

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
INTERVIEW WITH HARRY HODGSON (HAP) McNEEL
CONDUCTED, EDITED, AND INDEXED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT
for the
KSU ORAL HISTORY SERIES, NO. 67
TUESDAY, 26 JUNE 2007

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KSU Oral History Series No. 67
Interview with Harry Hodgson (Hap) McNeel
Conducted, edited, and indexed by Thomas A. Scott
Tuesday, 26 June 2007
Location: McNeel Building Systems, Inc., Cobb Parkway, Marietta, Georgia

TS: Mr. McNeel, why don't we begin by talking about when you were born and where you were born? I assume you were born in Marietta, but maybe not, so if you'd just talk about that.

HM: I was born right here on Freyer Drive right off of Cherokee Street. (Pronounced free-er) My grandfather developed that subdivision over there, Freyer and Seminole and Cherokee Heights.

TS: Was that Morgan McNeel?

HM: Morgan McNeel, Sr.

TS: He was your grandfather.

HM: My grandfather. He developed that street for his children primarily. He had a lot of children, and there wasn't any place to build, so he cut a street through Cherokee Heights. I was born October 28, 1927.

TS: All right. Then have you pretty much stayed in Marietta your whole life?

HM: All my life, yes. I went into the service in World War II and came out and went to the University of Georgia.

TS: You had been right in that age group, I guess, to have been born in 1927 . . . let's see, you would have been eighteen right about the end of the War.

HM: Seventeen.

TS: You were seventeen? You went in when you were seventeen?

HM: Right.

TS: So you were right out of Marietta High School at that time?

HM: The War was going on pretty strong, and my brother was in the Eighth Air Force in England bombing Germany. He sent me to a military school to get me prepared to go into the service.

TS: So you didn't go to Marietta High School?

HM: I went to Marietta High for two years and then went to Marion Military Institute in Marion, Alabama. I graduated in June of '45 and then immediately joined the navy.

TS: Were you sent to the Pacific?

HM: Well, they sent me to Bainbridge, Maryland, for boot training, and while I was at Bainbridge the War ended. They sent me to Miami and put me on a ship to come up to Green Cove Springs, Florida, which is just south of Jacksonville, to decommission ships; they were bringing ships in from Europe and from Japan to mothball them. That was just about the extent of my career was chipping paint and cleaning up all of the cannons and machinery on the ships in case we'd ever need them again—which we did in the Korean War. They pulled them all out, and they must have had a thousand ships in the middle of the St. John's River. Today there's not a one left. They gave them away to South Korea and Vietnam and South America, so they got dispersed out of mothballs and went all over the world again.

TS: What's the name of you brother that was bombing Germany?

HM: Morgan McNeel.

TS: That's Morgan, Jr.

HM: Yes, the III.

TS: The III?

HM: Yes. He graduated from Georgia and ended up teaching school and is now retired in L.A., California. He's eighty-two.

TS: Did he teach school his whole career?

HM: Just about, yes.

TS: What level did he teach?

HM: The high schools in California and Hawaii. They paid better in Hawaii so he went over there for several years.

TS: And in your case, when did you get out of the Navy? How long were you in for?

HM: About a year and a half. They had a point system where the first ones in were the first ones to get out. The early-enlisted people got out much earlier than I did.

TS: But they were reducing the size very rapidly at that time, I guess.

HM: Oh, yes. The War was all over and people figured we'd have peace forever, so they were in a big hurry to get them out. The GI bill was very helpful in going to college.

TS: Did you already have your high school degree when you went in to the Navy?

HM: Yes. My dad wouldn't let me join until I graduated.

TS: I see. So you graduated from Marion Military Institute, and then you come out and you've got the GI Bill—we were just talking about the GI Bill in my class last night—but you go straight to UGA with the GI Bill.

HM: Yes.

TS: Let's see, I guess with a year and a half in the military, what did that pay for—a year and a half of your education?

HM: Oh, no, it paid for nearly five years.

TS: Did it really? So it paid the whole way.

HM: Well, they paid your books and tuition and about \$28.00 a month. You didn't live too high on the hog.

TS: Right. I'd forgotten what the formula was. I was thinking it had something to do with the number of months you'd been in the military.

HM: It did, but they were very gracious about it. The fact is, if the GI Bill was still going I'd probably be a student. [laughter] I was having such a good time!

TS: It's interesting, one of the motives behind the GI Bill was that a lot of people thought we were going to go back to the Great Depression if all these young men came home and tried to find jobs, and it was a way to keep them out of the work force.

HM: That's right. And it had shut down all the defense industries.

TS: So they were thinking the GI bill would keep them out of the work force a little longer.

HM: Well, it was a wonderful program that educated just about every GI that was in the service.

TS: I think it greatly exceeded expectations.

HM: Oh, yes. The HOPE scholarship is doing the same thing. It's a good program.

TS: Exactly. Okay, so you go to UGA. What did you major in at the University of Georgia?

HM: Business. My dad was a big Tech man; he went to Tech before World War I.

