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Interview with W. Tinsley Ellis, Board of Trustees member

W. Tinsley Ellis

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P: This is Julian Pleasants, and I am at Nova Southeastern University, and I’m speaking with Mister Tinsley Ellis. This is part of a history of this university. Talk a little bit about your family. Your family came here, as I understand it, from Georgia in 1923, and your father had a lot to do with the development of Hollywood.

E: Right.

P: Talk about your family.

E: He came from—he went to Emory University, and he was a young lawyer in Macon, Georgia, and he heard about the boom that was down here in Fort Lauderdale in the [19]20’s. So he came down and took the Florida Bar and worked for the McCune-Higherson Law Firm in Fort Lauderdale. One of their clients was Mister Joe Young, who was developing the city of Hollywood. So they assigned him to Mister Young. So he went down to Hollywood, while it was being developed, and incorporated the city of Hollywood for Mister Joseph Young in 1925. He stayed there as the original City Attorney, and the law firm was there until two years ago. It was a father-son law firm. It was three partners and three sons. Of course, when the partners died, left the three sons, and then they each went their own direction. He was in Hollywood all of those years and very active in the development.

P: You have been active in Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood all of your career?
E: Right. I was born in Fort Lauderdale because Hollywood was too small for a hospital. So we had to come up to Fort Lauderdale. Growing up here, there were only six thousand people in the entire county. There were about two thousand in Hollywood and four thousand in Fort Lauderdale. So it was a very, very small community.

P: You were born in 1933?

E: 1933.

P: Let me just read in, for the record, your background. You did your prep school at Choate.

E: Right.

P: Then undergraduate at Emory.

E: Right,

P: Law degree at Emory, and then a Master’s degree at NYU.

E: Master’s in Taxation.

P: Master’s in Taxation. Talk about your relationship with what is known in the history of this university as the Oatmeal Club.

E: I was the last one to join. It had been meeting, maybe, for a year under the direction of Robert E. Ferris, who was a Fort Lauderdale attorney. We met once a week to plan a university, and the idea was that we had the junior college here, and the university would complement that. It was going to start at the advanced level of the advanced degrees and work itself down. So that was the plan.
You were with Charles Foreman, Al Hines, who was the Superintendent of Schools.

Right. I have the charter here with their names.

Yeah, would you read them for the record?

Right, and I'll give you a little background of each of them.

please.

Starting off with James Farquhar, he was a landscape architect from Long Island. He came down here to Davie, where we are now, and started a sod farm, which was a big business. He was very, very instrumental in the formation of the university and gave quite a bit of land and quite a bit of money. The second was Howard Allen, who was the head of the First National Bank of Fort Lauderdale. Warren Winstead was our first President, who we'll discuss. Robert C. Ellis was a CPA and very active in the early finances of the university. Robert O. Barber was the head of Unisys Corporation, which was an optical company. Henry Kinney was one of the editors of the Miami Herald. Henry Perry was a dairy man, who owned most of what is now West Hollywood, because he had to have a place for his cows. Then he formed a bank, which now has been merged into Wachovia. Myron Ashmore was the Superintendent of Schools. Charles Foreman was on the School Board and on the Board of Regents of Florida. Where we are now was called Foreman Field. The government took over all the Foreman land around here and made an airfield here. John Hines was an industrialist, but he died shortly after, and I know very
little about him. William Mather was a Hollywood attorney, who was from Georgia, and he was the head of the Bailey Foundation. That was our largest gift. He gave four hundred acres on Hollywood Boulevard to the university, which we immediately sold for four hundred thousand. It would be worth about, maybe, forty million now. LC Judd was quite an important real estate developer, and Robert E. Ferris was a local attorney who started the Oatmeal Club.

P: It was a rather diverse group.

E: Yeah, it was.

P: Now, when this group started in 1961, they officially set up the South Florida Educational Corporate.

E: SFEC, right.

P: Explain what the ultimate objective of that—

E: We were to be the capstone of all the education out here in Davie. So it was supposed to be a coordinate between the Nova schools, which were very famous when they first started—elementary and high school. It was very hard to get your child in there. Then we had the junior college. Then we were going to compliment that. It was to be like a consortium of all education out here on the Davie campus.

P: This is a not-for-profit organization.

E: Right.

P: How did you get involved with the Oatmeal Club?
E: They only had—they didn’t have anybody from Hollywood, except Myron Ashmore, who was the Superintendent of Schools. So someone suggested that I come and join them, see what was going on, and then I just stayed with them.

P: This is rather unusual that a group like this own their own not-for-profit and would sit down and have the vision to plan this concept, which is really education from the cradle to the grave.

E: Right. But we were going to go backwards.

P: Yes, I understand that.

E: From the graduate down to the grave.

P: So the initial idea was that what was originally named Florida Technological—

E: It was called Nova University of Advanced Technology.

P: Okay.

E: As we evolved, we realized that we were not going to be a technical school anymore, but it was going to be a general university, so we changed the name.

P: And, again, it’s very interesting that you would start with graduate work as opposed to undergraduate. Why was the emphasis on graduate?

E: We were copying what was called the Graduate Research Center of the Southwest in Dallas, Texas. So a group of us chartered and airplane and took about seventy-five local residents out to Dallas to see what they were
doing, and we were going to copy that. So we started with seventeen graduate students in the first class.

P: I’ve read periodically that the ultimate concept was that you wanted a school that would end up being like MIT.

E: Mm-hmm. In fact, Doctor Killian, the head of MIT, was the head of our advisory board.

P: I’ve read some documents that he was very enthusiastic about the idea. By the way, it was a tremendously brilliant idea to have people like Killian on the regional board.

E: Right.

P: There were a couple of Nobel Laureates.

E: Mm-hmm. It gave us some substance.

P: It did. If you’re starting a university and you have that kind of support, it makes it a lot easier to get national attention.

E: Because a lot of people were very, very skeptical of the whole idea of us starting a university. They said we were going to be a diploma mill.

P: Well, and one of the problems that you came up against very early is the problem everybody comes up against: funding. The decision was, I think, early on, that this was going to be a private school not a public school.

E: Right. Always.

P: So the concept here is that you’re going to raise money. You assume that you could raise enough money locally to get the university off the ground?
E: What happened was Foreman Field was still here, and the government owned it. They declared it was surplus land, but they could not give it to a university like us, so they were going to sell it to the School Board of Broward County for seventy-five thousand dollars. So the idea was we cooperated with them, and we said, we will raise the seventy-five thousand if you'll get the land from the government and then donate it to us. That's what we did. We went out and found seventy-five people who would give one thousand dollars, and it was the hardest money we ever raised to start a university because people were skeptical.

P: Well, and there's no real land available. I mean, it's just an old airfield.

E: That's right.

P: So it's sort of hard to get people to imagine.

E: It looked like an airfield. It was still an airfield, and people were still landing here by mistake.

P: So it's sort of hard to get people to envision what the future would hold in those concepts.

E: Right.

P: Now, one of the documents I came across early on was that the purpose of this school was to invent, implement, evaluate, and disseminate new educational practices.

E: Mm-hmm.

P: So this was really—

E: It was to be innovative.
P: To be innovative. This is, to a large degree, very experimental.

E: Mm-hmm.

P: So, in some ways, it makes it more difficult. If you were doing a traditional school, people might understand what it would look like.

E: Exactly.

P: When you start with graduates, people are saying, well that doesn’t seem like the—

E: Many people told me I was wasting my time.

P: Now this is the raising of that seventy-five thousand, was that the Founder’s Club?

E: I guess that must have been them.

P: Yeah. So all of the people who gave that money were part of that club.

E: That is the seventy-five people who flew out to Dallas to look at the Graduate Research Center.

P: One of the individuals involved here, who is very famous in the development of this university, is Al Mailman.

E: Right.

P: We would have, I guess, contributed early on.

E: Well, the first campaign we had was in the city of Hollywood. My law partner was the chairman of the campaign, names Sherwood Spencer. We raised quite a bit of money, and it was to be the Hollywood building, which we’re in now. We came up short, and Mr. Mailman came up with the difference, so we put his name on it.
P: So this university is officially incorporated in 1964.

E: Right.

P: And you were involved in that process.

E: I handled the incorporation.

P: Talk about how you went through that. I understand that you went to the University of Miami and checked with them as to how they had been incorporated.

E: I didn’t know people knew that.

P: [Laughter]

E: I copied their charter.

P: [Laughter]

E: I had no idea how to incorporate a university, so one of their legal counsel was a friend of mine. I said, can I borrow your charter, and he said yeah. So I copied it but then put in our names ‘cause I knew that that would be acceptable in Tallahassee.

P: At this point, it is the Florida Institute of Technology, in [19]64.

E: Right. I think, in [19]74, we changed the name just to Nova University.

P: Now, in the beginning, I understand, here you are, in 1964, you’re incorporated, you got a little bit of land and not much money.

E: Mm-hmm.

P: And so, explain how you really got the project off the ground. The difficulty all through the early years was money.

E: Mm-hmm.
P: I understand that local supporters were signing’ checks, and you sort of raised money as you went.

E: Sometimes, the trustees made the payroll. I did it at least on an occasion. Another time, we all went to the bank and signed a note. Then Mister Mather came along, who I mentioned, from the Bailey Foundation, and gave the one hundred acres on Hollywood Boulevard, which came to four hundred thousand dollars, and that’s what got it off the ground.

P: Now, there are some individuals, and this is easy in hindsight, said, we should’ve held that because—

E: Oh, definitely.

P: At a later time—

E: We were planning to have it a research center. We talked about the North Caroline Triangle type-thing, but we couldn’t afford it. Anytime we got something, we had to sell it.

P: Yep. And, of course—

E: In fact, Mister James Farquhar gave us quite a bit of land, but we had to sell it.

P: Later on—

E: And now we’re buying’ it back.

P: That’s what I was going to say. Later on, you purchased some of that land back for one-point-seven million dollars.

E: Right.
P: But, at the time, I think, to understand the process, you were just a
beginning university, and you had no concept of how long it would take to
develop the school. If you didn’t have the basic funding, you’d never get
off the ground.

E: Mm-mm.

P: So you had to convert that land into usable funds to really begin the
university.

E: That’s right.

P: Go through the process of how you acquired the land for the university.

E: It was a hundred and twenty-five acres, which we’re on now, the original
parcel, was surplus land and Forman Field. The government took it over
from the Forman family, and then they closed it down after World War
Two, so it was just out here, vacant. We arranged with the School Board
to buy it from the government for seventy-five thousand dollars. That’s the
seventy-five people we got together with one thousand dollars each. We
gave it to the School Board to buy from the government, and the School
Board then signed it over to us. That’s how the campus started.

P: Where and when did you acquire the other parcels?

E: Well, the other parcels, primarily, it’s still the hundred and twenty-five
acres but we have been acquiring, very recently, land up and down
University Drive, but that’s been in the past five years.

P: Okay.
E: Then we’ve also acquired Grand Oaks Country Club. I don’t know if you’re familiar with that.

P: Mm-hmm. There is also the acquisition of the Forman hotel, which is now graduate student housing.

E: Right, next to the golf course. That was the old Rolling Hills Country Club, where Caddy Shack was filmed.

P: I understand that. When you’re in 1964, you’re really working on trust and hope that this vision is going to come to fruition. What you needed at this point was to begin the process of hiring administrators.

E: Right.

P: So you hire Doctor Winstead as the first President.

E: Warren Winstead. He was the head of education for US Army-Europe. I believe someone from the Ford Foundation was in touch with us. They recommended him. He came, and we hired him.

