

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH JOSEPH D. MEEKS

CONDUCTED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT AND DEDE YOW

EDITED AND INDEXED BY SUSAN F. BATUNGBACAL

for the

KSU ORAL HISTORY SERIES, NO. 54

THURSDAY, 6 APRIL 2006

Kennesaw State University holds legal title and all literary property rights, including copyright, to this oral history. It is not to be reproduced without permission from the director of the Kennesaw State University Oral History Project.

Kennesaw State University Oral History Project  
KSU Oral History Series, No. 54  
Interview with Joseph D. Meeks  
Conducted by Thomas A. Scott and Dede Yow  
Edited and indexed by Susan F. Batungbacal  
Thursday, 6 April 2006  
Location: Dean's Office, College of the Arts

TS: Joe, why don't we just begin by asking you when and where you were born?

JM: Oh, okay [laughter]! I was born in Anderson Memorial Hospital in Anderson, South Carolina. My home was in Belton, South Carolina, but my mother gave birth to me in the Anderson Memorial Hospital. This was 1940, January the 26<sup>th</sup>, and snow was on the ground [laughter]. The hospital was eleven miles from where I grew up.

TS: Just talk a little bit about your educational background; did you go through public schools, for instance? I think you went to the University of Georgia [Athens, Georgia]; maybe talk a little bit about how you got there.

JM: It's an interesting journey. I went to public school [in] a very small town and, of course, my parents—and I said this on Saturday evening, Dede, [at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit Gala for the Arts at Kennesaw State University, held at the Fabulous Fox in Atlanta]—there were two really very important things for them: the arts were important—that they were a part of our lives. I have two brothers. I have a brother twelve years older than I, and a brother four and a half years younger than I—he was at the gala. They wanted us to have art lessons, and music lessons, and whatever; and of course, they wanted us to be good students, and education was extremely important to them. I told this in a funny way—well, I started piano lessons when I was about ten years old, and I was very fortunate because a woman who had grown up in the town had gone away, was Julliard trained. And a very prominent man from the town really wanted to marry her, so he went to New York, and brought her back and married her. She came back to that little town and devoted her life to teaching young people. She was an outstanding teacher, outstanding musician.

TS: She never performed anymore?

JM: Oh, she performed. She was the church organist at the Methodist church; and, of course, her students went to competitions, I mean, you were always in competition.

TS: What an advantage for you.

JM: Oh, it was a wonderful advantage. My father was the one who arranged my piano lessons, and he wanted me to study with her. And she, of course, was so good that people from all the surrounding counties and towns wanted to study with her. Her schedule was always full. So, he kept talking to her. Well, she had my brother for three years, and he was totally into sports, and so after three years all he could do was play C major scale [laughter] with one hand. She was very frustrated with that. So, I don't think she was much excited about trying the second one.

DY: Not a lot of genetic promise here in this family [laughter]!

JM: Right. So it's an example, even though she was Julliard trained, that it just wasn't his thing. He went on to sign a contract with the New York Giants to play professional baseball in the early '50s. I remember when they came in—the Boston Red Sox and all these people were really trying to get him to sign a contract. And so I remember when they came and sat in our living room, and there was an ottoman in front of this chair, and they put this little portable typewriter to type his contract, and give him the money that they give you to sign a contract. So he went in that direction. So anyway, my father kept saying. . . .

TS: How far did he go?

JM: Well, it was a crazy time because then he got drafted, and there were all these various things that interrupted. And then finally he just said, "I'm not going to stay; I'm coming back home, go into business and get married," and all those things that happened.

TS: You said your father said. . . .

JM: Yes. He kept wanting me to do it, so he finally said to me one day, "Go by Mis' Floride's house tonight." She was Floride Cox. Everybody in town called her Mis' Floride.<sup>1</sup> And so he said, "Go by Mis' Floride's tonight. After she finishes teaching today, she's going to talk to you." So I went by, and when you went into her home you went into another world because she had a music room, and a grand piano, and another piano, and bookcases, and books. She never had any children. That evening she stood there. I can see her smile now as she was standing in that music room. I was this little boy looking up, and I asked her, "Would you teach me piano?" She put on the biggest smile, and she said, "Yes." And throughout the rest of her life, until she died at ninety-four, she said, "You know, I just couldn't turn down those big brown eyes" [laughter].

---

<sup>1</sup>In her correspondence Mrs. Cox often signed her name "Mis' Floride." She, of course, was not a "Miss," but in the southern spoken English of that era it was customary to slur the pronunciation of Mrs., so that it sounded like "mis'" or "miz." Even children could call a woman by her first name, but always with the title "mis'" to show respect.

DY: We got to see the slide; we saw the picture at the gala, and it was the most precious little child I have ever seen. It was like, “I will do anything for you!”

TS: This was the Gala for the Arts last Saturday?

JM: It was last Saturday evening, and it was to celebrate my thirtieth anniversary here at Kennesaw State. Of course, they surprised me; they had gone back and gotten, from family and people, all these pictures, even one of me in a diaper. It was kind of fun. Anyway, that was a really defining moment because it launched a direction for me with her, because I did have some talent, and I was willing to practice and work hard, and I did. And so, immediately she was sending me to competitions and planning my life. She was like Madame Sousatska [a passionately dedicated piano teacher played by Shirley MacLaine in the 1988 movie of the same name] or whatever type. I would go for a lesson at three in the afternoon, and she'd say, “Come back at five. Come back at seven. Come back at eight,” on the same day. I would do the eight o'clock lesson in the evening, and she'd say, “Come back tomorrow at three.” So sometimes I had a lesson every day. She was that kind of teacher. It was that model of teaching that I was just so taken with, the dedication and passion that she had. I was with her and was, of course, in public school. The music thing was going well for me, so we decided that I needed to skip a grade in high school—that I had already gone beyond where I should, and that I should go on to college. I had said that the only way I would go and major in music was if I could win a scholarship that would give me that endorsement. It didn't matter so much the amount of the money, but the fact that it said there was promise, that I was going in the right direction. My father could afford to send me to college. So it wasn't a matter of his not being able to afford to send me to college, or my brothers, but that was something that had to be for me. That's the reason scholarships are so important to me, and that's the reason I have the annual gala to raise money for student scholarships. Because, it's not so much whether they need the money, but it's that support and that investment we make in students that I think is so important, because it was made in me. So, the audition was arranged for me to go, and at that time my teacher wanted me to go to Converse College School of Music [Spartanburg, South Carolina], and it was ranked number five in the southeast, at that time.

TS: Converse College?

JM: Converse College in Spartanburg.

TS: Isn't that a woman's college?

JM: The academic school is; the music school is co-ed. It was the only separate school that the college had, and as far as I know to this day, is the only separate school. But the School of Music had really obtained quite a reputation: the faculty, the facilities. So, my teacher always prepared you with, “This is going to be tough, and the competition is going to be stiff, so I don't know, but let's do it.”

Well, I went in, and not only was I skipping a grade and going a year early, I thought, “Oh my goodness, what chance?” So there were 135 applicants in 1957 to go to audition for the School of Music. But, in the meantime, they screened you down. They finally allowed thirty-two of us to come and audition. Those were the days when things were really not so easy—I think we’re a little bit softer today with these things—but anyway, it was for two days. You first went in and you auditioned with the entire music faculty. You took all kinds of tests—ear training tests and all these things to see what your aptitude was, and scales and arpeggios, and all these technique things. Well, I passed all those things, you know, and there were only two of us who passed all the scales and arpeggios and all that. Everybody else may have a really fine audition, but when they came in their freshman year, [they] had to spend time getting those things up to speed. My teacher, until the day she died when she was ninety-four—she loved to laugh and tell the day they tried to trick me in my scales. She said, they said, “Joe, would you play C sharp major scale?” She said, “And you just went, “C sharp major scale.” They said, “Okay, would you play D flat major scale?” She said I turned to them and said, “I just played it.” Because it’s the same, you can do it in flats or you can do it in sharps. So anyway, I didn’t quite remember that, but she remembered it. So we did an audition, and we were told that we would be then selected—that they would screen us. So at the end of the day they came out, and I heard the people who had played before me, and I thought, “What am I doing here? These people are so good.” At the end of the day they came in to announce who the six finalists would be, and I was one of them. I turned to my mother and said, “Are you sure they called my name?” She said, “Yes.” And then I turned back to her, “Are you sure? I don’t want to embarrass myself by walking up there.” I guess I was very insecure, and I just couldn’t believe it. So anyway, that wasn’t the last audition. So then they flew in Dr. Earl Moore from the University of Michigan who was the dean of School of Music. He flew in for the finals, and so we had to do a public evening concert. You saw, Dede, the other night, they had a picture of that evening when it happened. So, Dr. Moore judged the final six, and he awarded me the Walter Spry Memorial Scholarship. Dr. Walter Spry had been the dean of the School of Music at Converse and had already died, so this was a memorial concert. It was a four-year scholarship, and so that was big time; it was a big thing in the newspaper with pictures. So, there was a picture the other night, and I looked like a third world child, as you can remember. My neck was about this long [describes length by stretching his arms out]. It was my piano teacher that had the fox fur around her neck [a popular fashion in the 1950s]. But the president of Converse College was Oliver C. Carmichael, Jr., and then Edwin O. Gerschefski was going to be my teacher at Converse—he was the dean of the School of Music at Converse at that time and an American pianist-composer, listed in *Grove’s Music and Musicians Dictionaries* [*The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (29 Vol. Set) (Hardcover) edited by Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (Oxford University Press)]. He only took a few students—he only took five; and so my teacher said, “Well, you’re going to teach Joe.” He said, “You know, you damn well know I’m going to teach Joe.” Those were his words.

DY: How wonderful!

JM: So that started my career, and I finished high school a year early.

TS: It must have been a challenge to learn to spell Gerschefski's name.

JM: Yes, we always called him "Mr. Ger," so everybody shortened it, so it was Mr. Ger. Any time he ever wrote to me, and I have letters from him, as the Dean of the School of music, it would be, "Edwin Gerschefski" and above it he would always sign "Ger."

TS: How did your parents get so interested in music to send you for it?

JM: You know my grandmother was an organist. She played the organ, and she had an old pump organ in her home; and she loved the piano, and she could play any musical instrument you gave her. She had a great ear; she wanted to play the guitar, and she picked up the guitar and she played it. She was a phenomenal woman. She could have built a house; she could do anything. I just come from that kind of family. It's a great, wonderful life I had.