TS: And your father is Morgan McNeel, Jr.?

HM: Yes. He wanted me to go to Tech.

TS: Why didn't you go to Tech?

HM: Well, because I'm not real strong in math, and my mother went to Georgia, so I figured it would be kind of a house party over there—which it was.

TS: Your father had an engineering degree—was it an engineering degree that he got?

HM: No, he went into World War I when he was a student down there, and he came out in 1918 and went to work for his father at the McNeel Marble Company on Sessions Street.

TS: Okay, that makes sense. Do you know what kind of program he was in when he was at Georgia Tech?

HM: He was taking engineering, but he never finished. He got out of the Navy and went to work for his father.

TS: Right, he went to work at that point?

HM: McNeel Marble Company was a very viable company in 1918. We built monuments all over the United States, and it was a very successful company.

TS: Where was the company headquartered at that point?

HM: Sessions Street in Marietta right between the Square and the hospital.

TS: So your father worked there I guess all his life.

HM: All his life.

TS: So you come along and you go through the University of Georgia and get your business degree.

HM: No. The GI Bill ran out, and after about five years my dad says, "You've had enough education; you go get you a job."

TS: So you really were doing some partying over there.

HM: Yes, I had a wonderful time! [laughter]

TS: I see. I've heard that you were a big Bulldog fan.

HM: Yes. It's been a wonderful experience going to the university. I had a lot of good times.

TS: So you come back home and you go to work for McNeel Marble Company also?

HM: I went to work for Lockheed in 1951.

TS: Right when they opened.

HM: Yes, when they first opened up. They sent me to Wichita, Kansas, to work on the B-29s. Wichita—Boeing was turning them out. The Korean War popped out, as you know, so Lockheed was modifying B-29s that they pulled off the deserts of Arizona, and we sent some mechanics out to the desert and put new oil in the engines and get them where they could fly into Marietta and then we'd strip them down. They'd been there for about six years with dust all over them and the insulation in the planes was falling in, and they just refitted them with new instruments and new equipment and sent them to Korea.

TS: Were you involved with any of that at that stage?

HM: Well, that's what I was doing.

TS: You were doing that.

HM: I was working on them but they sent me to Wichita to learn about the B-29.

TS: Yes, I heard some stories from Sherman Martin and Joe Gabriel about going out to Pyote and bringing those B-29s back.

HM: They were putting their live in their hands because they'd been laying there for six years.

TS: Right. And there were a bunch of you that went to Wichita, I think, weren't there?

HM: I went to Wichita.

TS: There were a bunch of people from Lockheed that went out there; approximately 80 to 100.

HM: Yes, they sent us out there for on-the-job training on the assembly line. At Wichita Boeing and then we were sent back after about six months and started refitting the B-29s.

TS: So you were getting on the job training.

HM: Right. There weren't any classrooms; it was all out in the field working. It was a good business, and we learned about the B-29 and then came back to Marietta and started retro fitting them.

TS: So that project lasted a few years.

HM: Oh, yes, it lasted. Well, they got into the C-130 program early, about '55. They were still remodeling the old [B-29] bomber and started up a line on the C-130 that they're still producing fifty years later.

TS: Yes, that's one of the most amazing stories I think in aircraft history to have a plane in production fifty years later.

HM: Yes. Of course, they keep modifying it and upgrading it but it's still I think a bargain for the government to buy because they're making them so long they build them pretty cheap.

TS: Did you work on the C-130 project?

HM: No, I did not. I stayed on the B-29, and after about four years I decided I wanted to go work for McNeel Marble Company.

TS: What was your job, by the way, on the B-29?

HM: I was in quality control to make sure we put the quality into the remodeling of the airplane.

TS: Right. So you were at the end of the line seeing how many errors they made along the way and that kind of stuff?

HM: Yes, you'd write up anything that was bad on the remodification of the airplane. That was the only project they had at the time. It was modifying the old airplane from World War II. It turned out to be very cost effective and a good program.

TS: Right. But after a few years you're ready to go work in the family business.

HM: Yes. I went to work for McNeel Marble Company as a salesman and just about starved to death! They gave me Alabama and Mississippi as territory. I couldn't sell a thing till I hit the Alabama line, and the cost exceeded the income. I finally got out of that business and got into the building business after about four years. Its' been very profitable ever since, being in the building business.

TS: It was a great time in Cobb County to be building.

HM: Yes, it was.

TS: With all the growth at that period.

HM: Well, everybody predicted that Cobb County and Marietta would be a ghost town when they closed down the aircraft company, but what happened is that all the GI's got out and

took up all the vacant houses from war production years, and they started to grow pretty good, but nothing like it has the last ten or fifteen years.

TS: To me one of the most remarkable stories is how you could close down the Bell Aircraft plant at the end of World War II and not have a serious unemployment problem in this area.

HM: Well, I think half to two-thirds of the people came off of farms working for Bell, and they just let their farms go to pot while they were building airplanes, so most of them went back to the farms and got the old mule out of the barn and started working again.