P: What was the essence of his contribution? Why was he so important to the development of the university?

E: Because he was the front man, to start, with all the fundraising. He did a very good job with that. He was very charismatic. He had a wonderful personality. He was young. He did what he was expected to do. Then when the school got off the ground, we realized we needed someone else, and that’s when Doctor Fischler stepped in. He was already here as a—from Berkley.
P: Now, one of the things Winstead did when he stated out—he was instrumental in setting up university planning and development office. Obviously, if you’re going to start to plan a new university and raise money, you have to have some structure. He also, I thought was interesting, hired a New York firm—Tamblyn and Brown—to help with the fundraising.

E: Right. To advisors.

P: Yeah. Well, because you’re starting a new university. It’s a difficult process. It made sense to get somebody from the outside to sort of help you.

E: We had a little office down on Las Olas Boulevard that someone donated to us. That was the university, downtown.

P: That’s all you had at that point.

E: That’s all.

P: Right, yeah.

E: And the land.

P: I wanted to read you about President Winsted’s overview of his educational philosophy. He wanted to integrate the arts, humanities and the natural sciences, and I quote, the technical and theoretical, the aesthetic and the scientific, the factual and the valuable, the creative and the inventive must be recognized as merely facets of one single, cultural core. That seems to be the essence of how this university evolved.

E: Right.
P: In other words, over a period of all these years, people have been pretty true to that vision?

E: Right.

P: I understand that the name Nova came from the Ford Foundation grant; that that was the name of the grant. Is that correct? Do you know that?

E: Actually, the Nova schools that were here were so famous, we were treading on that. Maybe the Ford Foundation—

P: That was the original grant for those schools?

E: Yes, I think that’s what it is.

P: Okay.

E: And—so we were planning the university. We said what should we name it, and then it came up, the consensus was Nova, since it was already out here.

P: Yeah.

E: And very famous.

P: Good. That’s a nice name.

E: Mm-hmm.

P: It’s new.

E: Right. In fact, New College complained about it and said we had to change the name.

P: One of the ideas that, as you start, I remember reading’ a letter from Gordon Sweet, who was SACS, the accreditation services.

E: He was very helpful.
P: But he noted that, if you start a school with just graduate students—and the first seventeen graduate students came with all tuition paid and all of their resource paid, where are you going to get the money to run the university? Because you had no tuition. You have no FTE's. And wasn’t that a concern as you started out?

E: Yes it was.

P: To start this university without that kind of income?

E: And actually, because of the concern, is the way the university is now. What we have now is not what was envisioned. We didn’t envision this great, huge university. But we were able to get 10 acres in Port Everglades from the county to start the school of Oceanography. And we started the School of Education, and it just kept growing. And it was Abraham Fischler that really started the growth.

P: And some of the other early gifts, which really sustained this concept—The Bailey Foundation, hundred acres in Pembroke Pines—and you sold that I’m Schure, that was the $400,000 you were talking about earlier, and Robert Loll gave $105,000.

E: He was my classmate at ______, so I went to him, and he endowed—he told me he was endowing a chair of $105,000, which he did.

P: And that was a chair in physics?

E: Right, Dr. Perpinsky. Did not work out well.

P: Yeah, Perpinsky did not last, we know that. And now perhaps one of the most unusual events was Lewis Parker in 1965, who apparently just—
E: He came into our office on Las Olas, and on the back of an envelope he said, “I pledge one million dollars to Nova University,” and nobody believed him, and it turned out to be true.

P: And why did he do that? Did he know about the school? Did he have connections with anybody?

E: He didn’t have connections with anybody, he just read about it. He also endowed what’s called the Parker Playhouse in Fort Lauderdale, gave them money for that. So he had some invention that went into every TV set that was made in America, so he was extremely wealthy and started giving his money away, and we named the Parker Building after him.

P: One of the things that was interesting about—and this gift was in ’65—what’s interesting about the Parker Building is that it was just the first floor that was built, because that was all you had the funding for, and you had to wait until later. And another thing that I discovered that was interesting was that you didn’t have the money early on to build the power plant, and there still isn’t a central power plant for the University. So those were some of the difficulties that you’re still trying to overcome, and you sort of raised money and did what you could.

E: Now, the first building that was built was the Rosenthal Building, and Mr. Rosenthal was also from Hollywood. In fact, the only large contributors were from Hollywood, and the first campaign was in Hollywood, which is unusual since Fort Lauderdale was in the hub. And we built the building for the 17 students. And it’s still over there, and it’s a beautiful building.
P: And all this money is being given before there are even any students.

E: That’s right.

P: Which again shows that some people believe that this was a great idea.

E: Now Mr. Mailman in particular was interested, and when we’d get in a hole, he would always come forward.

P: Mr. Ferguson gave 88 acres, and again—

E: Or is that Ferguson Peters?

P: I’m not Schure.

E: I think it would be Ferguson Peters.

P: Was it? Okay. And then you sold that land as well, right?

E: Mmm-hmm, and Mr. Henry Perry had Perry Dairy, and they took over his land for the North Perry Airport, and he gave a large donation of land, which we sold.

P: Now as you begin to develop the physical plant, you’re obviously in the beginning of the search for students. So explain to me how you ended up with 17 graduate students as the first class?

E: You’ll have to ask Dr. Fischler that tomorrow. I was not involved in the recruiting of students. And I don’t—I’ve always said that we should look for them and find out what became of them. Another thing we should do is, as soon as we got started, Newsweek Magazine came. I don’t know if you’ve got a copy of that.

P: I do.
E: And there’s a picture of Warren Winstead out there on the airfield, and there’s a caption that says, “A local group from Fort Lauderdale believes they can start a University.” And I’ve told them that they should have Newsweek come back to show what actually happened.

P: That’s a good idea, yeah.

E: Do you have a copy of that?

P: Yes, it’s in the archives.

E: Is it?

P: Yes. And it’s quite impressive, because this is an idea that was rather unique.

E: It was so unique, that’s why there was a story.

P: That’s right, so you get national publicity from something like that, which is always important when you’re starting a university. So, in 1967, the Rosenthal Building is completed, and you have the first students, you open the doors and you’ve got 17 graduate students. Then in ’68 comes the Parker Science Center, and you sort of go from there. And you do at this point have the oceanographic laboratory. Would you talk a little about that?

E: Dr. Richardson came down from Wood’s Hull in Massachusetts, and he was very well known. I believe he came because of the location. Where else could you find a place like Port Everglades to have your ships and do oceanographic work? So it was considered very excellent. But
unfortunately, he and most other faculty went down at sea, and we lost the ship and had to start all over again, and it was a big tragedy.

P: And that land was given by the city?

E: By the county. Ten acres. Beautiful land, right at the port as it goes out.

P: So that was another element in this innovative process that gave you a lot of national publicity. Now, as you begin the university, the problem is money. And there was at one point, and I'm not Schure whether this was president Winstead or the Board of Trustees, you went around looking at other schools for partnerships. Would you explain what your thinking was.

E: Well, when it became desperate about 1967. We went to the University of Miami and asked if they wanted to partner with us. They were not interested. And so someone said, “Does anyone know a good bankruptcy lawyer?” And at that point, Dr. Fischler said that he had been in contact with Alexander Schure at New York Institute of Technology, “Let me fly up and discuss with him whether he wants to partner with us.” He did that, and he came back with a pledge of one million dollars.

P: Well now let me go back a little bit in this search for partners. As I understand it, there were overtures made into Florida Atlantic, to Florida State, Miami, and the Board of Regents. And so there was some talk at this point about having the state take over the school and make it a public school.

E: Nobody was interested. Only New York Institute.
P: Well I think it’s important to note that had you made those arrangements then, it would have been a public institution as opposed to private.

E: That’s right, which we did not really want.

P: And I think the local people did not want, but at some point, you had to do something, because you couldn’t make the payroll, or you couldn’t pay electricity and all of the basics.

E: Right. We were way behind on our bills.

P: Yeah. Almost in every category. So, let’s talk about Alexander Schure. You would have had quite a few interactions with him. Talk about him, what kind of person he was, his background.

E: His background was, through his family, they owned Schure Electronics in New York. They became extremely wealthy, but he was interested in education, so he started New York Institute of Technology at Lincoln Center in New York. Then he went out to Old Westbury, bought a great deal of land out there, and then it became Long Island University. He could have completely overtaken this University, but no. He wanted it to remain independent and we would have a consortium, but he would have more Trustees from his school that would govern this school.

P: And, at this point, to get Dr. Fischler in here, he had been recruited by Winstead to be the vice president of academic affairs, is that correct?

E: From Berkeley.

P: From Berkeley.
E: And Mr. Mailman took an interest in him, because I think he had a tenured professorship out there, so he gave everything up to come here.

P: Well, as I understand it, he was on his way to somewhere, to South America or Chile or something, and stopped off just to look at it, and was very intrigued by the University School, the concept—he was an education specialist—and he was intrigued by the school and the innovative design of the school. And that sort of peaked his interest in helping to develop this University.

E: It's called the open school, I think they call it “school without walls.”

P: Right. And once you get into this agreement with Schure and NYIT, they're going to come up, and the figure I have, and there are various figures, was $1.2 million, and what was that money used for, once you got that funding?

E: To stay afloat.

P: So you paid taxes, you made payroll. In other words, that was an injection of funds that enabled the University to continue.

E: They carried it, actually, as a loan. We considered it a gift. On their books, they considered it a loan, because there was a little controversy about that. Because he was not really in a position with a New York school to give away a million dollars to a Florida school.

P: Well that was a lot of money in those days. And I’ve heard it characterized—Dr. Fischler said it was pre-paid rent.
E: Maybe they changed it to that. There was a great deal of discussion on how to call it.

P: Yeah, I know that.

E: As long as we got the million dollars and stayed afloat.

P: But eventually, and we’ll get to that later, that was paid back. In 1985 when the relationship ended.

E: I don’t remember if we paid it all back I remember 500,000.

P: I think they ended up paying 50% or something like that.

E: I think it was the 500.

P: What is circumstance of this university without that money?

E: If we hadn’t gotten the money? It would have closed down. The creditors would have closed us down.

P: So it was the last opportunity…

E: It was the only opportunity.

P: Did you try banks, did you try to get loans…

E: We were always getting loans from banks but we were not paying them back, I think our credit was over.

P: At a certain point they won’t continue to lend money will they?

E: No, no.

P: Now once we get this NYIT a lot of people were a little upset about it because they thought the school was selling out to…

E: …A New York group.
P: Yeah. And that they were losing their commitment to Broward County and this community

E: Fundraising it was a setback.

P: Yeah I was going to say…

E: …And also, that school was very new and most people down had never heard of it, I'd never heard of it until we flew up and met with them and found out that it was a lot of substance. But the local people were very opposed to it.

P: And the process that the two institutions went through was that they would be a MBA from NYIT on this campus and they would have some undergraduate students as well, which is quite different from what the original concept of the university was

E: Oh yeah

P: But at this juncture you had to make accommodations

E: Right.

P: Was it from the beginning a good fit? And I eliminate one point…

E: In the beginning it started off as a good fit. I guess you're leading up to why there was a division. As the school became more successful you see, we were in a position that we wanted to go back to being independent, and he, Dr. Schure, became the chancellor of the university, so he was the top man, and members of his family were on the board at his school, Mathew and Mrs. Smith, various… and his sister… so they were all put on our board, and it was like a family situation. It worked well to begin with,
and also he was the one who insisted that we start a law school. And we were kind of pushed into it. So they named me Chairman of the Board of Governors, of the law school, and Abe Fischler and I went out and hired a dean, the dean came and then he hired the faculty, and then we had our first students but we were not accredited.

