

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH E. HOWARD SHEALY, JR.

CONDUCTED BY THOMAS ALLAN SCOTT

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for the

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Location: Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning House at Kennesaw State University

TS: Let me just begin by asking you a little bit of background information, when you were born, where you were born, where you grew up, such as that.

HS: I was born the 25th of January, 1949, in Gadsden, Alabama. My parents moved back to Georgia when I was two. I graduated from West Georgia just west of Tallapoosa, Georgia; we had a farm between Tallapoosa and the state line.

TS: So you grew up on a farm?

HS: I grew up on a farm.

TS: And when you said your parents came back, the family is originally from Georgia?

HS: My father's family is from Georgia. My mother's family is from Alabama.

TS: So several generations back in Georgia?

HS: Yes.

TS: And in that part of Georgia?

HS: Primarily, yes.

TS: Around [the] Carrollton area?

HS: Haralson County, yes.

TS: Haralson County, okay. And that's Buchanan?

HS: Buchanan, Bremen, [Tom] Murphy's territory. Former Speaker Murphy's territory.

TS: Right, right. So did you have to milk the cows and feed the pigs and all that kind of stuff?

HS: I did very little cow milking. I fed my share of pigs and helped haul hay, all those little things that you have to do to keep the farm running.

TS: Right. Did you go to public schools?

HS: I did. I went to the consolidated county high school. It was then the West Haralson High School.

TS: And then from there straight to [the State University of] West Georgia?

HS: West Georgia. Like a lot of our students at Kennesaw, I went to West Georgia with the idea that I was just going to stay there a couple of years and then I was going to transfer somewhere else. I was fortunate enough to encounter a number of really wonderful faculty in the history department who convinced me that I should stay there until I was ready for grad school.

TS: So you knew when you started there that you wanted to be a history major?

HS: No, I didn't. I started there as a science major. [laughter] I got into what some people used to call the sophomore slump at the end of my sophomore year, and I began to ask myself if this was really what I wanted to do. I realized that I was enjoying my history classes more than anything else I was doing.

TS: So you made the transition in your sophomore year?

HS: Yes. I had always had an interest in history. My father and grandfather were both great storytellers; and, of course, I was coming along about the time of the Civil War Centennial. That was fascinating for someone my age.

TS: Was it at West Georgia that you got interested in Italian history and Renaissance and Reformation and all of that?

HS: No, not really. I did take Medieval and Renaissance history courses at West Georgia. We were very fortunate then that West Georgia was able to hire some really top notch young faculty, but I went off to grad school at Emory intending to concentrate on the Middle Ages and on English and French history. I didn't get shifted down to Italy until a couple of NEH [National Endowment for the Humanities] seminars during the 1980s.

TS: The 1980s?

HS: In the 1980s, I was already here. I had had a second field; I had a minor field in early modern history, so I had some familiarity with it.

TS: I see. Well, what was your dissertation?

HS: It was on—it's a very dry subject—it's on the administration of a tiny county in northern France that England held for about a century prior to the Hundred Years War. It was administrative and diplomatic history. Ironically, there is a connection between that and my later Italian interests because that was a period of time when Italian bankers were essentially financing the English crown. And as a form of repayment, they put this

county into the hands of the Frescobaldi family, whom I've been interested in for a number of years now. I knew about the Frescobaldi before I ever saw that.

TS: Before our transcriber gets mad at us, spell that.

HS: F-r-e-s-c-o-b-a-l-d-i. And you should see how some of those fourteenth century scribes spell that in English document.

TS: I bet they had many different spellings didn't they? You must have always had a facility for languages if you were working on French. I guess all the English kings spoke French until after the Hundred Years War, didn't they?

HS: Yes, really down to the time of the Tudors.

TS: That was their language.

HS: And documents were either in Latin or in medieval French. I was really lucky—since you mentioned going to public schools—having been able to take Latin in high school and then to continue it in college. That made a really good foundation for other Romance languages.

TS: Okay, so actually the French would be a few steps removed from modern French anyway in these documents in that period.

HS: Right. Sometimes when you're reading the medieval French or medieval Italian it's hard to know whether you're reading the French, Italian, or Latin because they were all so similar to each other.

TS: Wow. Well, one of the things that you started to talk about a few minutes ago is mentors, people that made us what we were along the way or influenced us in a particular direction. You mentioned that in the history department at West Georgia you ran into several people that were really good teachers. I wonder if you would just talk about who they were and what made them good teachers?