TS: What did your father do for a living?

JM: My father was a businessman; he was in the restaurant business. I grew up in restaurants.

TS: What was his name?

JM: Floyd—only had one name.

TS: What about your mother?

JM: My mother's name is Sarah Verena Stowe. She married my father, and my mother never worked; she was a stay-at-home mom. I don't know what—I wish I had asked at some point—but we had a big old piano in our house; and I guess maybe they bought it for my brother, who was twelve years older, and so that's the piano I had.

TS: You finally made use of it.

JM: Yes. My parents were so supportive, and I think the thing that is so wonderful—and I gave them credit the other night, Dede, as you well know—that whatever we did, they supported us. So in terms of my brother and the sports thing, they supported him 100 percent, and they supported me; and then my younger brother had art lessons, and he is a physician—he said when he was real young, he was going to be a doctor.

TS: What's his name?

JM: Michael Raymond Meeks.

TS: What about the older brother?

JM: Matthew (Mack) Henry—named for both grandfathers. My brother has now returned to painting landscapes, and he's really good. He is a family-practice physician in Laurens, South Carolina. So he had art lessons and all his things ended up at the county fair, and blue ribbons, and all that stuff. The wonderful thing is that my mother—the original artwork in our house was what my brother was producing, the charcoals and pastels and things like that. He studied with Miss Ruth Payne, old maid sisters, two of them: one was the librarian, and she was the art teacher. Miss Nell and Miss Ruth, we called all of these people by that title, and in our town we had lots of sisters that never married, and they taught.

DY: Southern tradition.

JM: The town was full of these people: Miss Etta, and Miss Grace, and Miss Una, and Miss Pauline. There were all these great things. My parents just believed that it was important to study piano. I think it was almost a requirement of the time because you would hear the question, "Do you take?" And "do you take" meant, "Do you take piano lessons?" Or, you'd hear people say, "Oh, yes, I took." That meant you took piano lessons. "Yes, I'm taking" [laughter]. And it all meant piano lessons. So it was part of your education; it was something you did. Some had talent, some didn't. Some went on with it and did well with it. My teacher had a number of students who went on in the music profession and chose music as a career. So anyway, it's interesting—Gerschefski had been at Converse for eighteen years. You asked a question earlier, Tom, about isn't that a woman's college; and it is, and the music school was co-ed. And you can imagine in the '50s that was a little bit problematic for a male student to be on a campus because rules were quite strict. It was just bizarre. Students today would not, in any way, know how to relate to what that was like. So, I had expressed to my teacher that I thought I might transfer to a place where I didn't feel so restricted by the environment. I was just sick about it because I didn't want to leave him, and he kind of talked me into staying, saying, "Let's give it a little bit more time." So then, all of a sudden, my junior year, I went for my lesson; and he said, "Well, I want to tell you something. You know you've been talking to me about transferring. Well, I have decided to leave Converse, and go to the University of New Mexico and become the dean of the School of Music there. You talked about transferring; you might want to consider doing that." So, of course I went home and told my father, and he said, "Oh, the University of New Mexico, you can't do this, you can't do this." And I said, "Well, I think I really need to." This is why I say mine is complicated, and so I finally convinced him that I really should do this. And another one of Gerschefski's students decided she was going,

as well. So, I was accepted at the University of New Mexico, and we headed off to New Mexico. Well, guess what? This is the first time I've ever been so far away from home in an area that is just bare of trees and everything. Actually, Gerschefski was one of these people who liked to build things [improve the quality]. When I got there I wasn't really pleased with the facility, and I just said to him, "I don't think this is right for me. I think I better go back home." So, I came back home, and of course it was a real concern of my parents, but Converse had not opened yet. I came back and I went back to Converse my junior year and studied with a teacher with whom I had had lessons in high school—that Mis' Floride would take me to—to prepare me for competitions. John Erickson was a wonderful teacher, but any time you reach the point of having to compare teachers; I had already been to another place. So, I came back and John Erickson took me then. So, I did my junior year, did my junior recital, and I realized I'm not getting really what I want. Well, out of the clear blue Gerschefski writes me a letter, and he says, "I have decided . . ."—he too, after one year, had decided to leave the University of New Mexico; and he had accepted the dean's position at the University of Georgia. That's how I ended up there. He said, "I'm coming to the University of Georgia." I wrote back, and I said, "Will you take me as a student after I left you in New Mexico?" It was so funny, he wrote me a very formal letter, and he said, "Yes, if you're accepted," and so forth and so on, "I'll have you back." Then, he signed his name, "Ger." And then down at the bottom, in ink, he wrote, "Hey!" So, I did, and that's how I ended up going to the University of Georgia. And, quite frankly, it was another place that had to be built because the University of Georgia was in pretty bad shape; the facilities were really terrible, and practice rooms, and all that kind of thing. Gerschefski went there; I wish today he got a little more credit for that. You hear more about Hugh Hodgson, the dean prior to Gerschefski's appointment. You hear a lot about Hugh Hodgson, but what Gerschefski inherited was pretty miserable facilities.

TS: Did he inherit straight from Hodgson?

JM: Yes. He followed Hodgson after Hodgson retired. Hodgson was, of course, a really fine musician. But, the facility, I don't know if it was just because of state funding—I don't know what it was, but it was a mess. If I had not had the teacher, I would not have stayed there. And then two other students came too; the one that went to New Mexico, and then one from Converse came to do her masters. So Gerschefski was so wonderful, and I had learned so much; and then I decided I might as well stay on for my master of fine arts degree, which I did. I completed that with Gerschefski. Well, he had studied with a teacher—there was a teacher at Yale [University], Bruce Simonds—and so the minute I finished my masters degree, I headed off to Yale to just study privately with Bruce Simonds, so I went there. The thing that I think is interesting here is that when I went away to college I went away to be a concert pianist; that's what Mis' Floride had in mind for me, that that's all I would do, play concerts. But all of a sudden my teacher, Gerschefski, who was a very fine pianist, wonderful performer, made his

debut in London and all that. And he was the dean of the School of Music; he was a great teacher and a wonderful performer. And those three things suddenly became something that became a part of my vision for myself. Not the dean part, but the teacher, and I thought, “Do I want a life with just performing—hotels and doing that stuff?” But I can teach, and I could be in a college. I loved what I was experiencing in the college situation; I wanted to be that. I wanted to be in there. I wanted to stay there. I can teach in a college, and I’ll have all the opportunities to perform that I want to do. So that’s the way I want to go. Then Gerschefski wanted me to do that, and quite frankly he picked out Agnes Scott [College] for me; he said, “I just think Agnes Scott would be a good place for you to go.” Of course, there wasn’t a position that came up.

DY: That’s my alma mater.

JM: Is it? He wanted me to go to Agnes Scott; there was no position. I really wanted to be in a city; I wanted to be close to where things were going on. I didn’t want to be in a rural place because I felt that could be a little bit—for artists, it can be a big challenge, and you can get stuck in places. So I decided—Clark College at the Atlanta University Center [Clark Atlanta University] had an opening in piano, and so I applied. There was a young woman who had graduated from Clark and had come into the master’s program at the University of Georgia System in the days when it was beginning to integrate, and so she and I had become friends. The chairman of the music department at Clark College was a man by the name of J. Dekoven Killingsworth.

DY: That’s a mouthful!

JM: It’s interesting how these things work because he called up this graduate student, and he said, “Do you know Joe Meeks?” when I applied for this position, and she said, “Yes.” He told me this later, he said, “Well, he’s applied for a position here, and he looks good. What do you think?” She said, “Hire him, if you can get him.” So it tells us about relationships.

DY: Yes, it does.

JM: It tells us about any day that we’re interacting with people; you never know how that’s going to play out in your life.

DY: That’s exactly right.

JM: There was an example of it. So, I came for my interview and I really wanted to be at Clark College; I really wanted to be there. It was an interesting time; it was 1964, and it was a historic time. I was at Clark for eleven years, and I knew Martin Luther King [Jr.], Duke Ellington. Duke Ellington would come to the campus, and the president would have a reception at his home. I would be sitting on the sofa with Duke Ellington—just all these great people that were coming and

going from Clark College. I accompanied the chorus; it was called the Philharmonic Society. In those days we did spring tours, and we would go up into the north; and we would get on the bus at eleven o'clock at night, and ride that bus all night because there was no place we could stop. We could not stop. We had to stay in homes and sleep in basements of churches and places like that.

TS: Are you saying as late as the mid-'60s?

JM: Yes, 1964-1975. Things were still. . .

TS: You're talking about until you left the South you couldn't stop?

JM: We just went straight up. Once we left Atlanta we traveled all the way until we reached our destination.

TS: Of course, after the Civil rights Act of 1964 they can't illegally deny access. . . .

JM: Of course, first of all we were saving money because we weren't staying in hotels, but it was still—things were not settled.

TS: They still wouldn't be welcome.

JM: In those days, when I would go to a restaurant with a black faculty member, we would sit and have people stare at us throughout the whole meal. When I moved into my apartment in Atlanta, I lived on Peachtree Memorial Drive, which is there in the Buckhead area. Shortly after I moved in, a black faculty member came for dinner, and the next thing I know, the landlord of the apartment called me and asked me to move. I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "I didn't realize that when I rented the place to you that you were at Clark College, and that you would be entertaining black people in your home." I can't remember her name.

TS: It doesn't matter.

JM: It doesn't matter. I said, "I haven't done anything wrong. I just can't believe that you are going to evict me." She said, "I'm going to have to because the neighbors are not pleased about this." So you know what I did? I went to every door, and I knocked on those people's doors, and I looked them in the eye; and I said, "I want you to tell me why you have a problem with this because—what have I done?" They all backed down, and they all turned out to be very loving neighbors.

DY: Did they?

JM: Yes, they were just great to me and sorry to see me when I moved away. I did not budge. But it was a difficult time, those eleven years. And then, of course, Martin Luther King was assassinated during that time; but what a rich time it was in terms of what I saw, what I heard, what I was able to experience at that time.