P: Well I want to go into that a little bit later, let me go back to the beginning of this; it’s a little confusing in a way; is this a federation…?

E: A consortium is what they called it. It could have been a take over.

P: Now Schure is in essence the president of both institutions…?

E: The head. And Abe Fischler was under him, and they were very congenial.

P: And the board is changed now, it is now some of the original board of trustees…?

E: Heather resigned. The executive committee of the university board became the existing board with NYIT board. And so a group had to be…

P: You were on the executive committee?

E: I was on the executive committee and I signed the consortium agreement with Dr. Fischler and Dr. Schure, and some of our very important board members had to resign so there was a little hard feeling there.

P: So now the board is in essence 9 and 9?

E: I can’t remember I think they had one more than us or something like that, but we got along fine.
P: the point that I think Fischler made, I read one of his letters, is that for the most part, NYIT did not come down and dictate what went on at Nova.

E: No, they could have

P: They could have, they had the authority

E: From the beginning they could have named this New York Institute of Technology but he knew that wasn't going to fit well in Fort Lauderdale

P: Right. Now I understand he was paid to be president at NYIT and paid to be president here

E: I believe the New York Times said he was the highest paid educator in America

P: [laughter]

E: So he got a salary here, we gave him an apartment on the ocean at Fort Lauderdale, so…

P: And how often in the period of time when this begins and the time it ends in ‘85, how often was he here?

E: He came frequently, because he had the apartment here and he *liked* it down here

P: In the winter right? [laughter]

E: M-hm, and his wife liked it down here

P: What influence did he have, what influence did the board have from NYIT, on the development of the school, on the curriculum, hiring?
They had the ultimate authority but they didn’t use it. He left a great deal of the authority with Abraham Fischler because he had a great deal of confidence in him.

Now as we go forward, at this point, there is enough money to pay off debts but you still need money to carry on the operation of the school. What money did NYIT give? I read that there was $6,000 a month?

I don’t remember but we had to go back to them to stay afloat and they would send down more money.

I read somewhere that it was 6,000 a month that they would give you for sort of operating as you go…

Could be.

So even after the original 1.2 million…

Yeah we had to turn to them for money.

Ok, and again without that money that would have meant the end of the school so

But it always came forward because they had an investment.

Yep. So as we go forward with the school, let’s go to this business of the law school which you were very heavily involved in. One of the criticisms locally was that the ultimate impact of Nova on the county, Broward County, was limited, because it was just graduate students, and the early successful programs were off campus programs, there were very undergraduates and there was no tie directly to the community.

The community didn’t understand what was going on.
P  Exactly and without that support from the community it’s hard to raise money it’s hard to raise that kind of attention…

E  But the law school was something they could understand

P  And here is where I think Schure understood that, interestingly enough all the way from New York, he understood the importance of the law school, that that would be a foundation that would tie this university to the community.

E  Right

P  I mean you did have the university school

E  And quite a few local people, sons of lawyers and such, came here

P  Right. Now when it started, in the beginning, and you can answer this more specifically, there was quite a bit of opposition from the board of trustees about developing the law school. How did you stand?

E  I was for it of course, being a lawyer, and the more I got into it the more interested I was, but we had to become accredited, otherwise our first graduates would not be able to take the Florida Bar Exam, so I worked closely with the American Bar Association

P  …which is the accrediting institution

E  So by the third year it was called provisional accreditation which means our graduates could take the Florida bar.

E.T.: 40:28
P It’s interesting though, you’re in a period still where the economic status of the University is not very sound. And all of a sudden, you are talking about building a law school, which is expensive. And I know Fischler was very reluctant because he’s the one who is responsible for the financial soundness of the institution and he was thinking “We can’t afford to build a law school, we’re barely afloat as is.” And my understanding is that Schure said, “Build it, I’ll pay for it.”

E Well, it didn’t work out, I don’t think he had to pay for it. But he stood behind it, and also he said “Now you are going to start getting some tuitions, with students.”

P Well, that was a really wise choice. Not only did you lack prestige and commitment to help the community, you’re going to get tuition which is something that the University may have used.

E And there again, we did not have to build a law building then. We moved into I believe the Parker Building. And, divided up and had classes there.

P And there was one of the original problems with the ABA, because they, the library, the physical atmosphere…

E You had to have so many books in a library.

P So you didn’t have what you needed.

E No.

P How did you go about getting accredited? This is not an easy process.
It took three years, working very closely with the ABA, and they worked closely with us and were interested. And, a lot of law firms donated books. I know my law firm donated I think the Florida Statutes and such.

So, this is going to be eventually called The Center for the Study of Law. It’s going to be established in 1974. You’re going to be Chairman of this Board of Governors.

I went out and got some local lawyers. The leading lawyers, from the leading law firms to become members of the Board of Governors.

And in the process of setting up the law school, you had to hire a dean, you had to hire faculty. What is intriguing about this, in order to get accredited, this has to be traditional. You have to have tenure.

I explained it to them. Also you had to have tenure, and we had a policy of no tenure. We had to do the tenure.

All of a sudden now, we’ve got sort of a hybrid university. You start out…

It’s a tradition, and a non-tradition.

It seems to me, that has been one of the successes of the University. You’ve been able to modify and change when you had to, to maintain to some degree the original concept, but to make adjustments as you would along to keep the school functioning and make it progress.

Exactly.

Now, as you went through the process of choosing a law dean, did you have a select committee for that, and how did you choose.
It was primarily it was that Dr. Fischler and I, we went up to New York, to the Association of Law Schools Deans, at the Waldorf Astoria and we interviewed various people and we ended up with the Dean of Notre Dame’s European School, or something. He came down, I can’t remember his name, I imagine you have it.

I have it but I can't find it right here.

I think he died last year. He, it was up to him to hire the faculty. He went out and got a very good faculty.

There again, that’s a tricky business. When you're taking on a law school that's not accredited, and really doesn’t have the facilities.

It was tricky for someone to even come here, not knowing whether they could take the bar and it was tricky for a faculty member to come, so everybody was just willing to take a risk.

And that is again consistent to the history of the school.

Right. Taking a risk.

Taking a risk. Believing that ultimately this will work out. Hoping. Obviously it’s more than that. You wouldn’t commit to a job, give up a job where you already had tenure, unless you assumed that somehow...

Of course being in Fort Lauderdale helps to get faculty.

Right. That’s always. If you’ve been in Wichita, Kansas that might not have been quite as easy. Now, as you started the Institution, it’s interesting to note that after the initial dean, all of the future deans were
selected by the faculty. Not by the administration. But I assumed that the administration would have to sign off or approve on that.

E Right. At one point we had acting deans, two members of the faculty became acting deans that did not work out well.

P No, that never does.

E And being a dean of a law school is a very difficult position.

P Oh yes. When you started this, did you have any sense that it would grow to the size that it is today?

E The University?

P No, the Law School.

E Yes. I thought it was a reasonable size.

P And one of the things was, that there weren’t at that time, many law schools in the state.

E No. We were filling the need.

P You were filling a need. FSU didn’t have a law school yet. A&M didn’t have a law school yet. So, in South Florida, you had Miami but not too many law schools in the southern part of the State. Everybody saw that as a potentially successful venture. As you got into the building process, explain how we end up with the current building and the current name of that building.

E The two names. The first name is Goodwin, Leo Goodwin. Mr. Goodwin had a foundation.

P He was Geico.
Insurance. Geico, that's right. He had his own foundation. They pledged 15 million dollars. Then they went back on the pledge and there was a lawsuit. They were forced to give, come forth with the money. The lawyer for that foundation made an agreement with me, and they just never lived up to it. So we had to go to court.

I want to come back to that. Let me get to the process so that the current building is named after both Goodwin and Shepherd.

And then Shepard Broad came forth with enough money so it's the school is named after him and the building is named after Goodwin.

Initially Goodwin had given the money, so it was named after Goodwin. And then Shepherd Broad came in and gave additional funding.

That's right. So the Law School is named for him, and the building is named for Goodwin.

Okay. And then I understand, I can't remember where I read this, that they also named one of the dorms after Goodwin. Because they felt like he may have not been real happy with just having the building named after him.

I don't remember that. The foundation is still in existence.

Yes. Let's go to that then. What had happened was, and I think that this is really a kind of unusual set of circumstances. But as they were able to initially, the Leo Goodwin Senior Foundation, which consisted of his son, his wife, and a secretary. Which was an interesting group. They had initially made a charitable gift, and the figure varies from time to time. I
saw 16 million, but it could have been 15 because the value of the trust varied. A considerable sum of money, which was to be given primarily to Nova University. Now, Della-Donna was the attorney for the trust.

E Alphonse Della-Donna.

P Talk about what transpired once he got involved in the process.

E I think he just changed his mind and he wanted to go somewhere else and that would be 16 million he was not going to be handling anymore.

P The argument that he made, and other people made, is that Nova sold out to NYIT. NYIT controls it. It's a New York company, it is not a local community institution, therefore it’s not a local charity, and therefore we can break the trust.

E That was his theory.

P Not very legally sound, I wouldn't think.

E There was something the community could understand.

P The process that you go through is just extraordinary. You end up having to go to litigation. I understand that when the board met, there was quite a bit of discussion about this. “We don’t want to litigate, maybe we should make a compromise.”

E Universities rarely go to court to enforce a pledge. But this one was so large.

P It was essential, wasn’t it? This was a make or break one.

E It’s the only time we’ve ever been to court on a pledge.

P Was it worth it worth the process?
Yes it was. It cost us a million dollars in attorney fees.

I noticed that Della-Donna’s attorney fees were one million dollars.

Probably. I don’t know whatever became to him.

He was disbarred.

I forget why.

He was charged. The bar charged him with misrepresenting his clients, making decisions that favored him personally.

Excessive fees, I believe was another.

They did mention excessive fees, but the court decided that they could not get those fees back because that was a contract between the trust and the lawyer. Although they thought the fees were excessive, they didn’t get them back. The court thought that they didn’t have the authority.

He had a big downfall.

Talk a little about your relationship with him. I know you met with him several times. He was apparently very obstreperous, very difficult to deal with, and this is something that goes on for two years.

I can’t even remember what the agreements were but each time we would meet the agreement, he would change it and add something else. Finally we just said no.

At one point, the trustees rescinded the money that was given to Nova. He had persuaded them that that was not the case. That’s essentially why you had to go to court. In other words, and I think Dr. Fischler mentioned this, if you had not gone to court, you would have never got the money.
E That’s for Schure.

P It took two years. And a million dollars, that you didn’t have.

E It took a lot of people’s time.

P This a case where for two years you had at the University, a lot of people who couldn’t start new research projects. It limited what the University could do while you are fighting over this money.

E We had a good outcome.

P At one point, the judge who ruled in your favor said you can’t make restrictions to an unrestricted gift. If it’s unrestricted, you can’t say you need to take off certain millions and send it here or there. My sense of it, having read all of these documents is that basically Della-Donna wanted to control all of the money for a long time so that he would get his legal fees. This was from what I can tell, from what the Bar Association, which of course disbarred him, said that that was his motivation all along. And that he did not represent…

E It was sort of obvious.

P You dealt with him on a one to one basis. Sometimes it’s hard to look at documents and then note from your interaction the kind of person he was.

E I never accused him of that, of course, because we were negotiating. Finally, we just, as you say, they rescinded it, that was it, so we went to court.
It must have been difficult, if he kept changing, it was obvious that he
didn’t intend to make an easy go of this. Of course he’s still getting paid
the longer you debate this.