TS: That makes sense, yes, that that would happen.

HM: They went back to Adairsville and Blue Ridge and Dalton, and the GI's got out of the service and came back here, and most of them started going to college. The GI's were going to Georgia Tech and all the different colleges on the GI Bill getting a better education for a better job.

TS: Right. It's amazing that it seems like a lot of people lived in that Pine Forest, I guess it is.

HM: Oh, yes, that was built to house the workers at Bell, and they filled up with GI's who had just gotten out of the service.

TS: Where did you live when you came back to Marietta after being at UGA?

HM: Well, my dad built that house on Freyer Drive in 1925, and when my brother and I got out, well, he bought a house on Whitlock Avenue where Dr. Henderson lives right now. We moved in there about 1940. It was one mile from the square. The city paved one mile in four different directions, so the paving stopped right there at the Henderson House. It was dirt roads out the Dallas Road, and there wasn't a car passed after dark.

TS: So that's where you lived then?

HM: Yes, we lived there.

TS: It's the house that's on the left as you go out of town.

HM: Yes, it's on the south side. It was a working farm and it was a wonderful farm.

TS: Oh, I didn't know that there was still farming there at that time.

HM: Oh, yes, the farmer left and got him a better job in the defense plant, so Dad put the whole farm in a soil builder and got rid of the cows and the horses, and then I guess about 1961 or '62 he developed the farm on the north side of Whitlock Heights called

Brookwood Subdivision, and it was a very successful development. I built houses in there where we cut those trees.

TS: Okay, when you get into the building business it's still a family business?

HM: It was me, me alone. My dad didn't put any money into it, but he did give me a break on the lots. I didn't have any money, so he would subsidize—I would just sign a note for the lots. If you got a lot you'd go down to the bank and borrow the money to build a building, and then when you sell the house, then you pay back the land owners. That's the way it worked.

TS: So you're developing a good part of what we think of as Whitlock Heights.

HM: Brookwood is a separate identity to Whitlock Heights, but it backs up to Whitlock Heights.

TS: Right.

HM: I was building \$14,000.00 to \$19,000.00 houses, and Whitlock Heights started about \$25,000.00.

TS: Twenty-five thousand was a lot of money back in that period.

HM: That was equivalent to about a half million today. Those little old \$14,000.00 or \$15,000.00 houses sold real good. It gave me a good start in life.

TS: So you built a bunch of those, and so you basically started your own company, and you're still running it today.

HM: Well, I'm not running it today; it's a stock corporation, so I've given all the stock to the children; they own a hundred percent of it, and they've given me an office as a result of that. [laughter] It's not being run by me anymore.

TS: So you've had a chance to retire.

HM: Yes, I've got enough industrial buildings in my own name that I don't have to [work anymore].

TS: What are some of the projects that you've worked on over the years?

HM: Well, Brookwood was the first one on Whitlock, and the second one was Westgate on Powder Springs Road, and the third one was Dunleith, and the fourth one was McNeel Farms out on John Ward Road. We were strictly residential. You'd make real good money, but come April 15 you had to go down to the bank to borrow enough money to pay Uncle Sam and borrow enough money to get started all over. So it was very profitable, but you didn't get to keep nothing. I figured there's got to be a better way

than this to start out in debt every year, so by getting into the industrial business you can build, and you pay taxes on the income, but you build enough equity in your industrial buildings. We've been in that for about thirty years.

TS: Okay, so that means sometime in the '70s you stopped residential construction and you moved into commercial.

HM: Industrial.

TS: Industrial. What were some of the industrial projects you've done?

HM: Well, there's Cobb-Marietta Industrial Park right there on Cobb Parkway, and we've got Acworth Industrial Park up in Acworth and Springs Industrial Park in Powder Springs. We've been in that for twenty-five or thirty years. We sell part of our buildings and keep part of our buildings. The ones you keep, if you ever get them paid for, it's very profitable; you don't make much money for fifteen years.

TS: Basically the tenants pay the mortgage?

HM: Yes, well, I'm paying the mortgage payment, but the tenants are helping me pay it!

TS: They're giving you the money to pay it. But not a lot of profit until you're loan is paid off.

HM: Very little profit until they get the final note paid off, and then it's very profitable.

TS: For industrial projects, how long do the loans usually run for?

HM: Fifteen years.

TS: So if you were doing projects thirty years ago some of them have paid off by now then, I guess.

HM: All of mine are paid off. Of course, I stopped building twenty years ago. Debt service breaks many companies; in many companies, there's too much debt. There's a red flag flying.

TS: I guess it's been great though in this area with the appreciation in values.

HM: Well, the appreciation in values is relevant to everything else, you know; we've got inflation that's running, what, 2 to 4 percent; you take a ten year program at 3 percent, the dollar is worth thirty cents less. It's a pretty good hedge against inflation. Concrete is a typical example; fifty years ago it was \$9.00 a yard, now it's about \$100.00 a yard, so everything is relative.

TS: That's a tremendous increase.