But it was out of that, that I ended up here because I met a woman by the name of Donna [W.] Angel, and I was accompanying Donna. She had gotten her master's at Northwestern, and she knew Wayne [R.] Gibson. Wayne had gotten his master's and Ph.D. at Northwestern. He had invited Donna to come and do a recital here, and so I came with her.

TS: And he was the department chair then?

JM: No, there was no such thing as departments.

TS: Oh, we're talking about '75, aren't we?

JM: There is no department, it's a music program and it's a junior college. Wayne had the title of coordinator of music, and John [C.] Greider was the division chair of Humanities. So I came up with Donna, and we played a recital, and I met Wayne. He said, "Why don't you come back and do a solo recital?" So I did, and out of that he said, "Why don't you come and do some teaching for us, just part-time?" I did, and all of a sudden there was a dream there of, "Let's build a department; let's build a program." I got really excited about being a part of that. Of course, you couldn't even find this place; we were sitting in the pasture, and you had to come through the rock quarry with rocks flying all over, and trucks pulling out in front of you, and bumping through holes, and whatever. We'd bounce our way all the way in to this little place with these four or five little buildings. But, anyway, the thing that struck me when I played those little recitals is how the community turned out for it, because we would have 150 people from the community. So many of them have passed on, they are no longer with us, but they were just the—the Knights, Franklin Knight and his wife—and all these people that were just great supporters, and they came to everything we did. So, in my first year I did fifteen concerts on this campus.

TS: Dr. [Horace W.] Sturgis was very supportive.

JM: Oh, Dr. Sturgis! He interviewed me, and hired me. I remember sitting in his office—he was such an imposing person, he was so—did you know Dr. Sturgis?

DY: No, I did not.

JM: Did you know him?

TS: Sure.

JM: How long have you been here Tom?

TS: I came in '68.

JM: Oh, you were here before I was here! How long have you been here?

TS: I've been here thirty-eight years.

JM: Thirty-eight! I didn't realize that. Oh wow! That's great! Well, you know more of the history than I do. I guess I was with Dr. Sturgis for about six years before Betty [L. Siegel] came.

TS: In '81 for Betty. Dr. Sturgis retired in '80.

JM: I came in 1975 to Kennesaw. But we sat in his office and we just really communicated. He loved the arts; he absolutely loved the arts. And there's something I'll say—and we can take this out, or whatever, but it was very interesting, Tom and Dede, when I took the position at Clark College, needless to say I was very surprised at the reaction. I thought nothing about it. I had not been taught prejudice; I had not been taught some things, or whatever, I don't know. But I applied for the job thinking that I was so excited that I had gotten this job; I was just so thrilled about it. I was excited about the experience. And, oh, my goodness, the next thing I know people are saying, "You're going to do what? You're going where?" And I won't put on tape some of the really ugly things that were said to me at the time, but one of the things that was said to me that caused pause was, "Well, you know if you do that you will pigeon-hole yourself, and you will never be able to go anywhere else. You will be then associated with a historically black college, and that's probably where you will remain the rest of your days." I thought how strange, I don't get it.

TS: I was thinking, even in the days of segregation, one thing that blacks were given credit for was being good musicians.

JM: Well, yes, and we had wonderful students, and I had so many wonderful relationships there. The exhibition that we have in the Sturgis Gallery, right now, is here because I bought a student's painting in 1966, forty years ago. And I still have that oil painting, and it's in exhibition right now. He came to Clark College; I bought this painting; and he is now an internationally known artist; and he's up on the faculty of the University of North Carolina. And so two years ago, I decided to try to find him, and I found him, and I wanted to do an exhibition. That's a whole other story

DY: What a nice connection, Joe.

JM: It goes back to my Clark College days. But, anyway, after eleven years it was time for me to move on, and to do something else. One of the reasons I left—that's an interesting place because it's a complex of schools; and what they started out to create, they never did; and to this day they really have not. It was very frustrating for me to be there for that one reason. Clark College started out on University Avenue; if you go down the expressway, you'll see University Avenue. The old Clark Campus is over there, and you can see it in the distance.

They were convinced to move over to where the Atlanta University Complex is because Spelman [College] and Morehouse [College] and Clark and Atlanta University [Clark Atlanta University] and the Interdenominational Theological Seminary and Morris Brown [College]—they said, we want all those schools to be here, and we’re going to create the Atlanta University Complex. What should have happened is that there should have been partnerships to cut out duplication, and not competition. But, what I found there was competition. Spelman wanted to be the best, and Morehouse wanted to be the best, and Clark was kind of a stepchild. So, we had music theory taught at Clark, music theory taught at Spelman, and here we are across the street from each other; when we could have combined the curriculum and what could have been offered, and they could never ever get there. I think it’s probably still that way today. I was real frustrated by that; and so I thought, well, it’s really time for me to move on. But I get back to my interview with Dr. Sturgis—it was just that smile and that receptiveness to me, and his wanting me to be a part of this. So, he showed me such excitement about having me join the faculty and do something with the arts that it was another defining moment that I have to be here. Here I was a tenured faculty member at Clark, and here I was taking—the only two words, risk and opportunity. I thought, this is a grand opportunity to build something, and yet there’s a risk. Here’s a small place, what will happen? But, I felt really good about it, and I have never regretted it. So, I came here and I joined Wayne—there were three of us—David [B.] Ogg was here.

TS: I was going to ask if he was still here.

JM: David Ogg was a really fine musician. That’s an interesting story because Fred Roach’s [S. Frederick Roach, Jr.] wife was first here, and there was a music appreciation course and a chorus, and that was it. And then, David Ogg came in when Fred and Carole [G. Carole Hyde] married and they had the situation where the wife and husband couldn’t both be here, so David took that position. Then he wanted to go off to Europe to study, and then Wayne was out of—I think he had been at Plattsburg teaching for a year—he was out of a Ph.D. program. So he came in to replace David on a one-year appointment. Wayne was really hot to build a music program. He said, “This is the place; we should start offering some more courses.” David had no interest in that.

TS: As I understand it, David Ogg was a great singer, but a prima donna.

JM: Oh, very much of a prima donna.

TS: If I remember correctly, they had trouble just making sure he showed up for class.

JM: Exactly. And I’m going to tell you a funny little story. He had no interest, “Why would you want to build a music program? Not here, not at Kennesaw”—just negative about everything. “Out here? Atlanta is where things are. There’s nothing out here. Why would we do this?” He was stunned by the fact that

Wayne and I were so enthusiastic about building a music program. Dr. Greider would come around at the end of the year—we'd have end of year funds, and he'd come around, you know, Santa Claus, and say, "Well, Joe, we've got some money, what would you like?" Well, for some reason he had bought a conducting chair and stand for David Ogg or Wayne, or something; and he said, "You want me to get you another one of those conducting chairs?" I said, "Well, Dr. Greider, we already have one." But guess what? We ended up with about three of those things. He was really caught up on these conductor chairs. I never will forget, I said, "Dr. Greider, do you think we could have six music stands [laughter]?" And David Ogg looked at me and said, "Why do we need six music stands?" You see about vision? It's all about vision, isn't it? So he just couldn't believe what we were trying to do. We had one music room and a little office, and then the next thing, Wayne and I had two rooms and then three rooms and then four rooms.

TS: Had the maintenance building been remodeled for music?

JM: No, no. We were at the bottom of the old Humanities area. You had [the original] Social Science [Building] here and Humanities there [now renamed Willingham Hall], and you went across [the breezeway between buildings], and then stepped down into the Humanities building.

TS: Almost like a basement.

JM: Yes, like a basement, and we were on the lower floor. Madeline [M.] Miles [Humanities Division secretary to Dr. Greider] was down on the other end when you'd come in from that end.

TS: They were downstairs?

JM: Madeline Miles was downstairs. Dr. Greider's office was upstairs. My office and Wayne's office, we were all down there, as was Tom [M. Thomson] Salter's office. We had a big art room, and we had Room 125, which was the chorus room. We taught piano in there and whatever, and then we got a second little room, and then a third one, and finally four rooms. So, we started designing curriculum, and Wayne and I would leave here everyday—he'd make dinner, and we would write until two and three in the morning. We did that night after night to start designing the music program. Then, all of a sudden, the students were just coming from everywhere, and I had more piano students than I could possibly handle. My theory classes were just full, thirty or so students. We could have just had them packed in like sardines. We were doing concerts; we started a concert series; and I was playing a lot; and we were having guest artists come out.

DY: Where did you hold those concerts?

JM: Over in the old student center [Student Services Building]. Do you remember—behind the [current] Nursing building used to be the student center [presently, Technology Annex]. We would pull out the chairs, wax the floors, put a piano out there, and that's where we performed. Then, when we built the Carmichael Student Center, where the Fireside room is now, those two rooms—the Leadership room and the Fireside room was one big room. So, we wrote a proposal for a justification and got our first Steinway piano, a little seven foot Steinway piano. Wayne and I wrote that and got it. Everything went out for bid, and we wanted a Steinway; we wanted to be the same quality of other people. So we got it. We put that piano over there. We put that on one end, and we put the chairs out here. So, we moved from the old Student Center to what's now the Leadership Room, Fireside Room, and that's where we had concerts. It was a little closet back there—was our little “green room,” and we'd walk out and we'd do those recitals. I've got pictures in there of us in that room.

TS: You called it a “green room?”

JM: Any place where you “hold” as an artist is called a “green room.” It wasn't a fancy green room, you know, green rooms can be really fancy with sofas and lounging places and private bathrooms and whatever; but that was our little green room. We'd come out of there and take our bows, and do all that kind of stuff. Then we started adding faculty, and Dr. Sturgis was very pleased because he and Sue [wife] absolutely loved the arts; they never missed a single performance, never missed a performance. You knew they were going to be there. They were there early, on time, they sat in that audience, and they stayed afterwards, and they were just so thrilled with all of that. Then we were growing so . . . .

DY: When did you add your first faculty member, I mean, in addition to you?

JM: Well, Steve [G. Steven] Everett's at Emory—that's a whole story.

DY: When did Steve come? I remember Steve.

JM: Steve has been gone now about twelve years, and Steve was here about twelve years. Steve came in 1978. He came right out of Florida State [University] with a master's degree and later went to Illinois [University of Illinois] for a doctorate; but Steve was absolutely one of the finest teachers, one of the finest people, one of the most inspiring teachers that we've ever had in the music department, and he could do everything.

DY: You have been so blessed with wonderful teachers.