I think he kept making more conditions that we couldn’t meet.

There were several conditions that would have ultimately changed the
whole focus of the University. He wanted to move the Law School that
was one thing he talked about. I think Fischer said well, you can take the
faculty but the buildings are ours. That’s a pretty major attempt to
undermine the University, the Governor of the Law School, that’s a major
loss at the University. So it’s finally settled in 1978. Then, you get the
money, and then at that point what do you do with that money?

You’re going to have to ask Abe Fischler exactly what we did, tomorrow.
Some went into endowment, but not a great deal.

Probably out of 16 million, by the time the million was paid, legal fees
________, probably about 8 million left that went into endowment. So,
some of the money was paid back to NYIT, bills, all sorts of back taxes.

We were always in financial trouble. Now we’re not, that’s why it’s a
plea Schure now to be on the board.

But this was the turning point.

Right. Definitely.

NYIT save you. This opened up the University for extension. Let me go
back to one little issue in the middle of all of this discussion. While the
discussion was going on, ABA was here for accreditation. I think Della-
Donna must have known that he held a trump card because once you had the money from the Goodwin Trust, you could build a new law building. ABA was saying, where’s your library, where’s your building? I think he may have used the fact that the ABA was here and I know Dr. Fischler was highly agitated, because it’s a very delicate process to get accredited. And then you got into this mix, this lawsuit.

E We were telling the ABA, we hope we are going to get the 15 million and they said well, let us know. But they were very cooperative.

P Obviously, I think they wanted to make it happen. What did Ferraro have to do with all this?

E Ray Ferraro was a local attorney. I was the first Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Law School. August Paoli was the second, he was a trustee. Then, we went to Ray Ferraro, who was the head of the Florida Bar, a very well-known lawyer. We asked him if he would, because he had no connection with the University then, would he come on and be the next Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Law School. In that position he was an ex-officio, a member of the Board of Trustees. When his term came up, then we named him as member of the Board of Trustees itself.

P So he played a major part in the development of the Law School ________. 

E Yes.
P  That was his first connection with the University. And of course then he’s on the Board of Trustees and later becomes President. I have the figures here, 16 million was ultimately what was received from the Goodwin Trust.

E  Geico went up, of course.

P  Geico went up, yes. Again, might have been well to hold on to it. Up until about a year and a half ago. They paid NYIT four-plus million, they sold some of the stock worth six or seven million, and they were left with something like seven million dollars. So, again that’s the sort of thing that enabled the school to expand and continue. In 1985 you are going to have the dissolution of this arrangement with New York Institute of Technology. Talk a little bit about what happened then, why it was dissolved, and why 1985.

E  The University was becoming a success, and we knew that the local people wanted it to be a local university, so we wanted to separate ourselves from the New York Institute of Technology. We knew that we had some obligations to them, and it’s my recollection that we paid back five hundred thousand.

P  The way it was set up is that NYIT got 50 percent of the gross. Initially, 50 percent of the gross was not very much. But once the University began to expand, it was five hundred thousand dollars a year. In other words, it was maybe two hundred thousand and now it’s expanded to five hundred thousand. Fischler’s looking, these guys are getting five hundred thousand and they’re not contributing anything. It was no cost to NYIT. They were
getting five hundred thousand, and Fischler believed that we needed to be a separate university. We were developing now on our own.

E He and Dr. Schure were very close to each other. It put him in a very difficult position.

P He says over and over again, he says Schure saved this University twice. We wouldn't be having these discussions were it not for him. At this point, it seems as though it was better for the relationship to end.

E That's what the Board wanted, very much.

P That’s what I’m saying. It came more from the Board than from Fischler.

E Right. It was sort of directed to make it happen.

P What was the basic argument that the Board of Trustees made to end this?

E It was becoming uneven and unfair. What we were having to contribute back to the New York Institute was excessive.

P Over a period of time, really beginning in around 1981, there is a rather extraordinary development of new programs. Florida School of Professional Psychology, a program in clinical psychology, Master’s Degree program in Language and Speech Pathology. The development of the Oral School. Talk a little about how that happened.

E The Oral School was a local school for the deaf. They decided that they wanted to be connected to the University. From that, they became the Baudhuin School. From the deaf, came speech pathology, but now it's
really a school for autistic children. It’s developed into that because that is what the need was. It’s almost exclusively that.

P: And now, with a new building and quite advanced research, sort of groundbreaking research.

E: In fact, my granddaughter is impaired, and her mother called down here and said, “Have you ever heard of the Baudhuin School?” And I said, “Yes, I’m on the Board of Directors.” And they moved down here for three years, and they put that child in the school and did a great deal with her. So I’ve been interested in it.

P: And the new facility is apparently very impressive. So you see these new programs, but what I see from the beginning of this institution is the idea of long-range education. Where have the essence of the funding in the early years came from was the beginning of these off-campus programs in education so that on nights and weekends, principals and superintendents of schools could come.

E: That was a very innovative program, and very opposed in most of the states that we went into. Now it’s mainstream.

P: Everybody does it.

E: Yeah. But we were some of the first to do it. Also, it was a source of income for us.

P: Huge source of income at that point, because, I mean, you had lots of opportunities all over the country to expand the program.
E: We got a law firm in Washington that helped us through it. Because we had to go state-after state to get it approved.

P: Well I know specifically that the state of North Carolina sued and the argument was that it was their ground, that you were coming in and taking the students that should have been going to their state university, and the court ruled that education was not—

E: And Arkansas tried to keep us out because we were not teaching Arkansas history. They tried everything.

P: Well, these are, as I understand it, what we call field-based programs.

E: Or external degrees, I think they call it.

P: Yeah. And so, everything essentially is done in Newark, New Jersey or wherever the place happens to be, and then in the summer, there is an institute for one week or two weeks at Nova.

E: And in the meantime, you connect with your teacher through a computer. We’re always supposed to be available.

P: And so that’s the next element here, is the electronic classroom, so what you’re doing in essence now is they can see each other, interact with each other, not just on the computer, but it really is an interactive process. And part of what goes on at this university from the very beginning is the development of technology. And in fact, I remember looking when you first came to Nova, the first 17 graduate students, the only language they had to know was __________. But you had to have that language.
But they call us the most wired University in America. And also in the Law School, very wired over there.

But that was the concept from the beginning. In other words, distance learning brought the development of technology. So you’re going to have the evolution of a huge computer center, and that has evolved over a long period of time, and so on the Board of Trustees, as these developments were coming about, were you enthusiastic about it? I do know that some members of the Board of Trustees were not all that happy about it.

You know, I went along with everything that was proposed.

But there were some who thought that you were going too fast?

Some people wanted to keep it at the most a hundred students, was the idea. We would never be more than one hundred, and of course, we’re how many thousands now?

What is the view of the Board of Trustees in the mid-eighties about undergraduates? During this time, there is still a limited number of undergraduates. I think at some point, the people in the Trustees say we need more.

I, in particular, question the quality of the undergraduate. Because I knew that all the undergraduate schools were very highly qualified. I questioned what the undergraduate was going to be like. I always said we’ve got to work on that. A lot of them were adjunct professors. People in the community that came out.

Most of it was night courses, for undergraduates?
E: I think it started that way, a lot of commuter students and it just wasn’t of the same level, in my opinion, as the graduate schools.

P: Was that the idea behind Nova College? To create an undergraduate liberal arts?

E: It was supposed to be Junior and Senior and then it went from, as you say now, cradle to the grave.

P: But do have in the back of your mind, the object ultimately of increasing the number of undergraduates?

E: Yes, and the quality. We have a university school, which is very highly qualified.

P: As undergraduates at Nova, you needed a larger number. I can remember at one point, in the mid-eighties, there were something like 97 admitted, and 24 showed up. What the University did at that point, they had an open house, and they got all of the administrators together. “We need to expand, we need to advertise this school, and we need to attract more students, better students. We just can’t assume.

E: Everybody wants to go to our Law School, our Medical School, and Oceanographic. But there was no ground swell for the college. Even the university school students that were graduating were not coming to the University.

P: They were going elsewhere. A very low percentage would be coming to Nova.

E: That’s what we want to change, and we’re working on it.
P: Still in progress. What would be the admission level of students? What would they have to have?

E: I don’t know that. In the college, the aptitude and such, I don’t know that. I have the feeling, before it was almost open admissions. Which is very unlike our graduate schools.

P: Exactly the opposite. Highly selective and not selective at all.

E: We do have these situations where we admit some people, if they’re successful in the College, they automatically go to the Law School and they can automatically go to the Medical School. But that’s a small group of highly gifted students. The rest of them, I don’t know.

P: They call it the five or six year plan, as they take their undergraduate, they’re moving on to the Law School as well. But, in the end, as you look at Nova today, the object is to create an undergraduate qualified class of 20,000, is there a number in mind?

E: I don’t know the number.

P: But this now has completely shifted away from the original idea.

E: It just grew like ________.

P: I don’t mean this in a negative sense, it’s sort of entrepreneurial. You see areas where you can develop, a law school off campus, med school, dental school.

E: That’s exactly what happened. You see a need and you fill it. You’re going to make some money on it.

P: All of these areas are underserved, if I can put it that way.
E: We saw a need and so we created something.

P: You’re in a huge population base in South Florida.

E: It was not the intent of the original founders of the University. I think that they would be pleased. You know, they’re all dead, except for me.

P: You’re one of the few people, you and Dr. Fischler, who’ve really seen it from the beginning. You were here even before he came. I’m Schure it’s very gratifying to look at what’s happened over the years.

E: The early days were so difficult. Now it’s a pleasure to go to a Board of Trustees meeting. I go and listen, and I don’t have any trouble.

P: You don’t have to write any more checks. If we go back to this Educational Leaders Program, which is interesting to me. Once this thing started, you can get a Doctorate in Public Administration, and the Educational Leaders, mainly elementary and secondary school principals, superintendents, that sort of thing. It just exploded. Early on, this is 1973, there were 817 participants in 23 states. At that point it was half of Nova’s budget.

E: And people were trying to stop us.

P: But this was one of those institution-saving decisions. Without the money from that, and this is 1973, when it was really tough to survive. That is again part of this niche, and I think Fischler saw that niche and filled it. The down side of all of this is that Nova gets the reputation as a diploma mill. How do you deal with that?
E: You just do. You just show them they’re wrong. No one calls us that anymore, of course. Because in the community, I have the feeling that we are highly regarded.

P: That has taken some time though. In the beginning, how did you deal with that?

E: Actually, we just had to live with it.

P: You didn’t go out on a public relations campaign?

E: As much as we could, we would send out Dr. Fischler. That was just one person. We had public relations departments. In the development department, we always had bad situations there. We just had to live with it. The Law School really completely changed people’s minds. They couldn’t understand what was going on out here.

P: That was critical. In terms of this issue, I remember reading at one point, of all things, the Cincinnati Enquirer had published a very negative article about Nova, and the administration wrote letters and tried to counter that.

E: Is that when we were going into Ohio? I’m not even familiar with that.

P: It’s also interesting to me, that in 1971, that there was an ad in the New York Times for Nova. It got 9,000 responses. There was an effort on the part of the school to try to get its concept before the American public.

Public relations in a school, in its beginning, is obviously critical. As you said, even the local people didn’t know what was going on.

E: I had to explain it to my mother. She would say, “Why are you spending all of your time out there? It’s never going to work.”
P: Another thing that I wanted to mention to you that I found interesting. It seems to me that there’s always been a push at this institution for diversity. One of the first 17 graduate students was an African-American.

E: Have you found these people?