HM: The printing presses are working overtime in Washington to print out money.

TS: By the way, when did McNeel Marble kind of slow down and stop being a profitable company?

HM: In 1960 is when we had to lock the doors.

TS: Is that right?

HM: Yes. The company lost money for about the last ten years it was in business from '50 to '60, so my dad, it about broke his heart to have to lock the doors, but what happened is like the horse and buggy business; people quit buying horses and buggies and went into buying cars. Well, the same thing happened with the monument business; they quit buying monuments and went into these bronze parks. These no monument cemeteries put the monument business back into the horse and buggy days.

TS: So you were primarily doing monuments, not marble buildings, but monuments?

HM: Oh, yes, strictly monuments. It was a wonderful plant that my grandfather started about 1880, and they sold monuments all over the southeast. They sold a world of them after World War I. These different cities and counties would put up World War I monuments. They even sold more than after the Civil War in 1865. He didn't get into business until about 1880, but there was a tremendous amount of sentiment of the South.

TS: When did your grandfather die? How old would you have been about that time?

HM: He died in 1941.

TS: Okay, so you got to know him real well.

HM: I was fourteen years old. He had a working farm right up there between Cherokee Street and Church Street, Ivy Grove.

TS: Yes. So he was actually farming there?

HM: My grandmother was the farmer; he was at the monument company.

TS: I see. And then he developed Church Street, didn't he, your grandfather?

HM: No. Church Street was there; the Episcopal Church was built in 1843.

TS: I meant really out closer to the hospital, that area that would have been right behind Ivy Grove.

HM: Yes, they owned a lot of property up that way.

TS: I was thinking he might have built some of those houses along there.

HM: My uncle, Frank McNeel, built a lot of those homes in Cherokee Heights. My great-great-grandfather, Dr. Egbert Barrows, bought the [Edward] Denmead house [Ivy Grove] from—he came from Davenport, Iowa. My grandmother was born in Ivy Grove.

TS: What was your grandmother's name?

HM: Ada Freyer.

TS: That's your grandmother?

HM: That's my grandmother. She married Morgan McNeel, Sr. Her parents were Francis Ludwig Freyer and Julia Barrows Freyer. Her grandfather [Egbert Barrows] was a doctor before the War Between the States, and his wife was kind of an invalid, so after 1865 he brought her down here to a warmer climate to keep her alive. My grandmother was born down here in Ivy Grove. It's been in the family for a long, long time. It was, as I said, a working farm; they had Guernsey cows and chickens and every kind of fruit imaginable and a good garden. You could feed your whole family during the Depression years of '29-'39.

TS: Right, right. Could you kind of describe what your grandfather and grandmother were like or any memories you have of them of what they looked like or anything?

HM: There they are, right there.

TS: Let's see, you've got some pictures on the wall.

HM: That's my mother.

TS: That's your mother. And what's your mother's name?

HM: Hazel Hodgson, from Athens.

TS: That's your middle name, then.

HM: I'm Hodgson. Right. I'm named after my grandfather, Harry Hodgson, right here. There's Prince Hodgson, who was in the Confederate Army. These are all his sons. Oh, it's a wonderful family. You asked about my grandfather; he's right over here. This is Morgan McNeel, Sr. This is my father.

TS: Okay. So that's a picture of when the boys look like they may be fifteen years old.

HM: They were probably in Tech at the time. This is a picture on that farm up there at Ivy Grove. He had a fishpond with marble around it. That's him right there.

TS: Same one. He had a mustache all his life it looks like.

HM: That's my brother and my sister.

TS: So that's your grandmother, Ada.

HM: Right. And that's my sister who is now 75.

TS: Where are you in the picture?

HM: I'm right here. That's my cousin, Charlie DeFoor and Sonny got killed in World War II.

TS: Sonny DeFoor.

HM: Yes. His name was Morgan DeFoor.

TS: Morgan?

HM: Yes. There's my brother. It's been around a long time. A long time.

TS: That's great that you've got all these photographs.

HM: Yes. Well, we just have a wonderful family for a long time.

TS: I think I've seen a picture before, I know at least Frank is in it and I can't remember who else, but it's a picture taken in 1949 when Lucius Clay came back for that Clay Day celebration and there's a photograph. Rip Blair is in it.

HM: Well, Rip and my dad and Lucius Clay all went to school together.

TS: I think your father is in that photograph and Frank also.

HM: Yes. And Lucius Clay is what got Bell Aircraft here. Mayor Rip Blair went up to Washington when the war first started and carried the county commissioner, George H. McMillan, with him, and Lucius was in charge of army procurement, all forces armed procurement. He was a smart guy. So he said, "We got an airport down here in Marietta, we need an air base and a manufacturing plant down here." So Lucius Clay went to Bell and, of course, the government footed all the bills in those days to get war production up. So that was the reason that we got Bell Aircraft.

TS: Did you know Rip Blair very well?

HM: I knew him very well, yes.

TS: Jimmie Carmichael bought Ivy Grove during World War II; did he buy it from your grandfather or from the estate?

