

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN A. DELVES

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Interview with John A. Delves  
Conducted by Thomas A. Scott  
Edited by Laurence Stacey and Thomas A. Scott  
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Location: Alumni House, Kennesaw State University

TS: Today we're interviewing John Delves, who was the alumni president in the 1986-87 school year. John, let's just start by talking about your background of when you were born and where and a little bit about schooling and things like that before you got to Kennesaw.

JD: Okay. Well, good morning. I was born and raised in England—born in 1944, right toward the end of the War. In fact, my family was moved from Shepperton, which is in the southeast of London. We were all moved up to the north to my mum's area because my dad was working on designing the Flying Boxcars, which took the tanks across the ocean for D-Day and crashed into the land and the tanks just rolled off. He was also working on two other kinds of secret, clandestine type activities for the government. For fear of Nazis' reprisals, we were all moved to the north. We went out to Sunderland, which is where my mum's family is from. Shepperton on Thames is about nineteen miles up river from London. It's right on the Thames. So we went to Sunderland and we stayed there for the duration of the War, and then we came back to London and to Sheperton and our home.

TS: What's your father's name?

JD: My dad was Frederick W. Delves.

TS: And your mother?

JD: Her maiden name was Barbara Clay. Of course, then it was Barbara Clay Delves. We're somehow related to Lucius Clay and to the Clay's here, somewhere down the generations. So anyway, we came over. I went to St. Ignatius School in England, which is a Catholic school in Sunbury.

TS: We have a Sunbury in Georgia; it's down near the coast. It was really big in the colonial period.

JD: Exactly. And that probably was people from Sunbury in England.

TS: Yes, at least indirectly. I think they came from the Puritans out of New England and then down through South Carolina and then down to Midway. Sunbury was nearby on the coast, and that was the port in the colonial period. That would be Liberty County nowadays.

JD: Interesting. But he was a council member there, and he was also a special bobby.

TS: Your father was—a special bobby on the police force?

JD: Right. It's, sort of like we have the sheriffs, and certain counties have special deputies.

TS: So a bobby is a special deputy under the sheriff?

JD: Well, it would be under the metropolitan London police at the time. I remember the first time I ever went with him when he was performing his actual function was at the coronation, and so he was on the side at the Pall Mall.

TS: Nineteen fifty-two?

JD: Yes. And he was standing on the Pall Mall, and so I was sort of between his legs watching. [laughter]. The Pall Mall is the lined road that goes down to Buckingham Palace. So that was my first time. Then, when we came over here, I had his truncheon which is a wooden piece of, I guess, oak, with metal in the middle. Of course, they never carried weapons in England, but they were pretty good with the truncheon, so they could do okay. But he was a special constable for the Bobbies. Then, like I said, we moved over to America in 1956, and he was an engineer at Lockheed.

TS: So Lockheed brought you over here.

JD: Brought us over here. We came to Oglethorpe Apartments right by Oglethorpe University, and we stayed there about eight or nine months. Then we moved to Cobb County and have lived there ever since. We moved to Smyrna and were situated in Smyrna off of Nursery Road and stayed there, and went to school at King Springs Elementary. I guess I should tell you a funny story first. When we were in Oglethorpe, the first day I was in school at Sexton Woods Elementary [Chamblee, Georgia], of course, everybody wanted to hear me talk. They'd say, "Oh, listen to him, say that again. Say b-a-t-h." "Bath." And, "What is that—a "bonnet" for a hood and a "boot" for a trunk. And the teacher, I think it was a Ms. Walsh, was saying something, and I said, "You're quite queer." In England that is like you're different, nothing derogatory at all. Well, of course, that was not the way it was taken. So the first day of school I had...

TS: It doesn't mean what it means today, does it, back in '56?

JD: Oh Lord, no! [laughter] It's like you're different, like your teaching style. I said, "Oh, that's quite queer." Oh Lord, I got hauled out of there up to Mr. Cravy. Cravy was the principal. He later became superintendent of DeKalb County schools. Anyway, she explained that I had just basically said that she was a queer or something like that, and so I'm over the damn desk getting my butt paddled the very first day of school. Then, of course, I had to go home and tell my dad. So the next day he has to come to school. I made a heck of a mark for my first day in American schools. Of course, Cravy tells him....

TS: They didn't understand that the word was different?

JD: No, I probably said, "What's wrong with that?" And of course, that just made it worse. He said, "Did you say that?" "Yes." Of course, I'm not going to lie about it. "Of course I did." Anyway, so my dad had to come and explain. He sat down, and the principal told him, "He said that she was queer." And my dad said something like, "What's wrong with that?" And so by that time it had kind of filtered down and we started realizing that....