P: No. I don’t know. His name was Leroy Booth. Over a period of time, I don’t know the current statistics, but this institution would produce one of the highest percentages of African-American Ph.D.s and Hispanic Master’s. Partly Hispanics are a large constituency in Broward and Dade counties, but nonetheless, the University has pursued that. I also remember an invitation was extended to Shirley Chisholm. You might remember, she was a congresswoman in New York who was running for President. You also remember that at one point Davie County had fairly significant Klan influence back in the ‘20s and ‘30s. When she was invited there was a great deal of criticism of the University for inviting a person of color to speak on the campus. Nonetheless, it seems to me that under those circumstances there was no backing off, commitment was kept, and that this has been sort of a understated goal of the University from the very beginning.

E: I think so. But the original Trustees were mostly very conservative Republicans.

P: That’s what I was thinking. If I were to characterize the original Board, looking back at the names you gave me, it would be businessmen who really had no experience at running a university.
E: None whatsoever. Not a single one. Well, Charles Forman and the Superintendent. But that was very different from a University.

P: In a way, that’s kind of the remarkable process as well. What also strikes me is the community commitment of this group. A lot of people would have given up. This group stayed with it and kept after this vision, and a lot of it was not to their particular economic benefit. I know you did a lot of legal work for the University pro-bono.

E: Maybe that’s why they chose me at age 29. They found somebody that would do it.

P: You served as Secretary for many years and still are. In order to make this commitment to the community, it takes time away from your practice of law. It’s a commitment of both time and money.

E: When they started the Law School, they needed a professor of taxation, so I came out here and taught. I had the advanced degree from New York University.

P: How long did you teach?

E: Only one semester. It was the hardest job I ever had. I always thought that they had an easy job, and they don’t. You have to stay one chapter ahead of them.

P: Well it’s really hard the first time. It gets easier after you’ve done it a few times.

E: I was spending all my time preparing, and I didn’t have time for my clients.
P: It’s a large commitment. When you look back at the school, someone wrote that the school has in its history taken what he called, and I think this was Ray Ferraro, meaSchured risks. That NYIT was a risk, the Law School was a risk, and the Dental School was a risk.

E: That was a good phrase, meaSchured risk.

P: It was not wildly impractical, but nonetheless, if it did not work out, if it failed, the consequences would have been substantial.

E: If we hadn’t taken the risks, it wouldn’t have survived.

P: It might not have survived anyway. Is this entrepreneurial risk coming from the Board of Trustees? Mainly businessmen?

E: I would say so, but mostly we were led by people like Dr. Fischler and Ray Ferraro now. Just like we bought this country club. We’re losing money. Eventually it will be a good asset.

P: I want to talk about the University School. It started out, as you know, Marilyn Segal at Temple Bethel, she had her own little school.

E: She was Mr. Mailmen’s daughter.

P: This was developed into a very innovative open classroom kind of school. Has that innovation continued to the present?

E: As far as I know, it has. It was so innovative that I didn’t send my own grandson there. I didn’t think he would do well in a school without walls.

P: There’s a difference in each student’s reaction. Some students need more structure.

E: From what their graduates are doing, I think they are doing a very fine job.
P: I want to point out that in 1977, the first law class graduated, and you were awarded an honorary degree at that time from the Law School, which I thought was nice. Another area that is, to me, somewhat essential to this University is overseas programs. Not just long-distance learning in the United States, but overseas programs.

E: I don't know much about that.

P: Obviously, the Board would have had to approve the programs, to have programs in Panama and Jamaica.

E: I think they're in the Far East. Some language schools, and I'm not completely up-to-date with that.

P: There's an M.B.A. school in Panama, for example. Do you see that as an essential part of a modern university, that they must have broad-based curriculum and have strong international exchange programs?

E: Not every university, but it fits into our plan.

P: One other development that comes out, and nobody knows this better than I do, having been at the University of Florida, is the beginning of athletic programs at this University. There's always this temptation, as you start athletic programs, you're going to end up like Florida Atlantic. They want a football team, and then they have to have a stadium. Central Florida had to have a stadium and South Florida, and on and on. Once you get to a certain level of athletics there's this tendency to expand and expand. What's the Board's view of athletics at this University?
E: No football. I’m a product of Emory University. It’s like John Hopkins and Colombia. It’s education that’s important. But we do want small sports. I think they do very well with it.

P: I see that the women’s golf team just won a national championship. Crew, they have baseball and basketball.

E: I have suggested that we might consider the idea of basketball. That’s something you can do on a much smaller budget.

P: They have a baseball team, right? They have some women’s sports. You’re Division Two?

E: I think so. We have wonderful facilities for sports.

P: Is that an element, I have been over to the new facility for physical fitness, which is obviously very important to students. One of the developments that has come along now is that you’ve got the Commons, a new building primarily for graduate students. Over a period of time, I guess there are seven or eight dorms that have been built. But this is still essentially a commuter institution, right? For undergraduates?

E: For undergraduates definitely. But in the graduate schools, not so much. Particularly, I think in the Medical and Dental school is very national.

P: And so are athletics part of the process to sort of get the undergraduate students to have some common ground?

E: Also, they’re expanded greatly in the University School. They have gone into football now, and they’re doing very, very well.

P: Well it’s less cost, I mean University football—you have to build a stadium.
E: Yeah, I’m quite Schure we’ll never go into big time football. But I do think we can do basketball. I’ve talked to Ray about it. I guess we do have basketball, but we play, you know, the small schools.

P: Yeah, yeah. Well, you talk about one, division one basketball—big time basketball. Yeah, you can recruit LeBron James and move right up.

E: Like those small schools in Indiana.

P: Yeah, well, that’s what it takes. You know, a small school can easily get to the top with one or two good recruits. Um, another element that has come along with this university I see, as the university has grown, it has become much more prominent in Broward County. I guess today it has one of the largest employers in Broward County. I wouldn’t know about the fiscal impact—must be a couple hundred million dollars I would think—and then the payroll is probably thirty or forty million dollars. And this is dramatically different from when you started out. Now you have a larger group of people who are working on the campus—who know the campus, who interact with the campus.

E: And Ray has a very good relationship with the county. I’m Schure you’ve heard about the Library.

P: Brilliant idea.

E: And I said it would never work. I said, “You’re never going to get public officials to agree to it.” And they did.

P: A brilliant idea!

E: Mmm-hmm. Very unusual.
P: Very unusual, I don’t know of any other case like it. And this is, as I understand, the largest library in the state of Florida?

E: I believe it.

P: Its very high-tech and the way that the first floor is Broward County Library and its open to the public, it seems to me what you want libraries to do is be available to the public—well used—and they said that’s a good idea. Also, there was a development—and I assume most of this came from the trustees—what we called, what I would call a corporate consortium—that you had relationships with IBM and AT&T, Wachovia, and American Express—whatever, and—

E: —Training their employees?

P: Yeah. And here again, that’s another niche; you can take someone who is in American Express and wants an MBA and can come onto campus nights and weekends, and in turn, AT&T can give you phone service, and they can give you computers and whatever. In other words, it’s a mutually beneficial arrangement. And that has expanded in the last ten or fifteen years?

E: Right.

P: Okay. As we go forward, an interesting development, and maybe you can explain this to me, once NYIT is out, Fischler becomes the CEO as opposed to the president. What’s the difference?
E: The difference is he’s in charge. Before, he was under Dr. Schure. And he had to take directions from Dr. Schure, but Dr. Schure let him go about his business as best he could.

P: But just in terms of the power of the title, a lot of times you’ll see the corporation’s CEO and then the president of the corporation. Most universities have a president as opposed to the title CEO, and my sense of it is that you once again see this University in the entrepreneurial sense, and in reality, he is a CEO.

E: That was the way he was supposed to do it. He was supposed to be the CEO.

P: Okay. The reality as we know it—

E: And Ray is a CEO, but he has George Hanbury—I don’t know if you’ve met him, he’s a very, very fine executive, and he does a great deal of executive work for Ray.

P: Now, what influence does the faculty have on this campus? Is there a faculty senate?

E: I’m Schure there is. You’d have to talk to Ray Ferrero about that. I know they meet in a faculty senate and the deans, but the academic interaction I’m not privy to.

P: There is ultimately going to be an expansion of the University School to Coral Bay, is that right? Somewhere in … Coral Springs.

E: Yeah, but we did away with that.
P: Oh it’s gone now, but at one point, you did develop sort of a satellite campus.

E: Right, yeah, we just felt that it was not needed.

P: Okay. And then the center for the advancement of education, which is now the Fischler Center, is that in North Miami?

E: Mmm-hmm.

P: Why there?

E: It was the location where the medical school was before it merged with us, so we ended up at that building. It would be better to have it here on campus. And we also have a campus—the east campus, and we have a building off of Road 84. And I don’t know what they’re using it for right now. It was the law school.

P: Yeah, and that’s where the old law school was, yeah. There also are some, I guess, satellite campuses like in Orlando—

E: Oh yeah, all around the state.

P: And these are not just educational, they are for all of the courses primarily still graduate? Or are there undergraduate courses as well?

E: I think there are undergraduate as well.

P: Okay. And has that been a successful process?

E: Yes.

P: Talk about the development of the business school. I guess the first major donation was from the Friedt Foundation?
E: I don’t think they came forward with it. I don’t think they did. And he left the Board. He and his brother had some sort of disagreement over whether to do it.

P: Oh I see, okay, well I originally had it down.

E: I may be wrong but I’m quite Schure that the gift was never made.

P: Well let’s talk then about the Horvitz Building. I’ve gotten some different interpretations of what happened. Maybe you can clear it up. There’s some dispute over which president actually got the grant from Horvitz.

E: It was Abe Fischler over a period of years.

P: He started, but the money I guess officially came when Feldman was here, is that right?

E: It could be, but it was Abe Fischler’s—

P: Who raised that money?

E: Mmm-hmm, and Bill Horvitz was on the Board.

P: And so he gave two million for this administrative building. And that seems to me to be a major event. Because people come on to campus, and they want to see a nice building like the Horvitz Building. I mean, it impresses—

E: But it’s too small.

P: It’s too small, of course, but at the time, it was quite a major addition to the campus.

E: Yes it was, and that gift came over from a period of years of cultivation.
P: Schure. Yeah, I know, having talked with Dr. Fischler, it took a long time to get that money, but eventually he did. I think he started out wanting to give one, and Dr. Fischler wanted him to give two.

E: What did it end up at, three? Or did it end up at two?

P: I think it ended up at two. But he had started out at a lower figure, and Fischler kept trying to move him up. And again, the money was needed to do the right kind of business. You don’t want to do as was done previously, build a first floor and not be able to finish a building.

E: He wanted three floors, but he ended up with two.

P: That’s right. Actually, I think he wanted three million, so he could build another floor. Now, once you get this, you also get an expansion from the Rosenthal Center, and you get dining rooms, bookstore, administrative offices, that sort of thing, so the physical evolution of this campus by the 1990’s, it’s really beginning to expand, and to sort of use up all of the original space of 125 acres. And then you get a rather unusual development—the Miami Dolphins training center, and I’ve heard different stories about that, but I’ve heard that Earl Marl, who was the mayor of Davie, was interested, one of the Board of Trustees knew Dan Marino, or knew the Robbie Family—

E: And Dan Marino’s child was in the Baudhuin School. She’s autistic.

P: So there were a lot of connections here. Can you explain how this came about?
They needed a facility. They were, I believe, at Biscayne College, and had outgrown that, and they were looking for a place, and one of our trustees named Jack LaBonte was very instrumental, and I guess Joe Robbie was still the head of the Dolphins at that time, and they liked this location, and a lot of the players lived in this area.