HS: The one person who really stands out as a mentor was W.C. Goodwin. Everyone called him "Cope" Goodwin. His name was Winslow Copley Goodwin. I had my Western Civ class with Cope. From the very first day, you knew how much he loved history, and very quickly you understood how important his students were to him. Even as a freshman in a survey class, I was invited to go have coffee in the middle of the morning or middle of the afternoon; I can't remember when the class was. Cope and his wife, Beverly, regularly had crowds of students over to their house for cookouts. When I was trying to make up my mind [about] what I was going to do about my major, Dr. Goodwin was back at Florida State finishing up his Ph.D. I called him up on the phone and said, "I need to talk to you about something." He said, "Well, come on down this weekend and we'll talk about it." He taught the Renaissance history class that I took as well. I saw him near the end of his life, and he said that he had kept the book that we had put

together as a class, all of the research papers we had done in the class. He had it printed and bound for us, and he had kept a copy for himself all those years.

TS: Yes. Now there was a journal at one time out of West Georgia, wasn't there? A history journal that the history department put out?

HS: I think there was, but it was not during my time as a student.

TS: So this wasn't what you're talking about.

HS: No, no, this was just something he did as a class project. He gave a copy to all of us and kept a copy for himself.

TS: And so is he the one that really got you interested in Medieval [times] and [the] Renaissance?

HS: He's the one that really got me interested in history, and I did take Renaissance with him. I took my Medieval course with Ara Dostourian. In fact, I'm one of the few people that took what Ara still calls the trilogy. He taught courses over the same time period on Europe, the Islamic world and the Byzantine world. I got a lot of the background for graduate school; the grounding in history from Ara but it was really kind of good when he was the influence that helped me decide that history was what I wanted to do.

TS: I guess West Georgia at that time was what, 5,000 or 6,000 student's maybe?

HS: At the most. I think it was probably more like 3,000.

TS: And the faculty in history, you mentioned Goodwin going back to get his degree; was this at a time when a number of them still didn't have their Ph.D.s?

HS: That's right. It was, I think in some ways similar to the situation Kennesaw was in just a few years later.

TS: Yes.

HS: People came in with master's degrees, realized that the school was changing and needed to go back and get that doctorate if they wanted to stay there.

TS: I can't remember whether West Georgia started out as an A&M school and somewhere along the line I guess became a junior college. Did they have a junior college phase before they became a four-year college, or did they go straight to four years?

HS: I'm not certain.

TS: But at any rate, they were upgrading in the late '60s when you were there?

HS: Right. And there were a lot of bright, young Ph.D.s coming out of graduate programs all over the United States: Dostourian came from Rutgers; Lynn Holmes, who is also on the faculty there came from another prominent school. I can't remember which one right now.

TS: Was it a relatively small history department?

HS: Relatively small, but really I'm surprised at the number of positions they were able to add during the late '60s, early '70s.

TS: You got out of there before Newt [Gingrich] arrived, didn't you?

HS: I got out of there before Newt arrived. Mel Steely joined the faculty while I was there but Newt had not made it yet.

TS: Did you take any of Mel's classes?

HS: I never did have a class with Mel; not anything intentional, just didn't work out that way.

TS: Well, coming off a farm in Haralson County, I guess I'm kind of fascinated in a way of how you got so fascinated in European history. I guess it sounds like maybe it was the professors, but also there had to be something about it that was particularly appealing to you.

HS: Well, it was the professors. All the people I listed there taught European history. But as one of my students said in class the other day, there's so much more of European history than there is American history [chuckle]. One of the things that I think made me gravitate to the Middle Ages was that it was a period of transition in almost every way you can think of, civilization picking itself up by the bootstraps and rebuilding out of its own resources. Maybe as a native southerner, I identify with that. [chuckle]

TS: Yes, I can understand. I thought before that there probably is an analogy of the South being in the classical period before the Civil War and in the Middle Ages until World War II and then the Modern Era after that time.

HS: Yes, good point.

TS: So there very well could be a connection.

HS: And southern society has sometimes been described as feudal as well.

TS: That's right, absolutely. What about the Haralson County schools? You mentioned that you studied Latin in the West Haralson High School. Did you feel like you got a good foundation there for going on to college and graduate school?

HS: I got a good foundation, I thought in almost every way except in history, which is probably why I went into college as a science major. We had excellent teachers in what are now called language arts, English and foreign languages, and excellent people in science, but too often the person who taught the history class was the coach.

TS: That's right. I think sometimes though we have very stereotypical views of rural schools in the South because we are constantly fed with all those statistics of how far behind Georgia is than the rest of the country. That may be true in terms of the dollar amounts, but it's not necessarily true in terms of the quality of the people in the classroom.

HS: Right.

TS: Why Emory maybe I should ask?

HS: Well, I applied all over the United States and got accepted in graduate programs from Western Michigan, which has one of the finest medieval studies programs in the country, to Emory, and it really came down to a couple of things: one is that Emory had a couple of very well known medievalists at the time—George Cuttino and Francis Benjamin, but one of the major considerations was finances. Emory was able to offer me a full fellowship, completely through the Ph.D. Other schools could only offer me partial assistance or only with programs that went through the Master's. I thought, "Well, I'd have to start all over again."

TS: Is this like a teaching assistantship or a research assistantship?

HS: It was neither actually; it was a full fellowship. My only responsibilities were to keep my grades up.

