it in writing, we would give them the feedback, we would follow through, we would, it just wasn’t dropped. It wouldn’t be just a meeting, everybody got together and then there was no response from that.

JP: But then you were dealing with non-traditional members.
CS: Exactly. Right.

JP: And so, you’re emphasis would be a little different if you looked at say Central Florida.

CS: Right.

JP: They have this big glossy alumni magazine.

CS: Right. Right. Right. Right.

JP: A lot of color, a lot of photographs.

CS: Sure.

JP: It’s high tech stuff.

CS: Right.

JP: And you guys would not, at that point, have had the funds I wouldn’t think to mount—

CS: Not really.

JP: What would be an extensive alumni program?

CS: No. I think that could always, at the time that it’s right to do something like that, I think you could just take that up a few more notches and the, the funny thing about it is, I would get, we would send it out to people here locally and mail it and then, of course, anybody else on the list—

JP: To non-graduates?

CS: To, we would send it actually to alumni.

JP: But, did you disseminate this information to non-alumni as well?
CS: They were not on a list, not on a mailing list, it was more of a, you know, pick it up here, pick it up there kind of thing, which wasn’t really very effective, but what the, our mailing list was really, we had a very modest membership fee to be part of the alumni, like $20 a year, which is nothing. I mean, anybody could write that check. So, we would have our list and the members would get this newsletter as a benefit of being a member. So, non-members were not getting the newsletter, which is, looking back maybe we should have sent it anyway.

JP: Well certainly, donors should get it.

CS: Any donors should get it. Anybody who writes a check for anything should get this. Anybody whose name is on a building should definitely be getting it. But ah the--so, those-- as we’re talking about it now, those are probably ways that we could have even taken that up another level.

JP: Well, let me just briefly jump ahead. You’re an alumni now.

CS: Right.

JP: What’s the situation like? Do you get constant information from the Alumni Association?

CS: I do not actually. No.
JP: You’re a former president of the Alumni Association and they’re not in contact with you?

CS: Other than my own involvement as a--

JP: So, you don’t get these glossy magazines?

CS: I don’t even know who the Alumni president is at this point and I don’t get a magazine at home or any kind of e-mail.

JP: I don’t think that that’s a--

CS: That would be-- yes, that needs to be fixed.

JP: Yes.

CS: That could-- today, that could be done very effectively through e-mail.

JP: Well again, going back to the question I had earlier, this is one reason it seems to me that the university is not better known because, if you’re not disseminating information to the alumni who would then disseminate it to other people--

CS: Right.

JP: How are you going to-- That’s pretty basic.

CS: Yes. Right. Right.

JP: As to how a university functions and you want to make sure that the people who are going to send their kids here feel like they’re getting a benefit of a good education.
CS: Correct.

JP: And if you’re not corresponding with the people who--

CS: Right.

JP: Have attended the university, it seems to me that’s a, that’s a mistake.

CS: Well, it’s, it’s a fact of life in marketing I know for sure. I’m in financial services my whole life and if you’re not constantly just in touch in some way we-- for example, a market newsletter about what’s going in the economy, it could be anything, that is routinely sent to your clients that, because life goes on and at some point there will be a moment where they’ll say, “Wow, I’m not happy with my current situation and Charles has been sending me this information for now for three years, I’m going to call him and ask him if they can do this.” And just like with the alumni, they may get the newsletter electronically, which is, you know, almost no cost, and they may get it and they may read it and they may delete, but if there’s something, if there’s a reason for them to delete, I mean to read it, they will or a section of it, but at some point there will be something where some neighbor will say, “You know, I don’t know where to send my kids to school.” And they’ll say, “Well, let me forward
this newsletter to you and then you go on the website and check out, you know, Nova Southeastern." And then it starts to get interesting.

JP: Do you know a lot about the Nova website? I’ve looked at it very briefly.

CS: I haven’t been there.

JP: It seems fine, but--

CS: I haven’t been there in a long time. I, you know, if I needed to try to reach somebody, a contact or--

JP: Would you recommend to the current administration that they, at the very least, ought to have an alumni magazine that they would send out, or?

CS: Sure. Sure.

JP: I mean, I would assume that they would send out information by e-mail, I mean--

CS: Right, and that would be something that the current Alumni president, and again I haven’t had a, I don’t know who that is, but, but that person probably could take that ball and run with it and just say, it doesn’t have to be a 40-page thing. Not too many people have time to read something like that, but if it could be something that hits the highlights and then you can go deep, you know, you just click on the subject line.
JP: Well, you know, I get quite a few of these alumni magazines from various schools and places I’ve contributed money and I find that there’s a dramatic difference in the quality of them.

CS: Right. Right.