Yeah. The original site was St. Thomas.

Well I guess that’s right.

And the agreement is, and it’s a little confusing to me, that Nova would actually have a bond issue for the building of the facility, but the Dolphins would design it, put in the parking lot, do the architecture work, pay the taxes, and pay back the bond issue, so technically, it did not cost Nova any money. Is that right?

Mmm-hmm. That’s the way I understand it. And it gives us a lot of visibility.

Well that was the whole idea behind it, was it not? Because basically I would not assume that that facility would be used for much other than training, would it?

That’s all. And their business office is there.

Yeah. But you would also have, I think, you lost a couple of soccer fields or something, they replaced those. Has it, I mean, it certainly was probably worth it to you since it didn’t cost the University anything. Was that a good idea in retrospect?

Yes, I think so.
P: I think for people—

E: 'Cause they have exhibition games and it gets people out here. The more people we can get out here, the better.

P: Well in particular at this time.

E: Mmm-hmm.

P: When Nova was still not as well-known as it might have been. And my understanding was that whenever the Dolphins Training Facility was mentioned, it had to be mentioned as being on the Nova Campus.

E: Mmm-hmm.. They don't do that so much anymore; they say “Davie.” But they don't say that much about Nova and they should.

P: But originally, they were designed, and I know when Feldman was president they had a press conference announcing it and they didn't include Nova and he got really upset about it and said whatever you have we need to be there. When they had the ribbon cutting and I think that was in '93 and I wonder now, do they pay rent to Nova? Is it just there facility and Nova has nothing to do with it?

E: I don’t know that. I enjoy taking people out there of course and that’s something they can understand they have the Miami dolphins and have their home offices here

P: I remember when I drove by and I saw the dolphins and I said 'what is this doing out here?' So it does it sort of catches your eye. Now talk about Abraham Fischler as president of this university and his contributions.
E: Well if it was not for him it never would have progressed. He took over from Warren Winstead and it was his idea to make it innovative and different and he’s the one that created various divisions as he saw a need for it, so he was very instrumental… he’s going to meet with you tomorrow I believe?

P: Yes. And how would you rate him as an administrator?

E: A…. A +

P: fundraiser?

E: Mmm-hmm, very good, like he got the Harvard’s money, and that was not easy.

P: [laughter] apparently not.

E: I thought he was great.

P: What are his most important skills?


P: Was it good at hiring administrative staff and hiring…

E: I thought so

P: Obviously as the University gets bigger…. When he first started as Executive Vice President I mean, he did everything, he was head of personnel, he was pay roll, and his job was universal almost

E: And he did not come here to be our president he came here to be a teacher…

P: No, no his idea…

E: It was kind of forced on him.
P: …Yup. Well it turns out to be a good choice. Now he served for 22 years, why do you think he resigned in 1992?

E: I believe he became 65 and he said it’s time to move on, it was voluntary.

P: It was voluntary, he was not asked to step down…

E: No none whatsoever.

P: Was there a requirement that he step down at 65?

E: No

P: Ok

E: He could have stayed longer

P: Well 22 years is a long time to be University President

E: Mmm-hmm, he was ready. And then he ran for the school board of the county so it kept him busy.

P: Well if I may I’ll read from the speech he made when he left office, and he was asked why are you leaving now and this is what he said, that “financially they were in the best position they’d been in years…”

E: His goals were met

P: …. He had six years of in the black which is very nice, the students had increased to 10,000, it was a nationally recognized university, all of the programs had been accredited…

E: And re-accredited.

P: …The buildings had been developed and more were on the way but the physical campus was sort of where he felt it ought to be and he said this, “I left the presidency feeling very satisfied psychologically, emotionally and
intellectually that I left the world a little better than I found it” and I assume you would agree with that…

E: I agree with that.

P: Let me ask you about another individual, James Farquhar

E: He was the one I told you was a landscape architect in New York, he came down here and bought a great deal of land west of here and was a sod farmer, which is a big business down here, everybody sods their land, and he became the first chairman of the board, I believe, let’s see…

P: I think that’s right…

E: And he was extremely interested in the university and its direction and gave quite a bit of land and quite a bit of money

P: And ultimately the Nova college is called Farquhar school, and I’ve heard people say, probably as much as anybody else, he was…

E: The big three are Farquhar, Fischler and Ferrero

P: And that sometimes Farquhar is not given his due because people are not aware of…

E: They forget you fairly soon

P: [laughter]

E: And he moved up to Delray and once he was retired he was not as active but he was extremely important to the school

P: The hiring of Steven Feldman, you were on the trustees committee, why did you decide on him?

E: I didn’t.
P: You were not in favor of his hire?
E: No, I just was not impressed but the majority recommended him, but I was not in that majority
P: Where was Dr. Fischler on the hire?
E: Where was he? I don’t know. I didn’t discuss it with him. I think he’d met with all of the trustees so it was kind of a full board decision, and he was on the board of directors of the furniture company Ethan Allen…
P: That’s right, Ethan Allen…
E: …and had quite a background in Western Connecticut….
P: Western Connecticut University he was one of their presidents…
E: …And one of our members Harry Gampel had worked with him, he was a benefactor of that school, he recommended him
P: And he had a P.H. D. in business from CCNY so he had very good credentials…
E: He tried…
P: He had been a sitting university person…
E: Right. It was a public school though.
P: That’s right. That’s always an interesting mix when you take someone from public school to private school it’s a whole different world, than you take to private school; you don’t have to go through Tallahassee to get your money [laughter] and get programs approved. What were his achievements? I know one thing he did that he felt was very important and I can see the design of this, was to improve the landscape of this
university. I mean Schure came down here one time and he said it looks like a poverty….

E: …No he said, this speaks poverty

P: [laughter]

E: And it was, but the local Davie people are very active at the university and A.D. Griffen who’s a landscaper, he’s the one that’s done the most of the_______ it’s a beautiful campus now but it looked like an airfield for many, many years

P: And according to Feldman at least that money was private raised it wasn’t out of the generally operating funds of the university and I can also understand the significance of that, if you ever had students visiting colleges to decide where to attend, when they go to the University of Virginia, [laughter] they’re apt to ________ a beautiful campus it makes a difference, you know to parents, the people who come to campus, if it’s run down, if it doesn’t look like its well-kept…

E: It was run down.

P: Well and people argue that that’s a waste of money but…

E: No it was not…. His achievement though was that it got him the merger of a medical school into the university

P: And he would have the end part with the dolphins training facility it would have opened under his presence

E: I believe so

P: Ok. One of the things he talked about, and he’s a business person
E: Have you talked to him? Are you getting this from his notes or what?

P: His papers are here and his notes and I’ve read through them and I’ve just gone through all the documents there and he did interviews with the sun central and things like that so you can just pick out various bits and pieces.

E: I see

P: He said ‘the business of education is business, the culture was a corporate culture’ and I think this follows on a somewhat even line through the philosophy of the school. “We’re builders we have an entrepreneur mission, if you manage things well you will succeed, and therefore he saw that the school needed… it had seven major characteristics of a successful university; quality programs, flexibility, which again has always been a part of the school, sophisticated technology, diversity, entrepreneurial, efficiently manage and global, and those are points we’ve talked about and his argument was that we just need to expand that, we’ve needed more infrastructure, he wanted more buildings, he wanted dorms, he wanted technology, so he came here thinking that the university was on the right track, he wanted to expand that, another thing he mentioned was he wanted to make the institution user friendly, he wanted more press coverage, he wanted more expansion of the undergraduate college, he said he wanted to expand the size of the college by one third. Now obviously his tenure was short, but he did not accomplish most of those goals, why not?
E: He was more of a caretaker, none of those goals… but he did shepherd the medical school, and he just didn’t seem to be an extremely strong leader, he was a very personable person, he and his wife, and he became very friendly with Jim Farquhar, that’s put him in a very unusual position, so Jim kept saying, “let’s give him one more year” and I think we gave him one more year and he finally said ok, that’s… things are not working out

P: Were the trustees during this period in time, mixed about his achievements some people thought he was doing ok…

E: I think so…. But it was only ok which is not enough

P: Well again he’s following sort of a…

E: Yeah it was very difficult…

P: Yeah whoever succeeds…

E: And he didn’t become well known in the community at all

P: Was that a failure?

E: Yes, I think so.

P: He didn’t get out into the community enough, ok, well let’s talk about the merger, the story I read was that Morton Terry was the head of South Eastern…

E: …He was a one man show.

P: And this was a medical school of Osteopathy, and for the record, would you define or explain Osteopathy?

E: I can’t.

P: (Laughter) I was hoping you could.
E: And there again, I had a client that changed her will because her husband was an M.D. and she wanted nothing to do with Osteopathy, because in the old days, it was just a step above being a chiropractor, but it’s very different now. They get the very same medical training. I believe the only difference is I believe they can do more than just being a medical doctor. They have some different theories of adjustment.

P: That’s right, there’s alternative options.

E: But they can go to any hospital and intern, so it’s supposed to be a very fine medical school. But there were reservations because it was a school of osteopathy.

P: And an initial story that comes to me is at Feldman’s inauguration, Terry scribbled on a program that we ought to merge.

E: That we ought to talk about it. He wanted to be part of a University and not a separate school in North Miami.

P: Well, and from his perspective, that was a very smart decision. I mean, they were successful, they were making money.

E: And they had $60 million in the bank.

P: Yeah, they were doing well, and from the point of view of Nova, this is a radical change, because health care per se had not been part of the equation at this point.

E: Not in the vision at all.
P: Not envisioned at all in the beginning, and so what was the process that we go through here? I understand that one of the point men was David Rush.

E: His son was a graduate of the school.

P: Right.

E: And he was on the board of trustees of the school of osteopathy. So he was the one who pushed it.

P: And then, from Nova's point of view, I think Ovid Lewis was the one who handled a lot of the negotiations along with Feldman?

E: I remember Joel Burman, who is now our council. I was not in those negotiations at all.

P: This is a very young school—this is a school whose first class was in 1981. I mean it hadn’t been in existence in a very long time. It was much younger even than Nova. And I think that the key here—it was an unknown quantity. And you were a little—at least the Board was a little leary in the beginning—osteopathy, do we need them?

E: And is it going to cost us money? We found out that it was not going to cost us money. That helped a great deal, yeah. And then we became acquainted with Dr. Terry and some of his subordinates, and we checked around, another close friend of mine’s son went there, and he was an MD, and he recommended it highly. And one of our Board members was Zachariah Zachariah, who is a very famous heart surgeon here, and we
went to him, and we said, “Are they well trained now?” and he said, “Yes, now. Not before.”

P: Yeah. Well, there’s an evolution here, you see. When you started out, it was a little iffy I would think.

E: There’s still people who would not go to a D.O. They want an M.D.

P: The merger is highly complicated.

E: But temporary.

P: But just off the top, the faculty status; what do you do with the Board of Trustees? Do you merge them? Do you have separate ones?

E: A number of their Board became on our Board for a period of years, which is up now.

P: And now they’re two separate boards, is that right?

E: They have an advisory board just like the law school, but the Board of Trustees is over the Medical Center.

P: The sale of the Miami Campus, you had to build a new building. Endowment, health benefits, overhead, salaries, fringe benefits…

E: It’s a big operation.

P: Huge! What do you do to guarantee the employees their jobs if you’re going to merge? How do you take care of all of that?

E: If Dr. Terry was in favor of it, everybody on their campus was in favor of it. He founded it himself.