JM: We have, we've been blessed. But Steve was with us for twelve years. It was really unfortunate that he left here, but he left for a reason that you probably all know about that caused us some problems.

TS: I contacted Steve when I was writing my book on Cobb County.

JM: He's at Emory, and he's done so well. Steve had come to us, and he was a great find for us, and the students loved him, and he worked hard. He was here from early morning until late at night. Just anything that needed to be done.

DY: I remember Steve well. He was a dear.

JM: Losing Steve Everett was a real loss for us. He went right to Emory, and he has been so successful. He's done great things. You read about him in the paper; his compositions get reviewed by Pierre Rue, the reviewer for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

TS: He's got a great website or did; he's doing some kind of different type of music, isn't he?

JM: Oh, yes, he's very much interested in ethnomusicology and India, and he's been to India several times. See, the thing is for us, because he had those interests—he was a composer; he loved the computer; he brought that multi-cultural piece to us. He developed the world music courses; he was just a talent and just something that was just—the fabric he helped us create in that department was wonderful.

TS: Well, let's see, wasn't it 1983 when we got departments on campus with Betty Siegel?

JM: Yes, and music was one of the first six.

TS: Music was one of the six and who was the original chair?

JM: Wayne Gibson. When they moved from programs to departments, Wayne was named the chair of the department.

TS: Was Steve ever chair?

JM: No. He would have been a great chair, but he wasn't. He did serve as a chair at Emory. They have a rotating system. At Emory it's like a three-year assignment, and then the next person comes in. Not like the way we do it.

DY: We're about to change that in the English department.

JM: Do you think so?

DY: Well, I think that's what we're going to do with this incoming dean. We tend to run them off anyway; might as well have a term limit.

JM: You're going to run the dean off?

DY: No! Not the dean, the chair! We like to recycle, and we really like to change-out.

JM: There's something good, and there's something bad about it. I mean, if you've got somebody who's really talented and they're doing great things, you'd hate to bring that to a close.

DY: Well, you would.

JM: But it's the way I feel about it. I feel like in all these leadership positions there's a time to come and a time to go. I was reading yesterday about the retirement of a president at—not the University of Washington, but one that just announced his retirement, and they were saying he had been there twenty years in that position. That's a long time, and they were talking about that. Now, it's an average of about 6.6 years for a president. I think for deans—I'm retiring, I just announced my retirement—it'll be about six or eight months because we've got to start the search to find somebody to start in the fall. But, I said when I came in to the position: five years is all I want to do because I feel that I had things I knew I could do and wanted to do. I felt that because the college was new that we could bring it to a level of stability and we could create the visibility piece that I wanted, the respect that I wanted us to have, to get all the departments nationally accredited, which I was able to do, and get this building [the Performance Hall] up, raise funds for scholarships.

TS: When you say, “this building,” you're looking northward from the Wilson Building where your office is located.

JM: The Performing Arts building and the museum are about to start. And now I have raised more than a million dollars for scholarships. Over the five year galas—I did five galas, this was the fifth one; that's what I wanted to do. Now, back to the chair thing, you've got to keep me focused.

DY: No, you're doing very well on picking up things.

JM: Wayne became chair, and then this little building became available to us.

TS: The old Maintenance building.

JM: The old Maintenance building [laughter].

TS: Greatly renovated.

JM: The architect went inside [and] created a wonderful little space for us and did an addition in the back that we could hold little recitals.

TS: Was that after you became a department?

JM: Yes.

TS: So that was after '83.

JM: We were named a department when we were still over here, so once we were a department—then they came along and supported us with giving us better space that was sound proof and designed with studios to teach in, and practice rooms—but, on a small scale, which now we call the “double-wide” [laughter]. So Wayne and I both—and this goes back to Mis’ Floride because my whole life is all based back to her, and about Gerschefski, my parents, it’s all there. When I went into her studio—I never will forget the day that she had an upright piano, and she had this grand piano. And all of her students [practiced] over here with the upright. I remember the day—this piano had a wonderful cover. I don’t know if you’ve ever seen the covers that go over pianos. If you go down to Stillwell Theater, our Steinway down there is in a box; and if you pull it out, it’s got a padded cover like a quilt that fits it. I remember the afternoon that I went in, and she pulled the quilt off, and she said, “I want you to play this piano.” I lifted the fallboard that comes down over the keys, and that’s when I saw “Steinway” [laughter]! So Steinway became extremely important; I realized quality; that was quality. So, when I went to Converse, we didn’t have anything but Steinways; we had two nine-foot “grands” in Twichell Auditorium; the studios had Steinways. But she also said to me, “You cannot go to a school that’s not nationally accredited. You cannot go unless it’s nationally accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music.” And that’s why I went to Converse because it was nationally accredited. Furman [University] was another possibility because they were—but I went to Converse School of Music. After that, I knew that I had to stay because you begin to know what you’ve got to do. So when I came here, I said to Wayne, “We have to go for national accreditation.” So he and I went to work on that. In 1984 we received national accreditation from the National Association of Schools of Music. We are now twenty-two years of national accreditation in that department. We were very excited about it, and then you’re reviewed every five years; and we have never been put on probation, we have never been deferred. We met the five year standard, and that means your library holdings, your faculty, your staff, the credentials, the curriculum, what you deliver. And as time has gone along, technology became a requirement, multi-cultural; and so that’s how our world music course ended up being created because you’ve got to teach non-western, you can’t be all western. We then did the next five-year period, and we just finished our ten-year period, and we’re about to be re-examined this next year. So, when I became dean, I said, “The other departments have to be nationally accredited too.” I immediately went for theater accreditation, which is the National Association of Schools of Theatre. And then I said, “Visual arts, you’ve got to do it too,”—and everybody kicking and screaming because you have to do a lot of self-study, and all that goes with that. Then we became nationally accredited in visual arts, and that’s the National Association of Schools of Art and Design. So all three, in our college, are nationally accredited and we

are only one of four universities and colleges in Georgia where all the arts departments are nationally accredited.

DY: Very impressive, Joe.

JM: Again, that was very important: “Steinway”; accreditation. So everything I do today has been built on what I learned in the early years of my life. Now, the next piece is that Wayne Gibson—we started on this project to build a performance hall many years ago, unsuccessfully, and so at that time Dr. Siegel said, “Wayne, I want you just to work on this performance hall.” I got a call from Lois [E.] Muir—have you seen that in the news recently? She was the dean, and she has just left Montana because she and the president—she was the provost—were in disagreement on the budget or something.

TS: At any rate, Lois Muir was dean of the School of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences after Dr. George [H.] Beggs.

JM: Following George Beggs, that’s right, because then Don [Donald W.] Forrester came in after Lois.

TS: To pick up the pieces.

JM: To pick up the pieces. I went home one afternoon, and my family was coming in from South Carolina. It was a Friday afternoon, and I was excited about seeing them. Well, I got home and there was a message on my machine, and I went to the message, and it was Lois Muir. She said, “Joe, will you call me at the office?” Well, I’m going to have to say, I don’t know if you worked with her but anytime that happened, “Oh my gosh, what’s this going to be about?” Because you just didn’t know; it was interesting. But anyway, the message was—I called her, and she answered, and she said, “Joe, I want you to serve as acting chair of the department of Music.” And I thought, my goodness, what happened?

TS: So, this is like ’95, ’94?

JM: In ’94. She said, “Wayne Gibson is going to go to the president’s office to work on the performance hall, and you are my pick. I want you to serve in that chair position.” I said, “Oh, I don’t know. I have to think about it, Dr. Muir.” She said, “Well, I really want you to do this.” And she started trying to convince me. I said, “I’m sorry, let me think about it over the weekend.” Everybody was horrified that I would say that to the dean, “I have to think about this.” I waited until Tuesday.

TS: Did you talk to Wayne in the meantime?

JM: Oh, yes, I called Wayne, and I said, “Wayne, what do you think?” He said, “I think you should do it.” Actually, that had a lot to do with my decision. He said,

“Joe, I think you should do it; I think you’ll be fine; I’ll be back in a year, maybe sooner, but I’m just going to spend some time on this project.”

TS: Was this something that Wayne wanted to do?

JM: I don’t know. The thing, Tom, that was confusing to me, because I can tell you they had no mercy on me in terms of what they would ask me to do while being in an administrative position; and I never understood why he could not do both of those things. I mean, why he couldn’t have chaired the department because that would have been a normal duty for an administrator because I do it as dean in raising money. And not only that, we also—we’ll get to something else in just a minute—he can’t devote twenty-four hours a day to that; I mean, you can be chair and do that too, so that was real strange to me. But he said, “I think you should do it. I’ll be back. You’ll be fine.” So, then I walked out in my backyard and I was just pacing when my brother and his wife arrived, and they said, “What are you doing?” I said, “Oh, the weekend is ruined!” They said, “What’s wrong?” I said, “I’ve got to make a decision about something, and it’s not something that I really want to do. I don’t want to spend my life doing that kind of thing. I don’t want to write memos and go to meetings.” My sister-in-law just smiled at me, and said, “Think of all the things you’ve always wanted to do. Think of the difference you could make.” So by the time they left, she had my brain turned around.

TS: What’s her name?

JM: Julia Meeks. She was at the gala. She said, “You’ll do a wonderful job, but just think of some things that you’ve been wanting to do.” So my head started to turn a little bit, and I talked with Wayne, and Wayne assured me he thought I’d be fine. So, I came in on Tuesday, and I accepted it. Of course, in the months that followed, sometimes, I questioned it because that was a hard time.

TS: So you came in as an interim chair thinking that Wayne was going to come back?

JM: Interim chair. I thought he was coming back. Lois Muir told me he’s not coming back. She said, “He’s not coming back; you’re going to be the chair.” Wayne is saying, “I’m coming back.” So, we get to the end of the first year, and Wayne says, “I’ll be back.” And then all of a sudden he says, “The president has asked me now to stay a second year.” So we do the second year. “But I’ll be back.” Lois said, “He’s not coming back.” So, finally at the end of the second year Wayne decided to retire, and in the meantime, Lois has left. Don Forrester has come in because Lois was here two years, but I think first year as dean of the School of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences and second year as dean of Graduate Studies and director of Special Initiatives.

TS: That’s right; they gave her a job where she wouldn’t be supervising any faculty members while she was looking for another job.