TS: Something lost in translation?

JD: What he said has nothing to do with what you're accusing him of. Of course, I never got the spanking undone.

TS: I guess not.

JD: I think I had a credit for the next year.

TS: Probably so.

JD: Just like cigarette cards in England, players and all the cigarettes over there have little cards in there with all sort of things like birds and cricket players and things like that, and they're called fag cards. Again, a fag is a cigarette in England, you know. Of course, you bring those words into the American....

TS: Right, I get the picture.

JD: Anyway, so that was my first day of school. Then after Sexton Woods, I came over here, and I went to King Springs Elementary school. Then, I was going to Campbell High School in 1959. My dad moved me, and I went to Marist High School. I spent the next three years at Marist and got out of Marist in the last class that graduated from downtown.

TS: So you're obviously a Catholic family?

JD: I'm a Catholic family. My dad was a Methodist.

TS: Really?

JD: Oh, very much so.

TS: But your mother was a Catholic.

JD: Church of England. Mum was a Catholic. Then of course, he went to the [St. John United] Methodist church out on Mt. Paran [Road, NW, Atlanta].

TS: When you say Methodist Church, in England he's Church of England, but here he's Methodist, which is an offshoot of the Church of England.

JD: Yes, right. Then of course, Reverend [Warren Candler] Budd, who I think was at the Marietta [United] Methodist Church?

TS: Oh okay. That was Lillian Darden's father.

JD: Yes. Well, they were very good friends with my dad because that was his pastor. So they built a strong relationship. Of course, then, Lockheed—he always wrote. At night he would come home, and in our kitchen we had a short-wave radio. We would always listen to BBC being beamed on this monster. I think it was a Zenith short-wave radio. Then he became the southeastern correspondent for London Daily Times and a couple of other ones.

TS: While he's still working at Lockheed?

JD: Oh, yes. He just loved writing, which is what explains later on in his life why he became editor of the Marietta papers because of his love for journalism. In fact, he did the story when the country singer who was like twelve or thirteen years old and had a really deep voice—her name will come to me in a minute—he wrote the story on her that was published in only European newspapers. He was quite a journalist. So writing was part of the engineering job doing the tech specs and things like that.

TS: How long was he at Lockheed?

JD: He retired from Lockheed. I think he died in '76. I think he retired from Lockheed in maybe '72, somewhere around the early 1970s—and then he became the editor of the *Marietta Journal*.

TS: *Marietta Daily Journal*?

JD: Right. He was good friend of Otis [Otis A. Brumby, Jr.]

TS: So he was the editor for a couple of years?

JD: Yes, a couple of years. And then of course, he got to know Bill Kinney and Jay Whorton and all those guys. He was pretty famous—he stood up for Lockheed when [Senator William] Proxmire [Democrat, Wisconsin, 1957-1989] was attacking us.

TS: That was a time when Lockheed was in bad financial trouble.

JD: Yes. Proxmire was whacking at us, and my dad was probably one of the few editors that stood up and went to bat for Lockheed. He loved the company, was very dedicated to the company. Then, of course, after school I went to Lockheed, and then I went to night school down at Georgia Tech for two years, and then I got drafted in the military in 1964,

spent two years in the military, went to Asia, went to Jackson, South Carolina, for boot camp, then I went down to Ft. Benning for advanced training, ranger school and stuff like that, and then got shipped overseas. It's interesting, I went to Arizona for desert mountain training, and then I was shipped to Alaska right about the time of the earthquake, and everything came on and got snow training, and then I went to Asia.  
[laughter]

TS: So that training really did you a lot of good.

JD: Then came back on with Lockheed. During my tour, somehow I got promoted, and I went into engineering 7240.

TS: Got promoted to what?

JD: At Lockheed I got promoted into engineering, which is good. You're not there, and you get promoted.

TS: While you were away you got promoted because of your military.

JD: Right. So it was neat. I was there in 7240, and we did all of the engineering drawings for the [C5-A]. At that time, of course, we were in the development stages in building the first plane. Then I started going back to school on the GI Bill, which was neat because when I got back in, I got married to my high school sweetheart, who I guess had waited around while I was overseas—actually I think she was downtown throwing flowers and doing stuff like that.

TS: Oh, one of those hippie types.

JD: Her son still gives her a hard time about that.

TS: What's her name?

JD: Sandy. Like she says, when I was over there doing my thing, she was here protesting!

TS: So she was down on 14<sup>th</sup> Street in that area.