P: But the issue was not so much with Terry as it was with your board.

E: Mmm-hmm. Will it work? And the $60 million helped.
P: Yeah (laughs). That’s a very persuasive argument.

E: And we were very impressed with Dr. Terry, whose since died.

P: Was the name ever an issue? Did you have problems deciding what you were going to call it?

E: Some people did. There was an opposition to adding “Southeast” to our name. I was all for it. I said it enhances the image to say “Nova Southeastern.”

P: Yeah, but some of the traditionalists didn’t want to change.

E: No, they didn’t want to change anything.

P: But that, was that a deal breaker?

E: No, just people went along with it.

P: In other words, it was not a demand by Terry that you had to include the name.

E: Oh yeah, not a demand by him, but no one opposed it.

P: I see, okay.

E: Voting-wise. There were some who opposed it.

P: Now, what you find here is their endowment was $35 million, they had annual profits of $3 million—

E: So I’m wrong, it’s not $60 million, its $35 million?

P: Well, I’m not clear on that.

E: I just remember the figure sixty.

P: Because I think it amounted to that because they agreed to build the new building on campus and build a parking garage, so that’s $30 million.
E: So maybe the rest of it is still in the endowment, I'm not Schure.

P: Yes, I think that's it, but I think the total amount of money—since they agreed to build a parking garage over there, so that's $30 million dollars, and it would be built on this campus, right? And the other thing they did was they protected the employees from both sides so that nobody would technically lose their jobs. And then Terry would be chancellor of the Health Sciences Division. It's part of the University, but he is much like the dean of a law school—a separate authority. And that's one of the things that I find intriguing about this campus—if this campus, according to what I've been told, most of these groups operate pretty independently. I mean, it's not like Ferraro is over at the Law School all the time telling them what to do, that most of these entities have their own budget, can hire and fire people, can control personality issues, that sort of thing. Which is not like, let's say the University of Florida where everything is under the President of the University has influence.

E: As long as they're succeeding, they're pretty much left alone.

P: (Laughs) If they don't succeed, then you make some changes. And in the beginning, some students, if you graduate you have an option of what you want your degree to be from—Nova or Southeastern—as you go through the merger process.

E: With the existing students, right.

P: Yeah, with the existing students who came through? And part of the problem was Southeastern had no pension plans, no retirement plans, you
know, again with this merger, as a lawyer, you understand the details that had to be worked out. Now, in general, how did the faculty at Nova view this arrangement? Were they in favor of it?

E: I’m not Schure. I’m not Schure. Because it didn’t fit into the overall plan of the university. It was going to be very, very separate. And then from there it went into a dental school you know, which is doing very well.

P: In fact, that was the state of the dental school—

E: And I was opposed to that because I—you know, being from Emory, they closed their dental school because there was not that much of a demand for dentists before dental hygiene, but this one was done very very well.

P: Well it was the first dental school built in several years, and it was state-of-the-art when it was built, and the same thing, here again, talking to Ovid Lewis about that, he said, “Oh, this is a real gamble. This is going to cost a lot of money to build a dental school, you know, it’s not just something you throw up, and it’s a long time commitment, it’s going to take a long time—“

E: As I said, Emory is one of the richest schools in America, and if they couldn’t do it—

P: That’s what I mean. He said, “Would we get the income out of that that would enable us to sustain this dental school? We wouldn’t want to build something that’s going to cost us money.” But it turns out again that it was a pretty good decision.

E: And there’s great demand for it for some reason.
P: And how influential was Ray Ferraro in this deal? He would have been Chairman of the Board of Trustees at this time with Southeastern.

E: I just think that he was in favor of it but he was not pushing it. It was David Rush who was pushing it.

P: Okay, did Ferraro—

E: He never vocally opposed it. But I don't remember him being in the forefront of it.

P: What was influential here was that all of these new institutions, dental school, pharmacy school, school of optometry, all were accredited. Here again, without the accreditation, it would be a disaster.

E: And we wouldn't have done it from scratch.

P: No, no, no! Having already had the developed institutions, then it was more easily achieved. But even under those circumstances—

E: And another thing, they do a great deal of service to the community with their clinics. So it's very popular with the local community.

P: Well that's another element I see with this university. Over a period of time, there are a lot of programs that are devoted to community needs. There is, for example, in the law school they now have disability law, elder law, there are programs that deal with poverty, mental health, public health, all of these have come out of this desire on the part of the university to meet the needs of the community as well as to provide a quality education for the students. Who was the instigator of all of these new programs?
E: From the beginning, it was Abe Fischler.

P: But some of these programs are developed after he left, that’s right?

E: Ray Ferraro, right. So those two are the innovators. Feldman and Ovid just kept it going.

P: Okay, so talk a little bit about Ovid Lewis, who had been the executive vice president, and when Feldman leaves, he becomes the interim president.

E: He asked for the position, and he was upset that they used the word “interim.” He said that it sent the wrong message to his faculty and deans that he’s interim. So he had a point there, so we took the word “interim” out.

P: So he was finally made officially president, but it took a period of time, it was not immediate.

E: Not immediate. And he had a good relationship with the board, more than the community. He didn’t relate that well with the community.

P: Why not a full search?

E: Because it happened right away, and that’s why it was interim, and we decided not to have a search, that we were satisfied with him. Because he was very, very smart, and had a good relationship with each board member.

P: As president. His commitment was to a large degree more on the academic side. He was certainly in favor of more distance learning, and I
think, when I talked to him, about cutting across disciplines. That this school had to interact better with its various entities—

E: He had a point there.

P: There was not this core element of this university, everyone seemed to be operating independently with one another, and he thought that the school needed that essence—

E: He tried with the law school when he was the dean was to interact with law and psychology, law and medicine, but he was more interested in developing what we had than starting off in other directions.

P: And in fact, and I’ll use his term, “We need more cooperation and synergy with each program being the best it can be and cross-fertilization.” SO he went back and sort of re-organize the undergraduate school and expand that and get more people around. And one of the critical aspects to me of the development of this university was the library, and that occurred on his watch.

E: You mean the new library?


E: Maybe it was his idea, but Ray Ferrero was the one who made it into fruition. Because there was a lot of politics involved.

P: But in terms of the planning, began in 1997, and this is when Lewis is president and Ferraro is chairman of the board, and from what you are saying, the Library came more from the Board than from the President’s office, if we can say it that way.
E: When they did mention it, I kept saying, “It’s not going to happen.” But it did.

P: Why not?

E: Well usually when you get politics involved, and we had to go through the county commission, and we had to share revenue, share facilities, share the parking lot, I said you can’t do it politically, but Ray did it.

P: So the difficulty was going to be with Broward?

E: Right, with the County Commission.

P: So this is again a problem with a private school dealing with a private entity.

E: Yeah. It’s not going to mesh. So it was a masterful job.

P: So if you do it yourself, you have to bother with all of that, but to get them involved. So a certain amount of money had to come from Broward County to carry this off?

E: Mmm-hmm. But you’re going to have to—for the mechanics of it—you’re going to have to talk to Ray Ferraro. Because we share our revenue, but the x number of dollars you’ll have to talk to Ray Ferraro about.

P: Okay, but the big contributor was Sherman.

E: Oh, that came after the fact. Alvin Sherman from Hollywood.

P: Right, so the building had already been built.

E: Mmm-hmm.

P: But it is now named for him.

E: He was a philanthropist from Hollywood.
So under his watch, Lewis, the medical complex opens up in 1997, that begins, and the planning for the dental school opens up. So he was involved in quite a few new developments. Also, he was very interested in the overseas centers. I know he went to Panama for one of the graduation ceremonies, you thought that was important. My sense of it was that he was not as involved in the community as much as Fischler or Ferraro.

No, not at all. Many people said, “Who is he?”

Yeah, I guess his personality didn’t lend itself to—

Yeah, very quiet type of personality.

How would you in the end—oh, one other point. In the end, he was also concerned about Gerontology, a significant move toward improving the commitment toward improving the curriculum in gerontology, and also, he wanted to set up a master planning council. One of the problems from Sachs was saying the University with grants didn’t have a good system to evaluate the grants and appropriately spend the money that it was kind of a haphazard system where some people got it and some didn’t.

That’s because it was so new. We never had it before.

That’s right. So somebody needed to organize a central decision-making body that could look at the grants and have some standard for allocating the money. Otherwise, it was not very efficient and they probably lost grants because they didn’t take the right measurements to organize it.

How would you evaluate his presence?
E: He was efficient. But I had the feeling that he was tiring of it. He wanted the position, he did what he wanted, but I spoke to another trustee, and I said, "Do you get the idea that maybe he’s kind of bored with the whole job and he’s ready to give it up?" He lost his enthusiasm.

P: It seems to me from what little I know that he was quite an intellectual, and he was a man of ideas and concepts.

E: An egghead.

P: Well, that’s a nice term. I wish I could qualify from that terminology. But one of the things, if I can remember—

E: And from the Board meetings, he was very theoretical and gave long dissertations about what we were doing, and wouldn’t come to the point immediately.

P: A good example of this is he wanted to set up an institute of learning and pedagogy to analyze how people learn and how people learn at the university. He kept saying that people didn’t need information, they needed knowledge, and how you get from information to knowledge. So I mean, in this sense, he was advanced in his theoretical thinking, but in another sense, it’s not quite as committed to the day-to-day activities from running a university.

E: The first thing he did was he fired a very popular member of the administration, and I’m trying to remember his name. He now writes for the Ft. Lauderdale news, and he formed the speaker’s bureau, and he was extremely popular with all of the society mavens in Ft. Lauderdale,
and when he fired this man, they all became very upset and wrote all of the board members that he should be fired rather than the other.

P: Was this Don Riggs? Joseph Harbough?

E: No, this was a man who was in public relations.

P: Okay, well he fired those two as well and got some negative feedback about that. But again, that’s one of the tough jobs that a president has, to come in and reorganize an administrative team.

E: So the only thing that a lot of the people in Ft. Lauderdale knew about was that he fired this person who was head of the speaker’s bureau, and he would meet with all of them, and they were extremely upset.

P: And by the way, the speaker’s bureau has had remarkable success. I mean Henry Kissinger had been here, Jimmy Carter, I think the Dalai Lama got a degree here.

E: Oh yeah. That was interesting. They told us not to touch him—that he was so holy. So I didn’t touch him, but he came and hit me on the back and asked me how I was doing. He was very personable.

P: It’s okay if he touches you?

E: Yeah.

P: Just you can’t—it’s like the queen. You can’t touch her.

E: He was a very interesting man.

P: Extraordinary person, yeah. And again, it seems to me, and when I was here last, George McGovern was here at the law school giving a talk, and one thing a university must do in order to enable the community to learn
about what goes on in the world is to invite people like Henry Kissinger, Jimmy Carter, and George McGovern to come give speeches on campus, and it is important because it gets the community involved.

E: Last month, they had Dr. Kevorkian to come. That was very controversial.

P: I would think so, but that’s okay. Because a University has a—

E: He had just gotten out of jail.

P: But doesn’t the University have the responsibility to invite someone like Kevorkian?

E: Certainly.

P: If you can’t exercise free speech and the exchange of ideas at a University, then where can you?

E: It’s like Obama going to Notre Dame.

P: Well exactly. And so, and there’s going to be some protests, but that’s okay. That’s why you make those commitments, so you can exchange ideas. But I was impressed with the list of individuals who had been on the speaker’s bureau over quite a long period of time.

E: And the Business School is gets a lot of people, like Welch from G.E. came last year.