JM: Exactly. So, he said, “Joe, I’m going to go ahead and retire, and I think they should go ahead and do a search.” So they did an internal search, and Don met with all the faculty, and it was unanimous that I had done a job that was good enough to stay as chair, and so I did. Then in June of 1998 after I’d been doing this for four years now—I have a home on Kiawah Island over in Charleston area—so I was there for the Spoleto Festival, which I go to every summer. And I was relaxing and having a good time when I got a call from Ed [Edwin A.] Rugg: a message for me to call at ten o’clock. So, I called, and he said, “Joe, Betty [Siegel] and I are here, and we’re calling you because the Board of Regents has just approved the formation of the School of the Arts. We would like for you to be the acting dean because you’ve done such an outstanding job as department chair. This has just been approved; no time for a search.”

TS: So you had been chair four years?

JM: Four years. But now, I was acting chair for two years, then permanent chair for two years, and now we’re ’98. So he said, “We think you’ll do a really good job, and you’ve got a good record at this point, and I think you’ll help us as we move toward the national search.” So I said, “Yes, here I am now, ready to go!” I said, “Yes, that would be a new challenge; I really believe this is the right move. Okay, I’ll do it.” Then he said, “But, we want you to remain as department chair.” We don’t want to lose what you’ve been doing there, and we want you to do both jobs.”

DY: I’m sorry, but that’s typical.

JM: I did both jobs for three years. It nearly killed me.

TS: I bet.

JM: See why my blood pressure is high?

DY: I was just going to say!

JM: And now, I’m going to tell you another little interesting story. When I was made department chair, Mis’ Floride—we’ll go back to her—we always went to Brevard in the summer for the festival up there; and she always had a new, black or navy blue Buick that she was no longer driving. She had osteoporosis, and was all bent over, very much so. So we’re in the mountains, and we’re driving, and we’re going along, and she said, “Joe, I don’t know why I didn’t buy a place up here years ago, and you and I could just spend the summer up here. I just don’t know why I didn’t do that.” She would look over at me, and she said, “Now tell me, you are chair of the music department, is that right?” I said, “Yes ma’am.” She said, “That means you’re over all the music and you oversee all of that.” I said, “Yes ma’am.” She said, “They’re going to make you dean next.” This is no

joke; that's what she said. Six months later—she died in February—and in June they called me and asked me to take the position of acting dean. When I did my presentation when they went for the national permanent position, in my presentation, I said, "I have lovingly accused her of dying, going to heaven, and making me dean" [laughter].

DY: That is so tender.

JM: It is, isn't it? Now, look at the circle: my teacher Greschefski, dean, teacher, pianist; and look what happened to me: dean, teacher, pianist. It's weird, isn't it? I mean, it's a little weird, don't you think? All that funny stuff that all lead up to all of this. But anyway, I did it, and boy, was that a challenge. I was sure the Music department would kill me because they were meeting constantly at eight o'clock in the morning because that was the only time that I could do those duties, and do the College duties because the College didn't exist: we didn't have stationery; we didn't have a secretary; we didn't have anything. We didn't have anything, brochures, or any of those kinds of things.

TS: Where was your office?

JM: Over in my little piano studio, and my secretary, Melissa M. Fryer, was outside in the old Music building, and I was there for about three years. Then one day Ralph [W.] Frey [Executive Assistant to the President and Institutional Planner] said, "We're moving you over to the Wilson building." I was working out of there; I was still teaching; I was department chair; I was dean; I was everything. But you know what? We were making great progress; we were just moving along. Finally in the third year of that I just said I've got to have some help; and so Peter [T.] Witte, who is now the chair, came in here for \$15,000 a year out of Michigan to take over our wind ensemble, which had just failed under everybody. Nobody could make it work.

TS: He came here for \$15,000?

JM: \$15,000 and benefits, as a half-time position.

TS: Oh, okay. That's still low.

JM: His father has been in the Atlanta Symphony for twenty-five years, his mother was the head of music for the Atlanta school system, and he was an only child. So he was coming back home, and this was an opportunity. Both his parents were well-represented and prominent musicians in the community, and so he took our half-time position. But I want to tell you something: he worked full time, and he was doing phenomenal things. I realized how bright he was and energetic and what a vision he had. So I said, "Can we make Peter acting chair to help me out?" They agreed to that. Then in 2001—it took three years before they finally launched the national search for the dean's position. In the meantime, I was

diagnosed with cancer in 2000, so I thought, “Well, this is not something you can apply for.” And Ed [Rugg] said, “You could go back to the department and be the chair since Peter was in an acting position.” And I said, “No, that’s probably not—I just don’t know which way I’m going to go.” So, in September of 2000, I went to MD Anderson [Cancer Center, Texas Medical Center, Houston, Texas] for surgery, not knowing what that outcome would be, and they had launched the search for the permanent dean. They closed it in January. In the meantime, I’d had three months to move along as I was recovering; and so ten minutes before the deadline, I put in my resume. Larry [Laurence I.] Peterson was the chair of the search, and I didn’t think I’d get it. I made the short list, and Larry called up and said, “You’ve made the short list.” And I thought, “That’s good, at least I made the short list. I won’t be embarrassed totally.” So then I got a call that I was one of the three finalists. They treated me just like they did the national people. There was somebody from Florida State, and somebody from Illinois came in, and so we all had to do these major presentations with an assigned topic. I did, and Ed Rugg’s words to me when he came over to the office, he said, “Joe I want you to know we’re offering you the position of dean. You just blew everybody out of the water.”

DY: How wonderful, Joe. Not surprising, but wonderful.

JM: So I said, “I’d like to do it for five years. I think what I’ve started in these three years as acting dean is very fragile.” It was still very fragile, and I’ll tell you why it was fragile: these departments had been in the larger college [College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences]. Particularly the Visual Arts Department—they were not in favor of a separate arts college; they fought it. Betty Siegel wanted it, the music people wanted it, the theater people wanted it; and we thought it was the right way to go, but they did not. So when they did it, they continued to act as if they were separate. They didn’t want to participate in anything we did. They didn’t want to be involved. They didn’t think that way. It was very interesting. Now we’re there; we think of ourselves as the College of the Arts. So it’s a great time for me to leave because we’ve got it where I think we think that way; we feel that way now. That’s great. What I really learned as dean in working with these arts: musicians are collaborative; they work in teams. Theater people are collaborative; they work together. Visual artists work separately.

DY: Solo.

JM: And so to get them to work collaboratively or as a team is a bigger challenge. That’s been one of the hardest challenges I’ve had. They’re all great people, they’re all very talented, they’re wonderful; but when it comes to bringing them together in a group, they have not had that. You see, in the first days when I had my first piano lessons when I learned how to play, the simplest thing: you ended up with a partner in a duet; or you’re in the band; or you’re in a chorus; and you’ve all got to come together to make this thing happen. If you go into the

- theater, the set design or the costume designers, the person in the orchestra pit, everything has to finally come to an agreement to make it work.
- DY: Not so with visual arts.
- JM: No.
- DY: Visual is the solitary artist who has a palette with a canvas, but that's it.
- JM: Yes, that's it.
- TS: Was this behind making Carol D. Edwards the associate dean—because she came from the visual arts?
- JM: Carol Edwards came from visual arts. Julia Matthews, an associate professor of Theatre, was here first as assistant dean. Actually, that came about as a result of my diagnosis with cancer, and I had to move quickly. I think Ed was still here at the time. I said, "We haven't done an assistant dean, and I don't have anybody there, so since I'm going to be away for three weeks"—and I was only gone for three weeks, and I was back—"You know, it would be great." Julia was my choice.
- DY: What was the assistant dean expected to do? Was she involved in personnel decisions, for example?
- JM: No involvement. Then, of course, she left and took the position of chair of the Department of Theatre at Albright College. Following Julia Matthews' departure, I invited Dr. Carol Edwards to move from the chair of Visual Arts to the vacant assistant dean's position.
- DY: She's wonderful.
- JM: Yes. So she came over, and she worked with me. Right now she's the dean of the College of Fine Arts at Western Washington [University]. But she said what she learned here prepared her for that dean's position. She was offered two positions as dean that year, one in Utah, and one at Western Washington. I see her at meetings, and she really wants to get back to this part of the country. She's not real happy up in the Pacific Northwest. But anyway, Carol was here for two years. We expanded on that position and that line with her. And I think she's doing a good job and she's successful at Western Washington. But I don't have an assistant dean right now, or an associate.
- DY: I didn't realize that.
- JM: I said, "We are going to step back and decide what that position needs to be." We have taken two years to do that, and I've discussed it in department chairs'

meetings. And finally we decided we needed an assistant dean for admissions and enrollment management because we have portfolio reviews, we have auditions, we have to be in the high schools a lot, and we have to connect with the conductors and the directors and all that. Now the secretaries and the faculty—they're just running to the high schools and doing all that—we needed somebody to oversee that, and the advising piece. Now with the mandate from the University System about retention, progression, and graduation, it was being proactive to have someone. We brought in consultants from the University of Michigan and all these people—because they have that line there—to talk with them about what they do. What we learned is that retention was phenomenal when there is somebody overseeing that. They make sure that the auditions are arranged, and that the parents—what we wanted to create was a single experience for the students and the parents. And we wanted somebody who could work with the admissions office and the registrar's office, and we would have our on-line stuff just the way it should be, and we would suddenly have a seamless thing. [We wanted] somebody that would be going to career fairs or conferences or whatever around admissions and enrollment management and those kinds of things. So we have now done a national search; we've got thirty-eight applications for this position. We have narrowed them down to about five or six, and we're in the process of doing phone interviews and references, and we will be inviting those people in. We have somebody from the admissions office on the committee, and so we think that's going to be a wonderful piece. The other advantage is somebody who specialized in grant writing and that kind of thing, but what somebody from the discipline was bringing, was bringing their discipline.

DY: Exactly. So, where are your candidates coming from, Joe?

JM: All over. They're coming from Michigan, they're coming from Illinois, and they're coming from everywhere.

DY: So this is quite an undertaking.

JM: Yes. And the other thing I did, I did not want a tenured faculty position, so I had an administrative faculty position, and it's a contract year by year. The interesting thing is with that staff position you're able to offer more money than you're able to offer in a faculty position. And the thing is I was also able to give them an assistant dean title.