JD: Yes, protesting. She was not in the favor of any of us being in 'Nam. Anyway, that was kind of a sidebar. It was kind of fun. Then I was back at Lockheed and came out here [to Kennesaw Junior College], started going to school. Of course, in those days I think we had three buildings, maybe?

TS: Well, there were eight originally.

JD: Were there eight originally, okay. Let's see, we had the one, we had the English [Humanities—today's Willingham Hall] and Science [currently, Mathematics & Statistics]; and then we had the Admin building [now Public Safety], and the library

[today's Pilcher], and the bookstore and the cafeteria [Student Services, currently Technology Annex], and maybe—was it eight, that many?

TS: Yes. Also Social Sciences, now University College; the Gymnasium, today's Student Recreation & Wellness Center; and Maintenance, later converted into the Music building.

JD: Okay, I'll take your word for it.

TS: What year did you start at Kennesaw?

JD: Let's see, I got back in '66, so I must have started in '67 or '68.

TS: Kennesaw opened in the fall of '66, and the first classes on this campus were January of '67.

JD: Okay, then it must have been '67.

TS: You're here the first year then.

JD: Yes, towards the end of the first year. Then I got out, I'll have to check the records, but I think '71, because I got through Georgia State in '74, so yes, that would be about right.

TS: So you took classes here until '71.

JD: I think that's right. We should probably validate that. I was here for about three years completing my two-year degree, graduated with an associate's degree.

TS: And you're still working at Lockheed while you're coming here?

JD: Yes.

TS: So you were taking night classes?

JD: Yes—getting tuition reimbursement from Lockheed.

TS: Oh. And you got the GI Bill.

JD: Yes, the GI Bill, too. When did you start here?

TS: In '68.

JD: Exactly. You were in the basement, the bottom level.

TS: I was on the first floor of the Social Science building.

- JD: Yes, I remember. Okay. Who was the other guy? He was a black-headed guy who maybe at the time was department head for....
- TS: George Beggs was the division chair.
- JD: George helped me later—that is the heavy-set guy, big guy? He was the guy in charge of biology and science? Young guy, black hair?
- TS: Let me see, at that time it would have been Wesley C. Walraven, and then after 1970, Herbert L. Davis.
- JD: Yes. So all those guys...and the reason I bring up Dr. Beggs, when I came back and was in school, I was still not a citizen. I was not a citizen when I went in the military; you don't have to be. If you're here five days they can draft you. So in one of his classes we were talking about becoming a citizen, and I said, "Yeah." So I went through and started the process, no joke. Anyway, he sat down with me, and I filled out all the paperwork, and then I went downtown to process. I go down to the old Federal Building, which is, I think, not the one that's there now. It was the old Thornton County building, I think. I go in there and take my paperwork in. The guy downstairs, this is what he says, "Now, you have to go up to the second floor and [do something]." So I go up there, and the guy up there says, "Where is your receipt?" There was like a ten-dollar charge or something like that. I said, "They said I didn't need one because I'd been in a combat zone." He says, "You have to have a receipt." So he sends me back downstairs. So I go back down, and I tell the guy down there, "The guy won't continue to process because he says I don't have a receipt." He said, "But you're military. You don't have to have a receipt; you've served in the military, armed forces, and you're void of that." Back upstairs. Anyway, after about two or three trips up, I said, "Stick it." And I left. Well, the next week or so I met with Dr. Beggs, and I'm explaining to him, and he says, "That's ridiculous!" Old military guy. "That's ridiculous!" So he got involved and made a couple of phone calls, and they said, "Oh, please come back." So I go back down, and this time it's a lot easier. I'm trying to remember exactly the year, but I was sworn in as a citizen December. I don't know exactly what date. Maybe it was '81; I don't know. But after about a year of struggling, after serving in the military, and then going down there, Dr. Beggs was very involved with me in becoming a citizen.
- TS: You think this is as late as '81, or was it more like '71 when you were in school here?
- JD: Maybe it was '71. I'll have to check on my citizenship papers, but that was the December, like 18<sup>th</sup>, when I was sworn in. I got the little flag to wave and stuff like that. But, yes, he was very instrumental because I had just about said, "You know what, it ain't worth the hassle." But I'm glad I did it. But that was interesting. That came from the school. Then I did graduate, and in those days, in fact, my wife and I came here, and she was reminding me the other day "K.C. and the Sunshine" performed in the gym. We saw him. He was at the naval house recently, and I reminded him, "You don't remember this but . . ." [laughter] So he was there, and then we became involved in the school, and then I went to Georgia State and continued my education down there. I think two and a half



years later, I graduated from Georgia State with a marketing and management degree, BBA. So that was my scholastic achievement.