JP: And the good ones are really good.

CS: Right. Right.

JP: And, they have interesting material and they have updates on new technology and research and awards and new buildings and the whole thing.

CS: That’s right.

JP: And if you’re going to give any money to the university--

CS: You’ve got to have that connectivity.

JP: Yeah, if you have a special interest in geography or whatever--

CS: Right.

JP: You would like to know that there’s a new geography building.

CS: Yeah.

JP: It would seem to me that would--

CS: I think that would be a very good way to get activity out there because it’s a--
JP: Well, and you can, it’s a magazine, its color, it’s got pictures, it’s not just something you pull up online.

CS: Right.

JP: And like you say, you might look at-- Well, you might even delete it before you look at it.

CS: Right. Right. You might say--

JP: When you get a hardcopy in your hands there’s a tendency to at least look through it, right?

CS: To put it somewhere. Sure, sure. And ah, and if it goes to an office address, for example--

JP: Other people might read it.

CS: Exactly. It’s on the table. If I got something like that at my office, at my business address, I’m sure I would look at it because, you know-- but, even if I was a person who was not particularly motivated to look at it, I would definitely look through it and see what’s going on, but I would probably walk right out and put it out on our table and everybody who’s sitting in our lobby is sitting there while they’re waiting a little bit they’re reading through it and there’s--

JP: Well, talk about your two years as Alumni director. Did you do a lot of-- Alumni president, did you do a lot of traveling?
CS: No, hardly any travel. It was all really campus-based here. But, the traveling took place by other people coming here.

JP: And, did you feel like at the end of two years you had made some progress in beefing up the alumni pool?

CS: Definitely. I felt very good about that. I should mention to you that, you know, they don’t usually give this award out very, very easily, at the end of my period of time as Alumni president, they gave the Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award which is only given out to like three or four people every year.

JP: And, one of the things you were involved in, as you become president there’s a new president of the university.

CS: Right.

JP: So, Dr. Feldman is inaugurated.

CS: Right.

JP: And, give me a little bit of the background of that, and it’s instructive in a way-- He was the only president of the university that was brought in from an outside search. The other presidents have been internal candidates.

CS: Right. Right.
JP: And so, this was sort of a little bit different. The university was finally in the black, starting to grow a little bit.

CS: Right.

JP: People are starting to say, “Well gee, you know, I think we’re going to make it and I think we’ve got a good future.” What was the tenor of that inauguration like?

CS: Well, the-- I would say it was very positive. The video that I’m leaving with you will also show that-- A big event covered by the media. There was a large tent on the campus, probably a thousand or two thousand people, maybe a thousand people that attended, but again, heavily media covered and the-- I wasn’t involved with anything to do with the search, of course, but when Steve Feldman was surfaced as the president, you know, of course, Abe Fischler has been here for a very long time, really a legend with the university, and that would be a tough act for anybody to follow so I felt like, “Wow, this, you know, this must be really somebody really special to be tapped for that position,” especially since, you know, there’s some, Ray Ferrero was, I think he was chairman of the Board of Directors at that time.

JP: He was.
CS: And so, the— I was actually a little surprised when, you know, after a relatively short period of time it just didn’t go. It just didn’t take flight and it was a big event when Steve Feldman came and it was kind of a quiet event when he left and—

JP: Did you interact with him very much?

CS: Only through the, sitting in the ex officio capacity on the Board of Trustees and I basically was there as a, in that sense, an observer or a spectator. In that position, you don’t have voting power so, but I was involved with him in all the trustee meetings and everything like that.

JP: What was your impression of him?

CS: Well, I felt like that he was very intelligent, very articulate and the— I wasn’t sure whether he was, I didn’t feel like he was getting any particular traction though. It was, it was activity and things and he would, you know, have things to say in the trustee meetings and then in different events, graduation ceremonies, all of those kinds of things— But, maybe it’s that feeling of somebody from out of town, you know, not connecting up with the local talent, I don’t know. But, it started, it started to feel like that there just wasn’t a lot of traction.
JP: You mentioned one of the circumstances when you succeed somebody like Abe Fischler--

CS: Right. Right.

JP: Who’s been here for so long time and has all these ties to the community--

CS: Right.

JP: It’s going to be difficult and secondly, Feldman came from a traditional university.

CS: Right.

JP: And so, some people who say when he came here he couldn’t change his modus operandi to fit into this type of school.

CS: Right.

JP: He kept looking at it-- He had been president of Central Connecticut State.

CS: Right.

JP: And, which was--

CS: More traditional.

JP: A traditional public school.

CS: Right.

JP: And not a private school.

CS: Right.

JP: And that sometimes transition is more difficult than one might imagine.
CS: Yeah. Right. Relocating to a different market.