DY: Yes. What disciplines are you finding these applicants coming from?

JM: They're coming in from everything. Some of them will come in with a music background; some will come in with a theater background or a visual arts background; and some are coming [with] an admissions background. As a matter of fact, one of the applicants is coming out of the Atlanta College of Art, and has worked there in admissions and advising. And with her, I'm not saying that she's

the strongest one because they're all strong that we're going to look at; but she's done a lot with the international piece, and so she comes with a lot of real strengths. We're pleased about that. We're going to bring to this office somebody that's going to do just a bulk of stuff that will help the department chairs, will help the secretaries, will help me, and yet at the same time can do some of the projects that I need to have done in terms of having somebody in this office. So we're excited about that.

TS: Well, speaking of searches, one of the great services that you've performed for Kennesaw State was to chair the presidential search committee, and I wonder if we could just talk about that a little bit.

JM: Absolutely. You know, I had planned to announce my retirement in the fall last year, and on July the 12<sup>th</sup>, we had lost our electricity here, and we had been out for awhile; we had no telephone service, so we had a meeting and [Secretary to the Dean] Melissa [Fryer]—we left the meeting, she went out, the phones were back on, and she checked the messages. She said, "The Chancellor's called you and wants you to call him." So I called him, and it was his private line. He answered. So it was Tom [Thomas C.] Meredith, and when I called he answered—no secretary, he answered. He said, "Joe, I'm calling because I've been very impressed with what you've done." He'd been to the gala a couple of times, and he said, "I liked what you've done in the College of the Arts, and I'm going to ask you to do something. I want you to chair the presidential search for the replacement of Dr. Siegel." He said, "This is something that you can have done in the fall. I wouldn't dare ask you to do this—because I know you have your big gala in the spring—I wouldn't ask you to do this because I know that takes so much of your time, but you're just the person to do this." And, of course it's an honor, and I was very pleased to be asked, and so I said, "Dr. Meredith, I'll be happy to, I'm honored, thank you." He said, "Well, I'll come out and charge the committee, and we'll get started; we'll have a search firm, Baker-Parker [and Associates, Inc.], and we'll move this along. We'll have the decision, and have this completed by December. Dr. Siegel is leaving in January, and this is the way it'll be." I said, "That's fine. We'll do it." I hung up and I thought, oh my goodness, what have I done? This is going to be a lot of work. I have a great secretary; Melissa has been with me ten years this month. I wrote her a long letter afterwards thanking her for her outstanding support of me as chair of the committee and her service to the university. I walked out here, and I looked up at her, and she said, "What does he want?" I said, "He wants me to chair the presidential selection committee." She said, "That's wonderful! We can do it," she said, with the biggest smile, and I wrote all that in her letter. When she said that, I said, "Yes we can." So, we kept waiting for Dr. Meredith to come charge the committee. Three weeks later on August the 4<sup>th</sup>, he said, "I'm coming to the campus to charge the committee." We all gathered, and then he calls up and says he can't make it, he'll charge us by phone. So he gave us our charge of what we would do, hung up, and our work began. That was on August the 4th.

TS: When did Meredith announce that he was leaving?

JM: Within the month!

TS: That's what I thought.

JM: Within the month he announced that he was leaving; and I could not believe it because I was doing it for Betty Siegel, and I was doing it for Kennesaw State University, and I was doing it for the chancellor because I thought, well, I've been here a long time, I love this place, and I'd like to do whatever I can to try to get the next president here that would be the right one for us. But, actually, it became a real challenge for us because Dr. Meredith was still here. We had his staff telling us what to do, and the search firm telling us what to do. Then he announced he was leaving, and so then they decided to name an interim chancellor, Corlis [C.] Cummings. Then the governor jumped in there and decided we're not going to do that, and they held it up. So then finally it was decided that Corlis would do it. I went down to meet with Corlis, and, of course Corlis was totally new to this. She had never done any of this before. She is a lovely woman, and we just got along so well. She and I just looked at each other, and we talked about what we needed to do because now we're changing horses in midstream here. We had been getting so many directions about, "You do it this way, or you do it that way; don't do this; don't do that." In the meantime, we were going about doing our work—writing the profile and writing the white paper and getting a web site created and doing these kinds of things. I was really pleased. It was a great committee, twelve of us. It just could not have been better. It doesn't mean that we agreed. We had times when we disagreed; we had times when we were passionate about certain things. But I will tell you when we left there twelve people had bonded, twelve people missed each other, twelve people respected each other, and it was one of the best experiences I ever had. I think the committee felt that way. I had very strict rules. I said we will start at two o'clock and we will never go longer than four, and we never did. We kept on the path, very direct, and we resolved anything that came up that caused any problems. I did more listening than saying anything; I let the committee, very much, voice and feel whatever they needed to do. I just basically kept us on track and kept us focused. I tell you, the relationship we built with the Foundation was outstanding. Tommy [Thomas M.] Holder came in really skeptical, and he said, "I just didn't know." He has so much respect for us now as a faculty and for the academic enterprise that he never had before, because he comes from the corporate world. He had a party at his home to celebrate our work, and I met with the executive committee of the Foundation and made a presentation about two weeks ago; and every time he introduces me he laughs and he talks about being skeptical. He said, "You know me, I just came in there and said, 'Well, this is very clear to me, let's just do this!'" And he said they said, "But, no, we don't do it that way" [laughter]! He just has the biggest, warmest, most wonderful smile when he talks about that experience and how meaningful it was for him. He said, "You know what? I didn't win, they did" [laughter]. I tell you, he was such a

great team player. Steve Prather who comes from our alumni association and is an alumnus of the business college is of the same mind. He'd look at me and say, "I thought we already had a discussion about this! What do you mean we have an open forum for faculty, staff, and students?" I was just steering this thing down that path, and it was amazing the way that they would just suddenly see the light and suddenly realize what we were doing—and the respect that I felt that they really gained, about the process and how we did it.

DY: It's a collaborative enterprise.

JM: The collaborative enterprise.

TS: They were much more accustomed to doing things very secretly?

JM: When I announced my retirement on Saturday evening, in the corporate world they would have somebody waiting in the wings, and they would have immediately announced who that person was going to be, and they would just point to that person and say, "Dede, you're going to be the next dean." And we don't do it that way. We go through the process; they'll launch a search in the fall and there will be a committee, all well represented, and all of that will unfold. So, it was a real learning experience, and I'll tell you, Tommy Holder has been so complimentary.

DY: How wonderful.

JM: He said publicly, "Joe has brought great leadership to the search. How he handled the whole situation with that mixed bunch of people to bring us all to the same place."

DY: I want to ask you a question about that too. I mean, we've all been involved in . . .

JM: And I'm not saying that to compliment myself; I'm just saying for him to come out of the Foundation and say an academic person is a great leader, it's a real compliment.

DY: Exactly. And apparently you have done a beautiful job because just talking to members of the committee, they felt the same way. You know the members of the committee did too, Joe. What I wonder just from my own perspective of having been chair, you know, smaller search committees, of course; but how did you communicate to the committee that they're a recommending body; that they don't make. . . .

JM: It's advisory.

DY: Yes, thank you. That's difficult for people.

JM: It is. We struggled with that here in the college, the faculty, if it doesn't turn out the way they think it should because they've made the recommendation or whatever, it gets really difficult. So I kept reminding them and I kept saying, "We are the presidential search and advisory committee."

DY: Thank you. So that's the term.

JM: We are here to screen and find the best candidates we can to present to the Board of Regents, and we have to stay focused on that; it will not be our decision ultimately. I think the thing that I did too, I said, okay—they've asked me to present written reports on each candidate, and for me to come and to present those reports, to give those reports and then talk about the reports if they have any questions, or whatever, at the Regents. So I said to them, "I don't want these papers to be more than one page. It cannot go—it will be one page, you will address the assets and the liabilities, and you will give it from campus focus, from the committee focus, from the feedback survey, whatever, and how we have arrived at what we consider the assets and liabilities of each candidate. But it will not go, not one word, not one line over one page. It's got to be that tight and we have to communicate to them what we think. We didn't have a single one that went over one page. When I went in to the committee the Regents looked at me and said, "How did you do it? This was the greatest we have ever seen." They're calling me from other—right now Georgia Perimeter, the chair of that committee, they used us as the example and the model. "Call Joe Meeks at Kennesaw State University, and copy what he did." And the woman there, last week she called, and she said, "We have copied everything on your website, everything, we have looked and we have followed everything." But anyway, the Regents—it was another piece where they said how did you do this? Regent Leebern, Don [Donald M.] Leebern, [Jr.] said, "I have never read anything as fine as this. You made our work so easy." The chancellor wrote me one of the most beautiful letters, and he said, "You made it very difficult for the Regents Committee because you sent us strong candidates, and you wrote up your reports so well."

DY: In a balanced fashion.

JM: In a very balanced fashion. Never recommending, never saying this is our choice. It's how well you write to get what you want across to say: these are the strengths, these are the weaknesses. We never used the words strength or weakness.

DY: I like assets and liabilities.

JM: And we didn't use the words, but that's basically what I wanted to keep in mind. We presented all of the good stuff, and things that the committee, felt this; but we never used those words, but it became clear where the strengths were and where the weaknesses were. But they said—Michael [J.] Coles said the same thing, publicly, that how easy it had made their job—difficult and easy—easy because it was so well run and the process was so good and what we handed over to them

was in such an organized great way that it made their work easy when they sat down to do it. The difficulty came in—we had very carefully put the best forward and so they had two or three there that it became really difficult to make a decision. They did site visits. They flew up to Illinois to see John [M.] Dunn [Provost and Vice Chancellor of Southern Illinois University] and to be on his campus, and what they found was a stellar record. I mean, nationally, he had recommendations all over this country from college and university presidents. When they got to Illinois they found exactly what we had found: that this man was outstanding. So Dan [Daniel S. Papp] had strong competition, really strong competition.

TS: When you started, how many applicants did you have?

JM: Fifty-two.

TS: And then you narrowed it down to ten?

JM: Ten. And we did the airport interviews with ten. We spent the whole weekend out at the airport, and we met all ten of those people. We stayed on time; nobody got a minute more than the other. Then at the end we did not choose, but we eliminated. We eliminated five. We never ranked.