TS: Was Sandy coming to school here when you were?

JD: No, Sandy went to Young Harris. I think that was done so she would be moved away from me. [laughter]

TS: I see. I was going to say, I don't think Young Harris produced too many hippies in those days.

JD: No, no, she was sent up to Young Harris. Then she came back, and, yes, those were fun days. Then we got married—still working at Lockheed. Then Lockheed started having all these massive layoffs. In one of them they told me that I was going to be laid off, and I went, “okay.” So I started building a business. I got involved with Charles Hardy who owns Hardy Chevrolet [Dallas, Georgia]. At that time, he was in mobile homes. He had Upside-Down Charlie Mobile Homes. Then Jackie Williams, if you remember, owned Triple A, Upside-Down Bonanza Mobile Homes. He was the kid from Athens who bought a mobile home, rented it to some students, then bought a second mobile home, and that's how he built his empire. Anyway, I went to work for him, and I worked for him for about four years while I was going to school at Georgia State.

The weirdest thing was Lockheed had told me I was being laid off, so I did all this planning. Well, then they come back and said, “We've decided not to lay you off.” I said, “You can't do that. I've already got all this stuff going, and I've made commitments; you have to lay me off.” I had to go to the president and talk to him. I think that was Tom May. I had to go to his office and sit down with him. He called Mr. Strather who at the time was the HR director of Lockheed and said, “Why can't this man be laid off?” He said, “Don't we need people to lay off?” “Well, we want him for a project we're going to be doing.” This was like August. Now this won't get printed, but it was like May. I was basically going to have to sit around and do nothing May, June, July, and August, until the project started. That just wasn't my nature. I said, “I can't do that. Lay me off.” So they did. The lay-off deal was if I wanted, if something happened wrong, and I came back, I could bridge the time, and I would continue to receive my benefits and stuff. So it was not a dumb move on my part.

Anyway, I worked there, and then I went into business for myself. Since that time, I went to Southwire in Carrollton and worked out there with Roy Richards and worked on a program that we developed called JET—Junior Executive Training—where anybody who is going to moving up into the company has to go through this one year program. I was one of the people involved in the JET administration. I also created training programs for them for the SCR—the Southwire Continuous Rod Process. Pete Cofer, who was the director of that part of the company, wonderful guy, he took a liking to me. So I created these training programs that we sold to Algeria. We had to go to London and to Spain, Madrid, and we had to sell the program. Then we had to train the better ones to run the mill, which I developed all the training programs for that. That's been, I

guess, four or five years out there. Then I had an opportunity—John Darden, who owns a company called Sands & Company in Atlanta, somehow got in touch with me, and I went to work for him. They were the old railway company that used to have the houses every twenty-five miles on the railroad track, you know, this company store, like Tennessee Ernie Ford, “I owe my soul to the company store.” That was Sands & Company. His daddy started it up in Virginia back in the 1800s. Anyway, it was a food vending company here in Marietta. I went to work for him for about ten years, and I headed up the training department. We created a company called Sands Training and Development, which was my forte. I was developing programs, and we trained everybody in the company. Then we started selling the training to outside people, and so we created a division.

Then in '81 we closed the division down, but John just gave me the company. So I separated December of '80, and then in January of '81 we started doing it ourselves completely. Twenty-eight years ago? That's about right. That's what I've been doing ever since—traveling all over the world.

TS: What's the company called?

JD: Southeastern Training and Development. Then in '81 I had the pleasure of meeting Ken Blanchard who was coming to Atlanta, going to Callaway Gardens to do a speech for a group called the YPO, Young Presidents' Organization. So I took him down there and we got to talking. The next thing we knew, we're talking about a book that's going to be published. I got involved with Ken. So in 1981 I joined forces with Ken Blanchard. He had Blanchard Training and Development. You might remember I got him to speak up on the second floor of the library. His famous words were, “I don't know why you got me; this guy is as good as I am most days.” That was his introduction, and I've never let that one slide. Yes, he came, and he was a guest speaker for us.

At that time, of course, one-minute manager had just hit the marketplace. So I got involved with him. I've been involved with him [for] twenty-some-odd years where I was doing all of his programs—leadership and the one-minute manager, situational leadership, putting the one minute manager to work. So I had his resources, my company in Atlanta, and through that is what I've really been doing for the last twenty-eight years. I'm traveling all over the world, speaking, writing articles, writing books, and contributing to books, and things like that. So it's been a wonderful life. Then in '86 I got back involved with the school and served as alumni president, and in those days we started doing what became known as the Jolley building.

TS: The Jolley Lodge.