HM: From my grandmother, after my grandfather died he bought it from my grandmother.

TS: Where did she move to?

HM: She moved in with her daughter, Aunt Margaret Thomas, on Seminole and had a black man that came with the deal. [laughter] He followed my grandmother wherever she went and took care of her. He was a wonderful guy named David.

TS: Do you remember what his last name was?

HM: I think he was McAfee. When my grandmother was a young woman she was riding out in the country one day on a horse and buggy and saw this little black man hooked up to a plow. He wasn't but about fourteen years old. She said, "That boy's too young to be pulling a plow." He said, "Well, he ain't mine anyway, he belongs to my uncle. You can have him." So little David jumped in the wagon and unhooked from the plow and lived with my grandmother for the rest of his life.

TS: How about that?

HM: He was a good man, a real good soul.

TS: So he had a room in the house over in Ivy Grove?

HM: Yes. Quarters were built in the backyard of George Thomas' house on Seminole. George, Margaret's husband, worked for McNeel Marble too. He was production manager.

TS: Why don't you describe your father a little bit.

HM: Well, like I said, he was an awfully big Tech man.

TS: He must have been mortified when you went to the University of Georgia.

HM: [laughter] He said, "I'll not give you a dime!" I said, "Well, Uncle Sam is going to pick up the tab!" He was a good man, a good fellow.

TS: You were, I believe, invited to join the KSU Foundation in 1973, if the records are correct. Does that sound about right?

HM: When was it started?

TS: I think it was started in '69. Do you remember who invited you or how you were invited to join the Foundation?

HM: Well, I knew most of the people on the Foundation.

TS: I'm sure you did.

HM: We had Dr. Henry [D.] Meaders that delivered all my babies. The purpose of the Foundation, as you well know, is to raise money for Kennesaw College. They said, "We want you on there; you can give it or go raise it, but we want money for the college to grow."

TS: That's how they said it?

HM: Yeah, it was very blunt. I knew just about everybody that was on the Foundation: Bob [Robert T.] Garrison . . .

TS: Bob Garrison was the chairman at that time, wasn't he?

HM: No.

TS: Was it Speedy Meaders?

HM: I think it was Speedy, yes.

TS: I think I've got a list somewhere of those dates.

HM: Steve Tumlin and Sidney Clotfelder. Wilder Little.

TS: Actually it would have been Steve Tumlin who was the chairman from '72 through '75 so when you came on he would have been the chair. And then Sidney Clotfelder after that. Actually Meaders wasn't chair until 1981.

HM: Well, he's still kicking at 94. He's a good guy.

TS: I understand he had a birthday recently. Let's see, Wyman Pilcher, Jr. was chair for several years when you were on the board as well. But you don't remember exactly who invited you; it's just that you knew everybody.

HM: Yes, I knew just about everybody on the board anyway. They just needed some new blood to raise money, that's what it boiled down to improve the college.

TS: I think one of the interesting things about the Foundation, even to this day, is that very few of the trustees actually ever went to Kennesaw. They all went somewhere else.

HM: Well, when we came along there wasn't any Kennesaw. [laughter] That's what it boiled down to.

TS: Right. But still to find people that are willing to give money or raise money for an institution that they didn't attend is pretty remarkable.

HM: Well, we just felt like it was a wonderful asset to Cobb County and to Marietta to have a college that will educate folks that can't afford to go anywhere else. I think the reason that most folks got behind it was to have a better community to live in. I know that's the reason I joined it. It's been a wonderful asset not only for the students but for the whole community.

TS: I think we have and I appreciate you saying that.

HM: No question about it. Y'all have had real good professors up there and good management. Betty Siegel was a dynamo. She put the thing on the map. [Horace W.] Sturgis was just as fine as Betty, but he didn't have the promotional ability that Betty had.

TS: No, no.

HM: You weren't up there under Horace?

TS: I was. I started there in 1968.

HM: Were you. Well, you know him as well as I do. He was just one great fellow.

TS: But he definitely did not like to travel.

HM: No, and he put you to sleep talking! [laughter] He wasn't a very good speaker!

TS: Not like Betty Siegel, that's for sure.

HM: No, but his heart was in the right place.

TS: How often did the Foundation meet back then? Did you meet once a year or once a quarter?

HM: Once a quarter. We would talk over problems and what we were going to do with the money we raised and stuff like that.

TS: Did you have your meetings on campus?

HM: Most of the time.

TS: I was just trying to think where you would probably have met in those years? We were probably just about to open up the new Student Center when you came on the Foundation.

HM: We were there long before the Carmichael Center. It was in some administration building up there somewhere. It was very very small and when Horace was running it what did you have, maybe 2,500 students?

TS: At the time that you came on the Foundation that would be just about right. I think we were about 4,000 when he retired. We were 1,300 when I started there.

HM: Thirteen hundred? You helped open it.

TS: I came the third year.

HM: The third year?