TS: What were your criteria for elimination?

JM: Well, first of all, one of the things that happened was how they presented themselves. For example, one of the candidates came in and we had a glass of water there. The candidate had [eye] glasses. The whole time was spent flipping this glass and the rest of the time picking up the glasses and dropping the glasses. That went on for an hour and a half!

TS: And ran you nuts.

JM: And just—on paper, really strong, great things. We said, “Gosh, I really was expecting this to be—this might be our choice.” It was really interesting. By the time we finished that interview, we were all just crazy. Another thing: how succinctly they could answer the questions. I always started, and I had an opening question, and my opening question was: why they were interested in this job, and based on their experience, why did they think they were a good candidate for the position. I said “Take ten minutes if you like, five or ten minutes, whatever and tell us that.” One candidate, thirty minutes later, was still going. One candidate was just literally preaching to us; it just turned into preaching to us and you were just sitting there. If you talk about “shared governance,” that doesn’t really represent—people will say, “Oh yes, shared governance, and I believe in whatever;” but then you watch the body language, you watch how well they’re able to answer the question, how inviting they are in how they’re talking to you. When that one was over it was, “Whew, I can’t imagine sitting in a meeting with

that person and having to be talked to like that.” Again, having such a mix, people like somebody from the Foundation sitting there knowing that they’ve got to interact with that person and suddenly saying, “Oh my goodness.” So it was very interesting the way it fell out. And then one or two would be brought in there coming from places where they had done good work, but really their experience was a little too small. You know, where there might be only 2,000 students. We’re a big campus now. Now, Betty Siegel has grown into the position; she came when we were small as I did too, so you’ve had the advantage to grow with that in those little pieces, so that you were growing and adjusting and developing, too.

DY: Right, if you just parachute into it, it’s like they say. . .

JM: Exactly. But for someone who has not had that, and you come from a tiny situation; you come into a place where we are now. And another thing that I think is very high on the list, and you may not agree with me—I think we’re in a different day. We’re not in the days when I went off to Converse College with ivy-covered brick buildings and the enchanted life that faculty and students had; it was just a wonderful place. We’re not there any more because we’re so challenged with funding. We can’t expect the state to keep funding everything we have; it’s not going to happen. I think we’ll get less of that as time goes on. If we don’t have private funding, if we don’t have an ambassador that can go out there and charm people and convince people that Kennesaw is the place to invest, then we don’t have a future. I feel that way in the dean’s position. I was talking at the chairs meeting yesterday. I said, “As you launch this search, please keep in mind for this college, and the arts in particular—if you don’t get someone who can connect with the community and be a salesman for this college, we haven’t got a future.” So fundraising. And I really hate to say this, but humanities people and arts people don’t realize it, but you better be a good businessperson. I mean, you really have to face the facts. I said to the committee, “Let’s not get caught up in scholarship. We want them to value scholarship; we want them to value research, but they may not be active in that right now if they’ve been doing the job to prepare them for what we need.” They may have had scholarship back here, but the main thing is that they value what we do—that they can go out and bring the money and the resources that we need to do our work.

DY: I guess the trick is always figuring out—how do you know that they value.

JM: And that is a tricky piece, but I think there are ways. For me, just watching how they react when I took them to the galleries.

DY: There you go.

JM: Or the Rare Book Room: were they fish out of water, or were they really excited about that? I’m not going to tell you who did what, but there were so many ways that you could determine that. But, if you read the profiles of university

presidents and deans and whatever at this point, most of them are spending their days with fund raising and meeting with the businessperson, looking at where the resources are going and how we can do a better job. If you don't have somebody in that leadership position that understands that—you know, business is important to me. I grew up with my father who was a businessman, and very successful and a good one; my brother who was a baseball player was also a very successful businessperson. Mis' Floride was also a very successful businessperson. She said to me in the beginning, you've got to have stock. She sat down with me and showed me every piece of stock she had, and she said, "Joe, you get it and forget it." And she would stop on the side of the road and go to a telephone booth to call her stockbroker to say, "Let's do this and let's do that." I started investing at a very young age, and I balance my checkbook; that's important. I sit here in this department and I look at what the budgets are doing and where we need to go and what we can and cannot do and what we need to get money for and whatever. If you don't have somebody doing that, that's really savvy business-wise—because you're going to be talking to those people out there where that's what they do, and if you don't convince them that you know what you're doing, and [if it seems] that you just don't know where money goes, you're not going to get the support that you need. So finding the person that has all of those things and more so than ever those things like fund-raising and business sense, those are crucial now; and hopefully you can have all of those things.

I think Dan Papp will do a fine job. He's raised money; I don't know if it's the kind of money at this point that we're going to have to raise, which comes from those people out there, individuals. What we've done in the College of Arts, we have really created a wonderful, wonderful network of supporters. I had a woman there the other night that had just given me \$100,000. She walked up to me after I made the announcement that I was retiring and said, "I didn't come here tonight to hear about any of this." One of the donors that I had the champagne for, he said, "Joe, I'll give you \$10,000 for the rest of my life, every year, you can count on that." And he gave me \$10,000 and I said, "Okay, you'll have a table at the gala. I'm going to pay for that." He said, "I don't want a table, I just need four tickets; here's \$800 more dollars." You know what I mean? Some of the donors are concerned about my stepping down as dean. As you know, it's all about relationships. What I have to do is help them transition and keep believing in Kennesaw. I'm dealing with that right now. It's going to be crucial in who that next person is to keep that momentum going and keep those relationships; because I have been about building relationships for students. It's all about students for me. My legacy is that. I believe in scholarships. I never will forget, somebody said to me and I won't tell you the name, a few months ago, "Why don't you use that money for this; you've raised enough money for scholarships." I said, "If I stay here twenty more years I'd never raise enough money for scholarships."

DY: See, that's one of the reasons John [Yow] and I wanted to come. The fact that it was your thirtieth was the key reason, but the fact that it goes to scholarships!

JM: To scholarships. And, you know, we are a very young university. We don't have any large endowment.

DY: We don't have that legacy.

JM: There are fine arts colleges some places where they have eighteen million, twenty million dollar endowments. If we want the best and the brightest, it's a competitive market, and particularly for us in the arts. That violin student—if she's good—she can go anywhere and there will be people putting money behind it. If I don't have some money to be competitive and say, "Look, Dede, I'm going to give you another thousand dollars if you'll come and be in our orchestra and be a music major." If we can't do that, when I leave here, if Peter [Witte] and John S. Gentile and Linda A. Hightower can't have scholarship funds to play with in terms of attracting and recruiting, [then we won't be competitive]. The return on that investment is significant because we're investing in the future of these students and their lives. That's what happened to me when I was seventeen, when I got the Walter Spry [Memorial Piano] Scholarship [Converse College]. That was an investment and that meant a lot. I didn't need the money. It wasn't about needing the money. It was about the investment that somebody believed I could do something, that what I was doing was worth it.

DY: And then, of course, then you give back, too.

JM: Well, you saw my little grand nephew up there, didn't you?

DY: I did.

JM: Again, it goes back to my parents and my brothers; my brothers give back. My brother has never missed a gala. My family has never missed a gala. I have two nephews and a niece there; do you think it's easy for them to buy those tickets? I buy my ticket, I don't go for free, never have, don't believe in it. If you're going to ask for money, you model that, you give it too. I may not be able to give \$20,000, but I can give \$2,000, so I always buy a ticket and I say to my family, "You don't come unless you buy a ticket."

TS: Let me ask one or two more questions.

JM: I'm sorry I keep talking.

DY: No!

TS: This is kind of a wind up question in a way. What kept you at Kennesaw all these thirty-one years?

DY: That's a good question, Tom.

JM: Well, Tom, what kept me here was the excitement and the opportunity to be involved in something that I felt—I'd like to think I was kind of visionary as well, that I saw what Kennesaw could be from early on, and it kept becoming that. It kept becoming what I wanted it to be. We went from a program to a department and then national accreditation, and, my goodness, where else would you want to be? In the meantime I was talking to my friends around the country. They were experiencing enrollments going down and no piano majors enrolled, being limited to copying only one hundred sheets or whatever per semester, and funds being cut. They were not appreciated by the administration, not in an environment where the community appreciated the arts. Why would I want to leave a place where so many exciting, wonderful things were happening? I never intended to stay; I thought there would be another place. I'd come and be here for five years, three years, whatever, and then I would move on to some other place. But that didn't make any sense.

DY: So many people have said that Joe that we've interviewed, so many people. Isn't that right, Tom?

JM: Really?

TS: Right. And Betty Siegel, too, has commented that we've been several different colleges while she's been here. So you really didn't have to go to another place to be at another place.

JM: Right. Tom, this place has been so good to me. I felt valued; I felt appreciated by the community and by the campus. I love the people here, I mean, you all—we don't see each other often, but I feel like we're good people.

DY: I do too.

JM: And we have people—again, it's about investment—you've invested, and I've invested, and I'd like to think that investment has really paid off and that we're reaping the return on that investment. To me that's what it's about. We make choices; we have choices, and you get to that road where you can go this way or you can go that way, and you hope you're making the right decision. I feel like many times I came to that road: when I was in Europe studying and I had to make a decision whether I was going to stay there because I got to Europe—my teacher at the Mozarteum [University, Salzburg, Austria] loved my playing and they wanted me to stay in Europe. Then I went to Boston University to study with Bela Nagy; I was going to do a doctorate there and decided that I didn't want a doctorate. The people in the arts, people get doctorates, but you can either do it or you can't, you know what I mean? And I came out of a world where many of my teachers didn't even have master's degrees; many of the great artists never even had degrees. That's the arts world, brilliant artists (musicians). When I was at Boston, my teacher Bela Nagy at Boston University, wanted me stay there,

wanted me to be at Tanglewood, but I chose to come here and do this. Where would those roads have taken me if I had stayed in Europe at the Mozarteum, or if I had stayed in Boston? They probably would have taken me to other roads. We had to make decisions. We all have to do that, and we all hope we've made the right one. As I sit here at this point, I just think I have made wonderful decisions. I have no regrets; I love what I've done. I would have never thought of myself as going into administration; I don't regret that at all. It's been hard; I've had some hard places to get through, some real challenges, but the work has been good, and I'm glad I made the decisions I made. I think you probably do too. Do you?

TS: Sure. Absolutely.