JD: The Jolley Lodge.

TS: So you were involved with that?

JD: Yes. Out of the time I was president.

TS: Let's see, we've got you down as '86-'87 school year as president. I know you were involved before with the Alumni Association before then.

JD: I was on the board, yes. And during my presidential years I'm pretty sure that was when we started pulling all the stuff together trying to get people, most of our efforts were getting people to give in-kind gifts, like finding someone to donate cement blocks and the lumber. Of course, we were going to the Cobb County community trying to raise funds and find ways to build it basically with in-kind gifts.

TS: You're talking about the Jolley Lodge.

JD: The Jolley Lodge. Then I believe the Foundation may have become much more involved, and they made it much more realistic.

TS: Well, I think the Jolleys put in a lot of money.

JD: Yes. Then it became a reality.

TS: So you all were intimately involved with that process then of creating the house.

JD: Yes. We did some drawings, and we had some folks like Nick Martin, I believe, was a guy at Lockheed who was also an illustrator. He was part of that. I think, I'll have to go back and look to see if he was on the board with me or previously, Nick Martin.

TS: In '86-'87 what would have been under construction at that time? We were growing by leaps and bounds.

JD: Yes, I know. When did Betty [Siegel] come?

TS: In '81.

JD: Okay, because I was involved when she was interviewed by the bigwigs and there was some student involvement early on. Was it [Horace W.] Sturgis who was there before her?

TS: Right. He retired at the end of the year in 1980, and then Gene Huck was interim until Betty came on board in the summer of '81.

JD: And she came from....

TS: Western Carolina.

JD: Yes.

TS: So Dr. Sturgis wanted students to be involved in the process of doing what at that time?

- JD: I think he was just looking for ideas, like what would we want in a president. You know, some presidents sit in their office, and you never see them. I think that was pretty much what he was after, honestly, to get some input about what would we want to see in a new president and how would we see that taking place.
- TS: Why don't we go back and talk about your student years at Kennesaw and your impressions of Kennesaw and why you came here in the first place.
- JD: Okay, going back to the GI Bill probably, Nick Martin who worked with me at Lockheed, was coming here. I guess we got to talking about the fact that I'd been at Georgia Tech, and that educational process had stopped, which is why I got drafted. [laughter] If you weren't in school Uncle Sam wanted you. I think Nick and I were talking, and he was telling me that he was coming out here. In those days we didn't have all the [interstate] highways.
- TS: No.
- JD: We'd come out Bells Ferry, out down the hill, and turn left. I think he was probably as much a factor in getting me to come out to look at the campus of eight buildings and then getting the application, filling it out, signing off, and then coming out and literally signing up and going to school. I think in those days, we were strictly a transportation-in and transportation-out school because we had nothing like all these buildings here [now].
- TS: We didn't have the residence halls.
- JD: Didn't have any residence halls. Probably the average age of the students was twenty-eight or thirty, or something like that. There were a lot of us that were military folks who were coming on the GI Bill, and the maturity level—I'm not saying the kids were immature, but...
- TS: It made a difference if you'd been in the service for a couple of years.
- JD: Yes. I think it was a more mature group, a lot of people who were twenty-five to thirty-five type people. The bookstore was right by the cafeteria if I remember.
- TS: Yes. It was just a little hole in the wall in the old Student Services building.
- JD: Yes, on the left-hand side before you went to the lunch line, exactly. I think in those days it was a very close-knit campus. Pretty much everybody knew each other. Miss Rogato, do you remember her?
- TS: Mary [E.] Rogato.
- JD: Miss Rogato taught English. I had her. Then what was Larsen, what did she do?

TS: Judith [C.] Larsen was an instructor of French.

JD: Yes, and I think another language or something. Anyway, people like Miss Rogato, wonderful lady! I think she was symbolic of what the teachers were at that time. The art teacher....

TS: [M. Thomson] Tom Salter.

JD: Tom, yes. They were so involved with the students. Most of the time you'd find them in the Student Center with us, and you could sit and talk to them. Probably one of the best things about the early days of the campus was the fact that I can't remember a professor who would not spend time with you. The classes were smaller. You didn't have anything like you had at the University of Georgia where you had 230 students stacked up on the seats there.

TS: Yes, unfortunately we're there now.

JD: But I think that was probably one of the greatest things is the fact that the classes were so small, that you had a one-on-one relationship with the teachers. You really did. I think that helped because people like myself who had been out of school, had been in the work force, and were coming back to school, really didn't need the same kind of treatment that you'd give to a nineteen-year-old who just came over from high school, and you're trying to drum into their head how important it was for them to pay attention and study. We came with open ears and open minds and open hearts, wanting to learn, begging to learn, trying to get a degree that would help us move forward in the world.