TS: Yes. You probably had your meetings—there was a little conference room in the Administration Building. Right next to his office and there was a board room with a table in there that you probably could put ten or twelve people around or something like that.

HM: That's about all we had in those days.

TS: That's probably where you were holding your meetings then. Do you remember about how much money you were raising back then?

HM: I think it was under \$50,000.00. I think they had something like a \$1,500.00 minimum for each board member to go out and collect. If you couldn't raise it you gave it! [laughter] You either get it or give it!

TS: So you were all committed to \$1,500.00.

HM: Yes. And they kept raising it.

Ts: So this would be like an annual fund drive.

HM: Yes. Friends of Kennesaw College.

TS: So you would go out and ask your friend to contribute?

HM: Right.

TS: I've heard stories before of names around a horseshoe table and people would pick up names and pick them out.

HM: Yes. You'd pick the person you knew. You'd get turned down a lot.

TS: I was going to ask about that, whether it was easy or hard to sell Kennesaw in those days.

HM: It was tough to sell Kennesaw because it was such a small school and you got the Chamber of Commerce drives and Boy Scout drives and ten million drives, and this was just another one to go raise money for.

TS: Sure. So what kind of money—were people giving like ten dollars or a hundred dollars? What would be a big gift?

HM: A big gift would be a hundred dollars. We had to try to get fifteen of those or write the check for the difference.

TS: Right. Were you usually able to raise the \$1,500.00?

HM: Yes, I was always been able to raise whatever the thing was, but a lot of times I had to write a pretty big check out of my own pocket to make the quota.

TS: So it wasn't always easy to raise \$1,500.00.

HM: No, it wasn't easy, no.

TS: Right. So when people turned you down—how well known was Kennesaw in the community would you say at that time?

HM: It was well known just like Southern Tech was well known. Everybody knew we had two colleges in town, but in those days things weren't any where near like what they are today, economically. It was a pretty tight economy at times. You had to knock on a lot of doors to get your quota up.

TS: So people would say, "Well, I'm giving to UGA; I can't give to anybody else."

HM: Exactly, yeah. You'd get a lot of those. But then you'd get a lot of folks that would give money you didn't expect them to give. It depended on how many doors you knocked on as to how much you'd collect. We had a quota system that we had to go out and raise so much.

TS: Did you all, once you raised the money, spend your meeting time deciding what we're going to spend this money on or did you wait for Horace Sturgis to tell you?

HM: We'd wait for Horace Sturgis to tell us where it was needed most. I think we did a lot of supplemental cash to new teachers coming in for moving expenses, housing expenses, all of that.

TS: I actually got a little bit of money back in those days while I was working to finish my Ph.D.

HM: Right. Horace knew where the money was needed the most.

TS: I can't remember exactly, actually I think it may have been to pay to type the dissertation, if I remember correctly.

HM: Well, that's money I knocked on doors for you! [laughter] That's what it boiled down to!

TS: And I think a few administrators had their salaries supplemented in those days too, didn't they?

HM: Yes, yes, they were underpaid, anted the pay so Horace knew where to put the money. I think 95 percent was what was needed the most.

TS: So you didn't have any knock down, drag out fights on what you were going to spend the money on.

HM: No, we left most of that to Dr. Sturgis. He was up there every day and knew a lot more about the operation of the college than us fund raisers.

TS: Right. In that period, I know Bob Garrison was involved in the movement to make Kennesaw a four-year institution; was the Foundation actively involved in doing that?

HM: Oh, we were very active, yes.

TS: So talking to politicians and such?

HM: Well, [A.L.] Al Burruss was on our board, and Al was also on the Green Door Committee, Appropriations of the Capitol [Georgia House of Representatives]. Al got that bill in there. And Joe Mack Wilson.

TS: Was Joe Mack on the trustees at that time.

HM: Yes, he was. He was a very good man. He did a wonderful job for the city as mayor. And he was in the House in Atlanta for twenty-five years.

TS: So you had two Cobb County legislators.

HM: Yes, and that was the result of Kennesaw going four years. Those two guys were on the Appropriations Committee. There was a lot of swapping back and forth to get it to be a four-year college.

TS: Did you do any politicking on that or anything?

HM: Well, we just got behind Joe Mack and Al Burruss to try to get this thing appropriated through the legislature, and they did.

TS: Right. I've heard some stories before from Joe Mack Wilson about certain people in the community might know a member of the Board of Regents from somewhere else in the state, and they'd send them down to talk to that Regent and that kind of thing.

HM: Right. And Bob Garrison was very influential in doing that. You know, he was chairman of the Board of Cluett Peabody. A good ole' Marietta boy that started with Cluett Peabody in about 1931 sweeping floors and worked his way up chairman of the board. He was very competent.

TS: We did an oral history interview years ago with Bob Garrison. It was remarkable about him coming home every weekend and then flying back to New York on Monday mornings.

HM: That was when he was restoring that house down there off South Cobb Drive.

TS: Right, what became the 1848 House.