JM: Because we could have all gone some place else. We've had opportunities to go to other places, but it was right to stay here. The thing that I really want, I want to be able to—if I am fortunate enough to live a few more years—I really want to look back here and see this place continuing to grow and reaching those higher levels that we still can go to, and to be so proud. I just want to look back and be so proud of where we started and what happened here.

TS: It's implied in everything you've been saying, I think, as dean and also chair of the presidential search committee. I think you're in ideal position to talk about where we are in terms of the intellectual life of the campus now. Could you say a little bit about where you think we are and maybe where we're going as well?

JM: Well, I'm very excited about that too because we all know where we were when we started in terms of the students we attracted. I think that's what you're talking about.

TS: We interviewed Oral [L.] Moses and he talked about that too, the quality of the students improving as time has gone on.

JM: Yes, we are getting such talented students; it is just really very nice, and faculty too. Now we all know that there was a time when we couldn't have attracted some of these students of the quality that we have now. There was a time when we couldn't have attracted some of the faculty we are now able to attract. So the talent level of the faculty and the quality of the students, it's just risen to what I had always hoped it would be. We are becoming more of a place of choice, and we're having students audition now where they've gotten a full ride at Arizona State University, which is one of the best in the country, and choosing to come here because of our faculty and because of the students that they meet and are performing within our ensembles. Our students are all being accepted in major graduate schools. We've got students in the doctoral programs at the University of Texas, at Florida State University, at Temple University, at Peabody, New England Conservatory of Music, and they're graduating with honors, and they're going in and not having to do remedial work. The feedback that I get from these students and what they've done here—but then the students that we have coming

in now—and some of those students that have been successful came in when they may have been deficient in some things. So we've turned out a good product, I think. But I'm very pleased because I feel like we're raising the standards and it's a very, very exciting place. I don't know if I've answered that. I'm speaking more just from the arts, but actually what I see across the campus.

DY: Oh, no, it's certainly true in my department. One of our graduates is going to get a doctorate at the University of Southern California with scholarships, so they are going places and we're turning out good solid students.

JM: Absolutely. And also, like the professional conferences, there was a time when we would not have been invited to be a part of that, or we would not have been considered a major player. But we have the Georgia Music Educators Association Annual Meeting in Savannah, which is always the last weekend in January. There was a time when Shorter College Chorale [Rome, Georgia] was the featured group, or University of Georgia, or Georgia State University—they would be the places where the faculty would be invited to present. Those ensembles—well guess what, for the last three years, guess who's being invited? Last year our wind ensemble was invited, our chorus was next, standing ovation; I was there to introduce them! This year four of our faculty members from the Department of Music were invited to be presenters. Our jazz ensemble, our chorus performed, our faculty did a performance—and the positive feedback we get from that? Students want to come here. We always have a Department of Music booth. We are now at a point where we are one of the major players, and students want to come to us, and faculty want to come to us. We're being invited to—I mean, what's happening to our wind ensemble for now, oh my gosh, how many years have we been invited to Carnegie Hall for the [Annual] National Wind Ensemble [New York, New York]. Peter Witte was invited to conduct there a year ago. We've just come out of the National Collegiate Band Association, and our students audition, and they're accepted in these national arenas. Our faculty are going and doing these things. So, I think it's wonderful. Our visual arts—our students are now being represented in some of the major galleries. They're in these exhibitions in these major places around the city. Our faculty—some of them are doing international work and they're finalists. We've got faculty here doing museum quality work in their own work, and we've got students whose paintings—people are paying nice sums of money for their paintings. We've got a senior graduating right now who had an exhibition in Atlanta, and he sold every painting he had. So I don't know if that answers you.

TS: That does; that's a perfect answer. You've been a great person to interview too. We can just sit back and let you talk.

DY: I know!

TS: You've been wonderful.

DY: It was unstructured, I loved the circularity, and you started out by saying you were on a journey, and the journey, the great archetypal journey, you have to go back home, the hero has to go back home and give back the gift.

JM: That's exactly right.

DY: And that's what you've been saying.

JM: And it is. In this, I feel like I've been the architect; I've been the bricklayer, I've been the custodian, and I think we have to fit all those roles. I think in life you've got to do all those pieces: you've got to be at times an architect, you've got to be the laborer putting up the bricks and painting the walls; and then you've got to be the custodian cleaning up. Whatever it takes that's what you have to do. You can't just sit in a place and be one thing.

DY: Or you can but . . .

JM: You can and when you choose to do that you're not going to make a difference.

DY: No, you're not.

TS: Well, I'm out of questions. Thank you.

## INDEX

- Angel, Donna W., 10  
Annual National Wind Ensemble invitation to KSU (Carnegie Hall), 35  
Atlanta College of Art, 24  
Atlanta University Complex, 8-9, 11-12
- Baker-Parker and Associates, Inc., 25-26  
Beggs, George H., 18  
Board of Regents, 20, 28  
Boston University, 33
- Carmichael, Oliver C., 4  
Clark Atlanta University (Clark College), 8-9, 11-12  
    Philharmonic Society, 9  
Coles, Michael J., 28  
Converse College School of Music (Spartanburg, South Carolina), 3-7, 17, 30, 32  
    Walter Spry Memorial Scholarship, 4  
Cox, Floride (Mis' Floride), 1-4, 7, 17, 20-21, 31  
Cummings, Corlis C., 26
- Dunn, John M., 29
- Edwards, Carol D., 23  
Ellington, Duke, 8-9  
Erickson, John, 7  
Everett, G. Steven, 14-15
- Forrester, Donald W., 18-20  
Frey, Ralph W., 21  
Fryer, Melissa M., 21, 25
- Gentile, John S., 32  
Georgia Music Educators Association, 35  
Georgia Perimeter College, 28  
Georgia State University Chorale, 35  
Gerschefski, Edwin O., 4-8, 17, 21  
Gibson, Wayne R., 10, 12-13, 15-20  
Greider, John C., 10, 13
- Hightower, Linda A., 32  
Holder, Thomas M., 26-27  
Hodgson, Hugh, 7
- Interdenominational Theological Seminary (Atlanta University Complex), 12

Kennesaw State University

- Annual Benefit Gala for the Arts at Kennesaw State University, 1, 3, 16
  - Changes at KSU, 10, 12-19, 21-25, 27, 30-31, 33
  - Community support, 10
  - Art exhibits, 11
  - Early development of music program and department, 10, 12-19, 21
  - National accreditation for College of the Arts, 16-17
    - National Association of Schools of Music, 17
    - National Association of Schools of Theatre, 17
    - National Association of Schools of Art and Design, 17
  - Performance Hall and museum, 16, 18
  - Development of the College of the Arts, 19-20, 22-25, 31
  - Approval by the Board of Regents for the School of the Arts, 20
  - Presidential search committee, 25-31
  - KSU Foundation, 26-27
  - Donations, 31
  - Reputation, 34-35
  - Department of Music, 35
  - Annual National Wind Ensemble invitation (Carnegie Hall), 35
  - National Collegiate Band Association, 35
- Killingsworth, J. Dekoven (Clark Atlanta University), 8
- King, Martin Luther, Jr., 8-9
- Knight, Franklin, 10

Leeburn, Donald M., 28

Matthews, Julia, 23

Meeks, Floyd (father), 1-3, 5-6, 32

Meeks, Joseph D.,

- Birth and childhood, 1
- Early education, 1, 3-5
- University of Georgia, 1
- Annual Benefit Gala for the Arts at Kennesaw State University, 1, 16
- On the arts, 1
- Parents, 1-2, 3, 5-6, 32
- Brothers, 1-2, 5-6, 32
- On music lessons, 1-3, 6
- On going to college, 3-4, 7
- On auditioning, 4
- Walter Spry Memorial Scholarship, 4, 32
- Mentors, 4-8, 17, 21
- Grandmother, 5
- On southern traditions, 6
- Master of Fine Arts, 7
- Private lessons at Yale University, 7

On teaching, 8  
 Teaching at Clark Atlanta University, 8-9, 11  
 On racism, prejudice, 1960s, 9, 11  
 Coming to KSU, 10-11  
 Role in developing music program and department, 10, 12-19, 21  
 On curriculum design, 13, 15  
 On becoming dean, 16, 22  
 Scholarships, 16  
 On Steinway pianos level of “accreditation,” 17-18  
 On gaining national accreditation for the College of the Arts at KSU, 17  
 Becoming acting chair of the department of Music, 18  
 Becoming acting dean while also department chair, 20  
 Development of the College of the Arts, 20, 22-25, 31  
 Health concern, 22  
 Chair for the presidential search committee, 25-31  
 Retirement, 25, 27  
 On challenges of funding, 30-32  
 On staying at KSU, 33-34  
 On support from KSU, 33  
 On intellectual life at KSU, 34  
 On students, 34-35  
 On attracting students and faculty, 34-35  
 On KSU students and faculty in the national arena, 35  
 Philosophy, 36  
 Meeks, Julia (sister-in-law), 19  
 Meeks, Matthew (Mack) Henry (brother), 6  
 Meeks, Michael Raymond (brother), 6  
 Meeks, Sarah Verena Stowe (mother), 1, 5  
 Meredith, Thomas, C. (Chancellor), 25-26  
 Miles, Madeline M., 13  
 Moore, Earl, 4  
 Morehouse College, 12  
 Morris Brown College, 12  
 Moses, Oral L., 34  
 Mozarteum University (Salzburg, Austria), 33  
 Muir, Lois E., 18-19  
  
 Nagy, Bela (Boston University), 33  
 National Collegiate Band Association, 35  
  
 Ogg, David B., 12-13  
  
 Papp, Daniel S. (President), 29, 31  
 Peterson, Laurence I., 22  
 Prather, Steve, 27

Roach, G. Carole Hyde, 12  
Roach, Jr., S. Frederick, 12  
Rugg, Edwin A., 20, 22

Salter, M. Thomson, 13  
Shorter College Chorale (Rome, Georgia), 35  
Siegel, Betty L., 11, 15, 18, 20, 22, 25-26, 30, 33  
Simonds, Bruce, 7  
Spelman College, 12  
Sturgis, Horace W., 10-12, 14

University of Georgia, 1, 7-8, 35  
University of New Mexico, 6-7

Witte, Peter T., 21, 32

Yale University, 7