Later in my life, when my daughter Jennifer graduated from Osborne, and she was looking at schools, she went to the University of Tennessee. It's such a big campus, they have little shuttle buses that take you from building to building. Then she went to the University of Florida, and loved that, and then she went to Auburn. That's where she wound up, and now she's the biggest thing going for Auburn alums. She just loves the school. But the same thing happened there. When she was a freshman there at Auburn, she was assigned to a dormitory right there by the quadrangle, right there by the Eagle and everything else. It was a wonderful experience at that time for her, just like mine was here being the fact that the classes were small, and, literally, if you didn't understand something, you could sit around, and when everybody got up and left, you could get up and talk to him and say, "Can you help me with this?" Miss Rogato was a very, very special person. She was that kind of person. Judith Larsen, same type thing. I'm trying to think of two or three others that....

TS: Did you take any business courses?

JD: You know, the bigger [upper level] business classes were downtown at Georgia State.

TS: Well, you would have taken accounting maybe and economics at Kennesaw.

JD: Right. And I took you. I'm almost sure I took you for American History.

TS: And that was the one exception to the good teachers, right?

JD: No, no, of course you were a lot younger then.

TS: I'm one year older than you are.

JD: You remember now, I think it's pretty good that I can remember going in the bottom door from the parking lot and knowing you were there. It was pretty impressive.

TS: I was twenty-five when I started here.

JD: I took like two classes; were we in quarters at that time?

TS: Yes.

JD: Okay, quarters. Then in the summer I would not quit. I would continue to go to school because I had it in my mind if I ever took off a quarter, I would like being off, and I might not come back. That's what drove me. It didn't matter. Of course, the summer classes were what, five weeks.

TS: Yes, two half-quarters.

JD: There were some pretty short ones. You could get two weeks off, and then [summer quarter began, and you get two weeks [off before] the fall quarter. I never stopped going. Every time kept going, kept going, kept going. The best thing about the school was that even though it was a junior college, you had the relationship with the faculty, you really did. You could walk across the quadrangle between the buildings, and you would see professors. It was not like aloof. They were there for you, and you could talk to them, and I think that was probably one of the biggest things; especially people at my age at that time.

TS: Did you have Charlie [Charles F.] Martin for economics?

JD: Yes, yes.

TS: What about Bill [William P.] Thompson maybe?

JD: Yes, I had to have an accounting class, which is not my baby. Of course, in those days we were getting into matrixes and things like that. I probably could go back and find some of the old books.

TS: Did you get involved in any student activities while you were there?

JD: There wasn't a lot going on in those days.

TS: Well, you didn't have that much time anyway, if you were working.

JD: Right, working and going to school. There wasn't a lot going on. We didn't have any kind of sports. We did take advantage of the gym, playing a little pick-up basketball and stuff like that over there. I'm trying to think. In those days there really wasn't a lot for the night students. We didn't have any fraternities and things like that; there wasn't any Greek world. That took place at Georgia State when I went down there. I think it was the relationship between the smaller classes, the individual [attention] caring professors gave you, and most of them, you included, would give a phone number where you could call them, and it wouldn't be an answer machine.

TS: I don't know how we ever got along without e-mail back then.

JD: I know, isn't that something. But then, of course, your office, was it down there too, around from the classroom?

TS: Yes.

JD: Most of the time, if you wanted to talk to a prof, they were there, and you could talk to them. It was a small campus that allowed you to become very involved with the faculty, and I think at that time that was probably one of the greatest things going for it. Of course, you had people like Dr. Beggs.

TS: Did you take him for political science?

JD: Yes. That's why, as I mentioned earlier, he got so involved when I was being hassled about becoming a citizen. He became involved and made some phone calls for me. In fact, I saw him several times afterwards, and we always used to laugh about how much trouble it was to become a citizen because, you know, I had served the country!

TS: Right.

JD: I'm trying to think, we just had the grass in the middle of the buildings, and that was pretty much it.

TS: Oh, you mean around the quadrangle? Right, it's a very different campus with the flagpole and the buildings around there. At least we had buildings on three sides of the quadrangle.

JD: Exactly.

TS: Would you see Dr. Sturgis on campus while you were a student?

JD: Yes. And it would be like you'd just stop and talk, chat about things. I'm trying to think, who was the provost at that time?

TS: Well, it was called the Dean of the College, and [in the 1960s] it would be Derrell C. Roberts.

JD: Yes, same thing—you would see them all around the campus. They were all reachable, they were all talkable and accessible. I think that's what made coming here good.