HM: Yes. The thing was falling in. He came down and bought it and was ready to retire and Cluett Peabody gave him a raise plus a jet to come home every weekend to work on that house. He commuted between New York and Marietta to finish up that 1848 House.

TS: Were there any other causes or issues that you were lobbying on when you were on the trustees at Kennesaw? I guess that was the big thing to become four years, but I just wondered if you all did any other work for the institution outside of fundraising?

HM: Well, I guess that was about the biggest thing. The board has always been a money raiser to help the college expand in its teaching positions and better quality of teachers.

TS: Well, now, you were actively a board member, a trustee for maybe about twelve years?

HM: Twelve or fifteen.

TS: Into the 1980s, so into the Betty Siegel era.

HM: Oh yes, many, many years after Betty got there.

TS: Did you see any changes in the Foundation over the years?

HM: Oh yes, I've seen some fantastic changes like one lady was on the board that built that guest house up there.

TS: Oh, the Jolley Lodge?

HM: Yes.

TS: LeoDelle Jolley.

HM: Lex Jolley's widow put that money up to build the Jolley Lodge which has been, I think, a tremendous asset for the college for functions and fund raising and helping the president out and supporting him. I've been up there many, many times to help further the college, and I think we've got an awfully good man in Dan [Daniel S.] Papp. He'll do a real good job.

TS: I think you're right. Well, now, about '85 you moved to emeritus status, is that right?

HM: Yes.

TS: Once you become a trustee emeritus do you still get invited to the annual meetings?

HM: Oh, yes, they invite you to everything and they still expect you to donate! [laughter]

TS: Let's see, if you were born in '27, you would have been like close to sixty at that time or late fifties, at the time that you went to emeritus status. I should ask you why did you move from being an active trustee to emeritus?

HM: I got tired of begging. Every year you've got a quota to meet and you've got to go knock on doors and a lot of folks, "Don't call me no more. I've done been giving to this thing for ten years." And, of course, I'd hit the same old folks and try to hit a bunch of new folks too. After fifteen years of knocking on them doors it kind of gets to be old hat. If you've ever had to fund raise you know what I'm talking about.

TS: Right. No, I'm not very good at fund raising.

HM: Well, nobody's very good at it. It's not a thankful job to have.

TS: In the years that you were on the Foundation—I know the Foundation has moved beyond the annual drive now, and it's gotten into owning a good deal of real estate and building their assets that way—were you all making any plans or talking at all about what should be the next stage in the development of the Foundation?

HM: Well, they just kept upping the ante every year, you know, and go from \$50,000.00 to \$100,000.00 to \$150,000.00 to \$200,000.00, and it was a wonderful experience working on the board and seeing the college grow, but, you know, you kind of get wore out on something like that after so many years.

TS: Right, right. What was your perception maybe of how the college changed during those years?

HM: Oh, good gracious, it's gone from 1,300 students when you were there to what, 20,000 students now. It's just like Cobb County; it just keeps growing and growing and growing. I never thought you'd give out of land, but you're just about out of dirt up there.

TS: It's remarkable isn't it?

HM: Yes, it is absolutely remarkable that it's grown that much. I can credit Betty Siegel for being able to wrangle the money out of the Board of Regents to add all those buildings. She was a real motivator for making it grow and getting the funds.

TS: Yes. How did things change when Horace Sturgis stepped down and Betty Siegel came in, as far as the Foundation was concerned?

HM: Well, Betty's a better motivator than Dr. Sturgis, so she would motivate the board to go out and raise more money.

TS: Would she always go to the board meetings?

HM: Oh, yes, every time. She never missed one. That was the source of growth. Betty is a remarkable person. She's done a wonderful job with Kennesaw College.

TS: Well, she's still going strong; she's got a faculty position now at Kennesaw.

HM: Oh has she? What's she teaching?

TS: There's actually an institute named for her now, the Siegel Institute for Leadership, Ethics and Character, and she's teaching in that program and we've got a doctorate now in ethical leadership, and she's teaching in that program and doing a lot of travel. She was over in South Africa for several months in the spring.

HM: Teaching over there, wasn't she?

TS: Teaching over there. Working over there with a school over there and she's back here now. She came and talked to one of my classes last week.

HM: Did she? Well, I'm glad she's still up there. She's a great asset to the college.

TS: Yes, I am too. Her office is over in that building, Town Point, where the Foundation has its offices nowadays, across the street from the main campus.

HM: Well, y'all have done a remarkable job up there of making it grow.

TS: Well, we couldn't have done it without the Foundation all these years.

HM: Oh, I think you could have. It might not have grown as fast, but I think it would have made it because we all are pulling students in here from all over north Georgia.

TS: We're expanding our service area over time. And campuses are expanding too. We're teaching business courses up in Dalton and down at the Galleria.

HM: Wonderful.

TS: I think the nursing program is going to move up to Appalachian Technical College up in Jasper.

HM: There's going to be a branch of Kennesaw College up there?

TS: We're going to do some nursing course up there.

HM: That's wonderful because there's a critical shortage of nurses.