P: Yeah, Jack Welch. I think it was Madeline Albright who had been here? I can’t remember, anyway, quite a few. While we’re on the Business School, what impact has Wayne Huizenga had on the Business School?

E: Well, a very strong one. We named it after him. And he gave it all that money and did not require that the school be named after him, but they
did of course. And it gives a lot of credibility in the community, because Wayne is committed to this university. And the dean had a luncheon with him last week. The dean had a big group to tell them goodbye, and Wayne was there, was introduced. I don’t know if they’ve got a new dean or not.

P: Well it’s a beautiful building, and once again, the law building and the business administration are very handsome buildings. I think again that increases the prestige in the community. It shouldn’t necessarily do so, but the reality is that if you want to come to a school, you don’t want to be in a trailer.

E: It looks like a successful school.

P: Exactly. Yeah, and it’s well-built, the law school is quite a vision. I’m Schure it needs to be even bigger than it is now, but nonetheless, it has served the purpose over the years. Talk about Ray Ferraro and what process you went through in hiring him as president. Was there an open search?

E: No. We said there was not going to be any need, because he was already working part time and doing such a great job, and he was already well known in the community and in the state, and we had him give up is law firm and come out, and we had no search, we said there was no need for one whatsoever. When you meet him, you’ll have a very strong individual.

P: I’ve already heard that. What was his goal as he becomes president? What was his vision of how Nova would change during his presidency?
E: I think he was more interested in getting on a better financial foot and expanding the boundaries, I don’t know if they’ve told you, but we’ve found all of these shopping centers and properties up and down University Drive that he bought us, and he didn’t want to be in debt land-wise. We even bought the country club that’s down here, which is losing money.

P: It’s a beautiful place. It may be losing money but the land is still extraordinarily valuable. So he sees physical expansion of this university. He sees from what I understand a definite commitment to a larger undergraduate population.

E: And to improve the quality.

P: From my perspective having just read some of his letters, that’s something that he sees as absolutely essential—that he’s going to have to come up with housing, and that’s Rolling Hills Country Club idea—look, we need housing for these graduate students.

E: Well there’s off-campus housing, it’s just too expensive for a student.

P: It obviously is. One of the things that is as interesting to me, and maybe you can clear it up—it’s something he’s working with—is the tuition. Now the tuition is different from every school. But apparently, he is trying to keep the undergraduate tuition to a reasonable level.

E: You have to compete.

P: I mean, this is not $30,000 a year, University of Chicago or whatever, it’s around, what, eight or nine thousand?

E: Something like that.
P: Yeah, which is considerable lower—

E: But considerably higher than public schools.

P: But there are very few private schools that would have tuition that low. So has that been set by the Board and Ferraro?

E: Led by Ferraro.

P: But now the tuition for the dental school and the medical school are considerably higher. And those would be on par with other schools, right? Miami...

E: Right, because everybody is trying to get into those schools.

P: Is that now the essence of the budget for this university? What percent of the budget comes from tuition?

E: I would say eighty percent. But I’m not on the finance committee at this time.

P: Okay, and the rest would be gifts. Now how has that progressed over the years? How has the fundraising progressed?

E: It’s mostly been individuals, and it’s been roughly based. We have a new director, and they’ve got a plan now to raise $125 million or something, but this is not a good time to get forward in it. But it’s been individuals like Mr. Mailman and Mr. Horovitz and Mr. Huizenga, Bill Mather and the Foundation. There’s never been—

P: Plus, one of the complications is that you don’t have a large body of alumni.
E: That’s true. We have, like the external degree people. It’s not the halls of ivy.

P: That’s right. You’re not dealing with the same kind of—

E: I don’t think we get that much money from alumni.

P: No. Apparently the figures I have—

E: The idea is to work on it.

P: Well, ultimately, I think that would be a good source. I think you start graduating people from the dental school and the medical school, and the law school, and you’ll have people who earn a substantial income over their career, and that’s going to be something that you tap into. But I was very surprised to learn that there had not been a ten-year long term commitment to raise $400 million or something like that. Most schools are consistently—over and over again.

E: Yeah, you meet the goal and start over again.

P: You meet this capital goal, you start again. And so how is the economic fiscal status of the university at this point.

E: It’s good, you know, it meets the budget, but a lot of it is tuition and I’ve always preached that we have to do something about the endowment. And when we get into a campaign, a large portion should go into endowment.

P: It really should. That’s the essence of a solid foundation; you have to have a strong endowment.

E: Even in the future if you have to borrow against it, it’s there.
P: it’s okay, better than not having it at all. Now when you purchase the Rolling Hills Club—country club, this new strip on University Drive, were those bond issues?

E: Some of it, and some of it not.

P: Where did the other money come from?

E: For the—well, like the shopping centers went into debt. When you talk to Dr. Fischler tomorrow, he will probably tell you—he’s been studying the debt structure and how much debt we have, and I’m going to be meeting with him to discuss that, because it’s a concern of his.

P: Well it has not been fully developed yet, has it?

E: What?

P: The shopping center.

E: Actually, we were turning people away so we could move into it. But they were very, very valuable assets, so I’m all for the expansion. And we do a lot with bond issues.

P: For example, you need to expand it so you have a bookstore, I mean, in other words, you want the University to expand to that area and use those facilities as opposed to renting them out.

E: That’s right.

P: Will there be any retail in that area.

E: It’s not envisioned. At least with some of the good tenants there now, we don’t need it.
P: Yeah. There are still some tenants. There’s a pizza place, you need that. Don’t get rid of that. How about the development of the on-campus facilities. There is enough different places for food, for all kinds of physical training, there are enough buildings in that sense, the core of the university is built out. So now you’re looking to expand. I don’t see any more that we’re going to have to buy in the country club—that we should be looking for more land right now. We should have kept the land that we had and sold.

P: Is there a sense that this is ultimately be what we call a multiversity—that this is going to get bigger and the law school is going to get bigger and you’re going to expand out into other areas?

E: Not in my opinion.

P: You don’t want to be fifty-thousand students like the University of Florida.

E: I think we’re as big as we should be. I think we should concentrate on quality and not quantity. I’m always talking about—we’re the sixth largest in the country, and I would say that means nothing. We should be the sixth best. I would say we should stop talking about numbers.

P: So numbers are less important now?

E: To me.

P: Although I do understand Ferraro wants more undergraduates.

E: Yeah, that. In fact, I think in the Law School we’re going to try to reduce the number of students is the idea. That’s what most law schools are doing.
P: Right, quality goes up. I hope you don’t mind me saying this, but the argument has been that there’s too many lawyers in the state of Florida anyway.

E: That’s why there was some opposition to us starting a law school. They say, “Why do we need more lawyers?”

P: Yet since that time, new law schools have been developed. Florida International has one. A&M has one.

E: We have too many now. Too many public law schools.

P: Yeah, too many public law schools.

E: And when they were starting the one in Miami, they said they needed a place for Hispanics, and we said there already here at Nova.

P: That’s politics.

E: Mmm-hmm.

P: It’s their turn.

E: Right.

P: You know how that works out. When you look at Ferraro’s presidency, what would you say is his biggest achievement?

E: Probably expanding the University to the community. He’s so well-known himself, and to the state.

P: And that brings up this commitment that the University has made to the museum.
E: Right, and that gets us what we call “downtown.” This is something that people understand. And I rode by yesterday, and now it says “Museum of Art, Nova Southeastern University.”

P: And what is the commitment that the University has to that museum? Is it financial?

E: Financial and academic. We have students learning how to be museum directors, they call it. And it’s a big asset for us.

P: And does the art museum lose money?

E: Yeah, that’s why they wanted to merge with us.

P: Yeah, that’s almost always the case. Well it’s a benefit to both, right?

E: Yeah. Because they were not self-supporting.

P: No. And there’s money from public sources these days, so these private museums—

E: All these museums are in that trouble now.

P: Yeah. And then there’s a performing arts center.

E: And also, we’re handling their finances, so that’s a big plus for them.

P: And as a performing arts center on this campus as well.

E: It’s part of the performing arts center downtown.

P: So here again, you have the library, you have the museum, you have the performing arts center, and all of that is the interaction between this university and the community. And this is something I see as a major goal of Ferraro as you mention—
E: And he’s a very, very strong leader with a very strong personality, and I admire him greatly.

P: But he has again what it seems to me has been a cornerstone of this university—vision.

E: Oh yeah he does, he believes in it.

P: Vision and flexibility. At every point where you needed to make a change or make an adjustment, you were able to overcome whatever obstacles were in the way to pursue the goal. How do you look at Nova now from the perspective of 1961, or are you just astonished?

E: I am amazed at what we envisioned, but I’m glad about what it became.

P: So you are pleased with the evolution of the school?

E: Yes, very much so. It was not feasible to have 100 students taking graduate classes, but that’s what Dr. Killian thought it was a great idea.

P: Well that’s what somebody said, that it was a great idea, but he didn’t have to pay for it. That’s the long term difference. DO you see the significance of a private school as having been key to the development? Would this be a different school had it been a public school?

E: Definitely. It would have been held back by politics and funding. They probably wouldn’t have funded a lot of these—they would not have taken the risks.

P: Probably wouldn’t have a law school. Probably wouldn’t have a dental school.

E: No. And also, they were just not interested in us.
P: What do you see as the future for Nova?

E: To continue to improve. And I wanted to improve on what we have. I think we’ve got enough now. And I want to improve the college.

P: What is the national perception of Nova?

E: It’s relatively unknown. When I tell people in Atlanta about the school—I had one of the trustees at Emory down last month, he had never heard of the school and I had him come down here. He couldn’t believe that something like this existed that no one had ever heard of in Georgia.

P: Well that’s my understanding as well, because I’ve talked to people—friends of mine in the academic world—and told them I was coming here. People in Florida have knowledge, but not very specific knowledge of it.

E: Well it’s so new.

P: But still, that seems to be one of the goals of the university. It needs to get the story out. And I think part of what this program—project is—

E: To get the message out.

P: Well, I think it’s pretty remarkable history of the school—where it started and where it is today—and it is an incredible mix of diversity in the different schools, and for a private school, it’s highly unusual. I mean, other than Harvard and schools like that, four hundred years old, this is a brand new school that has accomplished a lot in a short period of time.

E: One thing the school should do is get in touch with Newsweek, have them have a follow-up story.

P: I think that’s a great idea.
E: Show Winstead on the airfield saying he was trying to start a school, and I was kind of skeptical, saying these local people think they can start—and then show what has happened. I think it would be a good news story.

P: Well if you suggest that to President Ferraro, I suspect that it will get done.

E: I will.

P: But there’s another level here too. It is still not well known in the state of Florida.

E: No. People pass by, you know, like we’re in Orlando and Jacksonville, maybe Tampa, and people bypass our building, and say “Nova University, what is it?” My roommate from college said, “I just passed by a school called Nova University in Orlando, what is it?” And I tried to explain it to him. And it’s all there, but no one knows what it’s all about.

P: Well it seems to me that ought to be a major goal of this university to get that kind of publicity out, and it’s just not enough to have it in the Miami Herald and the Sun Sentinel. You need it state wide, and it seems to me that this is a school that is both under-appreciated and not as well-known as it ought to be. Understanding that it’s not 50 years old yet, so you’ve got a lot of time in terms of the future, but the emphasis should be to some degree as you mentioned, you think the school is going to be what it ought to be, now we need to make it a better school and make it better known.

E: Right. Even in the state of Florida.

P: In the state of Florida.

E: It was enough to get it known in Fort Lauderdale and Miami.
P: Is there another topic, another issue, another point of view you would like to express.

E: No, I think we're good.