TS: Were there quite a few veterans on campus with you?

JD: I think, yes.

TS: How were you received as a veteran?

JD: Interestingly enough, because you didn't wear any uniforms around, I don't remember getting any kind of negative from the campus. Not so true if you were a known veteran towards the Atlanta area, but here I think it was probably most of the students weren't that involved. So it probably wouldn't matter to them. I think probably 25 percent; maybe 30 percent of the students were here on the GI Bill.

TS: You think it was that high?

JD: I think so.

TS: So quite a few veterans?

JD: Yes, there were more, of course, at night school, which is what I'm talking about. Daytime, I'm thinking you still had the high school graduates that were coming here, and were being taught here right out of high school. But most of the night school was the older people, the people making career changes, and I remember there were probably a couple of older, older, you know, forty-five- or fifty-year-old people, who were coming back and getting some additional courses. Then, we had some who were auditing courses.

TS: Right, people were just coming for the cultural experience.

JD: Right. And I think that was part of being on the campus.

TS: And we still get some. Once you turn 62, you can come for free here if there's room in the classroom.

JD: That may have been what it was. It could have been that back then. That's interesting.

TS: Okay, so you left here; you went to Georgia State and got your degree. How did you get back involved with the Alumni Association?

JD: I'm trying to think who the individual was, was it Azar?



TS: Yes, Robert Azar.

JD: How would I remember that?

TS: He was the alumni director. He called you up?

JD: Yes! Don't ask me how I remember that as old as I am. I think he called and said, "We're doing some things here, and we'd really like to get people involved." [I think he was interested because] I was in the first Leadership Cobb class that was ever created. I was very involved in the honorary commanders. I think it was Azar that called because I was very involved in the community, I had been involved apolitically; I think that's the right way to say it. I ran for the school board once and realized the greatest thing was I lost. But I got very involved in politics and was not willing to sit around and have people say, "Well, there's nothing you can do about it." There is a lot you can do about it. I think I got that from coming to school here and going on to school at Georgia State. I have been very involved in the community ever since I've been here. I think somehow that came together when Azar called and said, "Look, we're doing this, doing that, can we get you back involved?" And I did. Then we started getting some little mailings about as alumni you can do this and do that. You can come to some of the things that we had at the field house or the gym, you know.

TS: The public programs?

JD: Yes, the public programs. What was it that we have once a year?

TS: Homecoming?

JD: No, not homecoming. The guest speakers come in.

TS: Oh, the symposium.

JD: The symposium, yes I got involved in the symposiums. Did Mead come here?

TS: Yes, Margaret Mead.

JD: I think it was around '70. That was probably one of the things that also got me back involved, the symposium. Then I did a little work for one of them; it may have been the Mead symposium. Little by little I was doing things and then like I said, got really involved and came back and got involved on the board, and then became the president of the Alumni Association. I have a lot of high school kids that are talking about they're going to go to college, and I talk about how high the quality is here for nursing, which is still rated very highly, and things like that. When I talk to people, and they talk about, "Well, I'm going here, I'm going there," I say, "Well, Kennesaw is a great school. I was the alumni president a few years back; I sat on the board. It's a great campus, and I think

its small enough that you're still an important person, and it's large enough that it can bat heads with most of the universities in the state."

TS: Well, it's a real struggle to keep the small feeling because we're 21,000 students now.

JD: I know! Wow! I bet, what were we at 3,000 when Betty came here?

TS: Yes, we were right at 4,000 when she came. Now when you were here as a student we would—well, when I started here in '68 we had 1,300.

JD: That's what I'm saying! And you knew everybody. There's a lot to be said for that because, having gone to Tech for a year and a half, at night school, you wouldn't know anybody. When I went to State, of course, I got to know some of the profs down there, such as Mike Mescon. Mike is Tim's father, right?

TS: Right.

JD: [Donald] Henderson, [David] Schwartz, I had him. I think because I came here, when I went there I took more time to get to know the professors and talk to them and build a relationship with them. I always remember Schwartz because the one class I needed to finish up in marketing was packed. I had to go see him and get an overload. I can remember he did it on purpose, but he says, "Let me tell you what. I'll give you this, but if you drop out, if you don't pass this, you'll never take another class on this campus! Do you understand?!" I mean, he was a horse's patoot. Of course, when I aced it, I went back to see him, and he took a lot of pleasure in the fact that I had actually aced it. I went back, and I said to him, "There!" He says, "I knew you could do it, but you probably wouldn't have if I hadn't fired you up!"