JP: Sure.

CS: Public to private, traditional to non-traditional, it was probably just a little too big of a leap not having grown up in it say like Abe, Abe Fischler had done.

You know, one of the things that I would, I wouldn’t imagine that Ray would remember ever saying this to me in a meeting, but he said his dad always told him to, “Invest in the best tools of your trade.” “Always invest in the best tools of your trade.” And I think that Ray and the board were always talking about, “What’s the next edge we need?” In distance learning, when it wasn’t interactive video and interactive video came available, “We’re going to do interactive video.” Before it was kind of an observing of a classroom, but then it became, I could be in Iowa and raise my hand and an instructor here at this campus would ask me, “Yeah. What’s your question?” I mean, that’s really great. So, it seemed like the, the rest of the board was very, Bob Steele, Ray Ferrero all were, you know, seemed to be really ready to do that. “Let’s be ahead of the game here. Let’s don’t wait until somebody else is ahead of us in this distance learning.” And, I don’t recall that Steve Feldman was particularly tuned into that.
JP: Did you have any dealings at all with Ovid Lewis?

CS: Yes, I did. Yeah.

JP: What did you think of him?

CS: I was positive about Ovid. He, he and I only had sporadic things where we would do-- I know that I would always see him at graduation ceremonies. I was asked to be a, you know, attend those as part of the group and then on a committee or two here and there and then, of course, in the trustee meetings and he was always into what he was doing. I felt like he was tuned in, you know, trying to better the status of the university. Always willing to offer his opinion and such.

JP: How would you evaluate the presidency of Ray Ferrero?

CS: I think it’s been excellent. I have, I hold him in high regard anyway and-- But, I feel like that Ray has a remarkable recall. I wish I had his recall and I’m, you know, I’m 58 and he-- Ray, you know, was president of the Florida Bar at one point and then he, in his role as a Board of Trustee member and then in his role as president, but I’ve seen him in a number of different venues where, you know, he can stand up and just go through 90 different things that’s going on at the university without ever skipping a beat and, so you, you know, you get a lot of
confidence in someone who is able to, to command that kind, “I know what I’m doing. I have my arms around it and we’re going to do great things and here’s how we’re going to do it.” And so, that’s, that’s my opinion of him.

JP: Of course, President Ferrero is both determined--

CS: Right. Right.

JP: And able to persuade people--

CS: Yeah. Exactly.

JP: To go along with his goal.

CS: He’s got it. He’s just got “it.” He’s got it.

It’s plain and simple.

JP: Somebody said I talked to just the other day said, “Well, he gets things done.”

CS: Right. Exactly.

JP: You know, sometimes maybe a little too swiftly for some people.

CS: Right. Yeah.

JP: But he, he sees what he needs to do.

CS: Right, and they act on it. There’s a large--

JP: And so, what do you see for the future of Nova now? I mean, do you see this school expanding, growing?

CS: I do. I feel like that the emphasis on maybe undergraduate activity, you know, and having undergraduates where they become feeder into the graduate programs and the
doctoral programs, I think the quality of the education is going to, has been good and it’s going to be still good and maybe, you know, always look for ways to improving that, improve that, but no, I couldn’t think of a negative thing to say about it. I don’t know where I would find anything that I would say that is so dramatically wrong, you know the-- If you look, if go down a list, I mean the continuing, acquiring adjacent properties, you know, building beautiful buildings that encourage people to take a look, the library was a joint venture with the county, that was innovative. The--

JP: Only one in the country.

CS: Right.

JP: Private school.

CS: And it’s a knockout library.

JP: It is.

CS: I mean, you can’t-- And so, they’re just, they’re probably on and on and on, you know, the acquiring of the Rolling Hills property to and now it’s-- I know an attorney his son’s going there. I know his son. I said, “How is it there?” He said, “Oh, I love it. I love it. It’s great.” You know, that kind of thing. So, I don’t know. I don’t know where I would--
JP: Are you aware of this new Academical Village out here on University they are developing?

CS: Right. Yes, I am. Yes. Yes.

JP: Does the bank have anything to do with that?

CS: No, it does not.

JP: No.


JP: Did SunTrust have anything to do with the Dolphins?

CS: Yes. SunTrust actually, and I was with SunTrust for about 27 years, but I was not involved in that transaction, but Joel Berman, I mentioned him earlier, Joel was very involved with it. He, somebody came up with the idea. I don’t know if it was Joel or, but somehow or another that idea blossomed into, “Well, let’s do a bond issue,” and then SunTrust was involved with the bond issue and guaranteed it and some things and sort of facilitated that.

JP: Has it paid off yet?

CS: I don’t know. I don’t absolutely know.