TS: Absolutely. And we're going to have a new building on campus before long, a Health Sciences building that's going to greatly expand the nursing program.

HM: How many are in the nursing school?

TS: I don't know the numbers, but we've got a pretty substantial faculty. There must be twenty or thirty faculty members in the Nursing school, at least. I mean, it's really highly competitive to get into the nursing program. Part of the problem is there are just not enough nursing professors to service the need, and that's going to be part of what we do with this new building, I think. We may have a doctorate in nursing up there primarily to prepare people to teach.

HM: Wonderful.

TS: I think that's in the works. The Foundation is raising a good part of the money for that new building.

HM: Good!

TS: Were you involved at all with the decisions to build the parking decks?

HM: No.

TS: I mean, the Foundation is really behind the residence halls.

HM: Yes, the Foundation got behind it, and we left it to the president to work out the details, that's what it boils down to.

TS: Right. When you were active on the trustees, or I guess right about the time that you became inactive and became an emeritus is right when the Foundation kind of moves out of Cobb County and starts bringing in trustees from all over the metro Atlanta area. Were you all thinking about that or had that already started? Maybe it had already started by that time?

HM: No, not to my knowledge it hadn't started. We had a couple on there from Cartersville.

TS: I think Joe Frank Harris was actually on there.

HM: Yes, Joe Frank was on the board when I was on there. He is a good man.

TS: But a lot of them that I interviewed like J. Larry Stevens and so on have talked about how important it was to bring people like Tommy Holder and other people. Of course, Tommy [Thomas M.] Holder's office is in Cob County. He's a Georgia Tech graduate.

HM: He's been a great asset.

TS: And to reach out to people throughout the metropolitan area and bring them on the board. [M.] Bobbie Bailey, I'm going to be interviewing her in a week or so. She's over in, I think she has a Tucker address for her business. The Foundation has really gotten pretty large.

HM: How many are on there now?

TS: I'd have to go back and count; I think there are probably fifty or so.

HM: Is it? I don't think we were ever over, when I left, over fifteen or twenty.

TS: Is that right? I think I've kind of run out of questions. Is there anything that you can think of that maybe we should have talked about that I haven't asked you about?

HM: I set up a scholarship fund in my mother and father's name up there, and the people running the fund let it, I didn't want it to depreciate. I got a notification from them one year that they had spent about half of the fund.

TS: So instead of being an endowment . . .

HM: Instead of an endowment they were spending the principal. So I raised sand about that and they said, "Well, give more money!" [laughter]

TS: Was this Jim Fleming.

HM: Yes. He said, "Well, just resupply it, Hap." I said, "Look, you spent it; how about you resupplying it, Jim?" Any way this new guy, this assistant to the president...

TS: Wes Wicker.

HM: Yes, Wes. I did resupply back to the original amount and I said, "Wes, I want a report from you every year, and I want that interest to grow a little bit and just spend part of the interest, don't spend all of it." Wes has done a good job for the last couple of years, but I haven't heard from him this year. I think it ended June 30.

TS: Maybe you'll hear from him shortly.

HM: I'll hear from him. I'll raise sand if he's spending my principal. I think we've funded about three or four students last year. I don't want them to spend it into oblivion; that wasn't the purpose of the endowment.

TS: Right. Are the scholarships targeted to a particular type of student?

HM: No, I just leave it up to the college. I don't want to put restraints on where they're going to spend it. If they can help students that need it real badly, and there's a lot of them that are working in the day and going to school at night, and I feel pretty good about it.

TS: Well, that was a big service from the beginning of the Foundation to fund scholarships.

HM: Yes. It's gotten up there pretty good, I think. We've got a hundred or so people who have given money on to this scholarship fund.

TS: On the one in your parents' names?

HM: No, I'm talking about other people that have done it.

TS: Oh, have started scholarships in somebody's memory?

HM: Yes.

TS: So you think a hundred or so?

HM: I'm sure there are well over a hundred scholarships. We'll give the college a good endowment to help students that can't afford it.

TS: Sure.

HM: Well, I've enjoyed working with them, and I think it's a wonderful asset to our community.

TS: Do you think we should have a football team at Kennesaw State?

HM: That's a \$64 question. I think y'all are doing—whatever you're doing you're doing it right. You've got a good baseball team.

TS: That's for sure. And softball.

HM: And softball. We've got a good program going up there; I'm just tickled to death with what you're doing.

TS: I think Dan Papp has said that if somebody gives us thirty million dollars to build a football stadium we'll have a football stadium.

HM: Has he got any money lined up yet? [laughter]

TS: No, I don't think so; so I don't think it's going to happen any time soon. There seems to be a lot of interest in it from some quarters.

HM: I'm sure there's always a lot of interest in football, but, as you've said, it's going to take a heap of money.

TS: I enjoy going out and watching the baseball games and basketball games and softball games.

HM: It's a wonderful asset.

TS: Well, I really do appreciate the interview this morning.

HM: Well, it's my pleasure.

TS: Thank you.

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