I don't know if they still have profs like that. I mean, Schwartz had the book, you know? He really didn't have to talk to you. He had tenure. I think maybe in those days the profs were more in tune with getting to know the students one-on-one. It's like how many years we've seen each other at the [Marietta Fourth of July] parade, same position, photographed every year.

TS: Yes, I appreciate that photograph.

JD: You're welcome. That was a good shot. So I think it's on the Republican work page.

TS: [My wife] Kathy might not like that. [chuckle] She is a strong Democrat.

JD: Oh, I know. I think the smallness of the campus, the closeness of the professors, really made a big impression. I think what we see today is what Betty has taken this school on to in her tenure, and it's phenomenal. She and I talked about this a couple of times. I always told her, "I'm willing to go to the Regents and say, "Why isn't she running the University of Georgia?"

TS: Well, Kennesaw didn't want to lose her.

JD: Of course, she wouldn't want that. And no, that's for sure, we would not want to lose her. But she would have been such a blessing to them like she has been to this school.

TS: Well, as alumni president, I wanted to ask you about your relationship with the administration, and Betty Siegel was president at that time. What was the relationship?

JD: Casual, friendly. I don't think we had a whole lot of input into what was going on. I don't think it was, we don't want your input. I think there was just so much because of the initial start-up and the growth that was coming on. I would never have had a problem walking over to the president at the time or the controller's office and just saying, "Do you have a moment? I've got a concern."

TS: But it was at a distance, in other words.

JD: Yes, but not purposely. I think Betty—we probably met six, eight, ten times on some issues. The thing about the alumni starting to do work on the Jolley Lodge and things like that, getting some guidance from her and the other administrators about what we could do and how we could not step into the Foundation functions.

TS: Who was the director of the Alumni Association while you were president? I know Azar was long gone. Was it Shirley Bromley?

JD: Yes. We had meetings in the [old] library down in the seminar room. I'm almost positive most of our meetings were held there. Then the one project was trying to get the Jolley Lodge up. We didn't have a lot of involvement as far as recent alums. I think one of the things we were trying to do to work with the administration on was finding a way to get more of the students who were graduating to immediately get involved in the Alumni Association.

TS: Were you doing anything to reach out to them?

JD: I don't really remember that. Keep in mind, in those early days when we were a two-year school and trying to become a four-year school, most of the students came and knew they were going somewhere else. So if any loyalty was going to be laid, it was going to be probably whoever gave you the BBA or the MBA or whatever you went on to get.

TS: Right. And yet in your case your loyalty was to Kennesaw more than Georgia State, wasn't it?

JD: Oh, yes. I never became [involved] other than the fraternity. I'm a Delta Sig [Delta Sigma Pi], the business fraternity. Other than that, Georgia State has never been anything that I've gotten involved with. I get the occasional mailing, the alumni from Delta Sig. We do two or three things a year. But as far as Georgia State, I get the phone call, "Hey, this is the alumni, would you like to do something, does your company match one-to-

one?” Because that’s the only time we ever hear from them, there’s not a whole lot of love that’s going to be wasted over there. Here there was more involvement with the contacts, with the mailing notices [that said]: “As an alum, you can do this and do that.” But it’s like everything else. One of the things I started doing once I owned my own business is I traveled four million miles on Delta. So typically I was traveling, seriously, forty-seven weeks a year, four or five days a week. Then, two years ago I went over to the Middle East and spent seven months over there training people. My job, what I had deemed for myself once I started the company, kept me away from here. With traveling, I was never here to attend anything. That’s a quick way to, I don’t want to say lose interest, but you’ve got all these other things.

TS: Lose contact.

JD: Yes, you really do, you lose touch with what’s going on. With Georgia State, it’s the annual call about, “This is our annual fund-raising, blah, blah, blah,” and nothing else. So you don’t have to spend a lot of time with stuff like that.

TS: I think I’m just about out of questions. Anything we haven’t talked about?

JD: No. I think the emphasis from when I was here as a student, the smallness, the closeness, the one-on-one that this campus allowed us, I think we still have that from talking to students who I have recommended come over here. I think there’s still a very close-knit relationship between the faculty and the students, and I hope we never, never, never lose that. The campus, as you earlier said, is growing by leaps and bounds, the buildings, putting up the dormitories, and things like that. I’ve been involved when that thing was going up, and if you remember Bill Byrne was [Cobb County Commission] chairman when we had to do some politicking to allow that....

TS: Over the residence halls?

JD: Yes, so I was involved in that, not as “former alumni president,” but I think I signed [a petition] to “Please allow this to happen so we can get residence halls.”

TS: All right. Well, thank you very much.

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