JP: If you look at your experiences at Nova, both in the classroom and as Alumni president and as a supporter of the institution, how has Nova impacted your life?
CS: It’s been very positive. I think that going back to when I graduated from the MBA program before I even became president of the Alumni and everything else, the president of our bank was aware, there was a notice in the paper that, you know, I graduated and he came over to speak with me and shook my hand and said he was real proud of, you know, me doing that and that-- And it just, you know, you don’t know what, what things are causing your career to move up, but, you know, I ended up shortly after that, there was a move, a person left and I was an area manager and, rather than just hiring another area manager they put me in charge of both regions and I ended up running the main office in Fort Lauderdale and then I was a senior vice president running 12 offices, the largest group in the whole county and, you know, I ended up running an incentive program for all the branches, just a lot of different things and you don’t know, maybe it’s a vote of confidence that, “Well, you know, we got a guy here that knows how to really stick with it and get something done and achieved,” and it could be that or it could be the content of the education, but I think it’s all of it really. I think one of the things that I got out of the MBA program was, “Wow, you know, if I really want to put my mind to something and do well I can.” Somewhere deep down in there is that and
then the, the parts of it where you could just go back and use it is incredible. It wasn’t theoretical. It was, I mean you can actually use this stuff. So--

JP: Now, I’ve covered most of the things that I would like to ask you about, is there anything you’d like to talk about or something that I have not brought up?

CS: No, I think that, it seems like we’ve covered a great deal of it. I know that the university has evolved. People, you know, are evolving. I think one of the things that, as I, for example, attend different functions—The Entrepreneurial Hall of Fame I think is a standout event in our community where NSU is a entrepreneurial kind of environment that, you know, we actually, you know, it is a school of business and entrepreneurship and I don’t know how many other places have that as part of the title and it is an, it is actually put into practice here. And then more recently, the dean of the business school was, attended our Planned Giving Council and was talking about some of the things that they’re doing in the business school and there is a segment of the course work that’s going to be focused on sales—How do you, you know, develop yourself as a person who can cause somebody to, you know, to want to buy? And it’s a, and I think that’s missing in so many things. It’s really I, when I was
hearing about this, I said, “Well, that’s okay. I can relate that to something.” It’s kind of like being a parent, you know, you study all kinds of things throughout your life, but you don’t ever really take a course to be a parent and all of a sudden you’re a parent and now you’ve got to know it somehow and this with-- In my career, I’ve had all kinds of activities in, you know, work life and then also education, but really it was always just something I did on my own, pick up a book from a famous person who wrote a book about sales or something like that I actually started learning that. So I would say, augmenting that into the business program any, any really, any program in the institution is a very positive thing. I think we’re going to stand out as a result of offering that program.

JP: Well, the history of this university has been entrepreneurial.

CS: It has. It has.

JP: And you see it over and over again. One of the things was opening the dental school when dental schools around the country were closing.

CS: Right. Right.

JP: And everybody said this was a pretty crazy idea.

CS: Right.
JP: When the university buys a country club.

CS: Right.

JP: People said, “What are you doing?”

CS: “What were you thinking?” Right.

JP: This is the division and the difficulty, as you know, is to balance the investment entrepreneurial side with the academic side.

CS: Right.

JP: And you have to have the resources, but on the other hand you don’t want to make bad investments and undermine the actual performing of the university.

CS: Sure. Sure.

JP: And so, it takes risk.

CS: A delicate balance.

JP: But, but calculated risk, I guess would be the right--

CS: Right. Absolutely.

JP: But, if you don’t take some risk, if you had not, this school wouldn’t be here.

CS: Right. I think the acquiring of property adjacent and the Academic Village property-- People were saying, “Well, you know, what are you doing buying a shopping center?” But, but, you know, that land someday might be owned by somebody else if it wasn’t that the university
bought it and then we’d be boxed in. We wouldn’t have that expanding capability.

JP: Right.

CS: And it might limit the future and I think that’s one of the things that they always talked about in the trustee meetings was, “What’s down the road? What’s down the road? What’s down the road?”

JP: And, I think that, that explains to a large degree how the school has evolved in less than 50 years.

CS: Right.

JP: If they had stopped at one part and said, “Okay, this is good. We’ve made it.”

CS: “We feel comfortable now.”

JP: “We feel comfortable,” and they’ve never accepted that situation.

CS: Right.

JP: They keep pursuing.

CS: I agree. I agree.

JP: Anything else you want to talk about?

CS: I think that’s it. I’m good.

JP: Okay. Well, on that note, I thank you very much for your time.

CS: Okay. You’re quite welcome. I enjoyed it.

Thank you.
JP: Good.

[End].