TS: Did you ever TA while you were at Emory?

HS: I did teach my own course for one quarter there. They had a program whereby people who were more or less finished were given a survey class to teach.

TS: To give you some experience to hit the job market with?

HS: Give you some experience to hit the job market with.

TS: Tell me about your mentors at Emory. Who had the most influence on you once you got there?

HS: Undoubtedly my major professor, George Cuttino. I have all these difficult names for you.

TS: Well, that goes with the territory. You could have gone into Far Eastern history or something and we'd have even more problems spelling.

HS: That's right. I guess second to George were Russell Major who was Early Modern France and Robert Smith who did Tudor and Stuart England.

TS: What made them mentors for you? What were there attributes?

HS: On the one hand, the profound depth of their knowledge about the subjects that were their specialties. With all three of them, I can say it was the rigor with which they taught their graduate classes and the high expectations they had of their students. But with Cuttino in particular, the sense that if you lived up to the standards, he would do anything he could for you. I [will] give you an example from very early on in my graduate career there. I won the draft lottery in the worst possible way: I came out with a very, very low number, just at the time when graduate deferments were ended. I was fortunate enough to—whether it's fortunate or not—find a place in the Georgia National Guard. All the guys who had been on the waiting lists who had high numbers immediately took their names off, and I went up to the local Guard unit, and they said, "Oh, it would be six months to a year before you could possibly be called up. If you want to sign up now, then you can go ahead and get your first quarter or two or maybe a whole year of graduate school under your belt before you have to go off for active duty training." A few weeks later I got a call that said, "Pack your clothes and get ready to go in three days."

TS: I guess in Haralson County it's more likely that you're going to get called up.

HS: That's right, there's a smaller pool to choose from. When I went over to Emory to try to line up affairs there, I was told that I was going to lose my fellowship. If I withdrew, then I could reapply when I was through with my training, but there was no way that it could be held for me. I went over to say good-bye to Dr. Cuttino—I had known him for about a month—and explain the situation to him and he said, "Wait a minute, let me make a phone call." When he put the phone call down he said, "When you get back, your fellowship will be here waiting."

TS: Good for him because I think they're in violation of some law on that.

HS: I don't know!

TS: I think jobs are supposed to be waiting for people when they get back from the military aren't they?

HS: That was what I understood, but that was not what the financial aid office at Emory thought.

TS: Well, he may have had to call legal affairs and set them straight.

HS: But if you became one of his students, he would do everything he could to teach you everything he knew and do everything he could to take care of you.

TS: That's great.

HS: He and I and my wife, Rise, became good friends in later years. You may remember after Rise and I married, we lived in the Emory area for quite awhile. It was nice to see that friendship continue down through the years.

TS: Right. What was his specialty?

HS: The sort of stuff I did my dissertation on, diplomatic and administrative history and the High Middle Ages in England.

TS: So he suggested the topic?

HS: He suggested the topic.

TS: Even though it was . . .

HS: There was not much doubt that that was going to be my topic. [laughter]

TS: Well, you probably got two pages in one of his books or something. How much National Guard, how long did it take to do that, six months?

HS: Yes, you were on active duty for a little less than six months. I left in the middle of the fall quarter, and I was back in time for the beginning of the spring quarter.

TS: Well, that didn't take too much time out.

HS: Right.

TS: Well, you actually got through in record speed; six years from the time you left West Georgia to get all the way through. Actually, I guess you did take a little while getting the Master's; I guess they just handed you the Master's at Emory.

HS: I was in one of those fast-track programs where, when you finish your oral exams for your Ph.D., they award you the master's degree.

TS: Right. So you just went full-time straight through.

HS: Right. Didn't have to drop out.

TS: And in '77 hit the job market.

HS: Hit the job market at its very worst.

TS: And let's see, it was actually a year before you went to Kennesaw, I guess, because I've got '78 down that you came to Kennesaw.

HS: Right. I worked in the Emory library. I had been working part-time while I was finishing my dissertation, and, when that was done, I was able to get a full-time position while I was looking for a teaching job. I was getting a little discouraged about that because, as with graduate schools, I was applying from one coast to the other and getting nothing but polite letters saying, "We wish you well in your search for a job." I called up Gene Huck who was the dean, the sole dean of Kennesaw College then.

TS: And also from West Georgia, originally.

HS: And also from West Georgia. I had known him at West Georgia.

TS: Was he on the faculty when you were there?

HS: He was. I asked him if there was any chance of part-time teaching here, and he said, "Well, we've got a full-time position open, why don't you apply?" I was lucky enough to be one of the two people you all hired that fall: Linda Papageorge and me.

TS: And that was actually the first year in '78 that we were offering junior level courses, when you came in.

HS: That's right.

TS: I can't even remember. I know before '78 we didn't even pay attention to what people's specialties were; we either hired World history or American history. Was it an issue when you came? Were you hired specifically to do the Medieval and Renaissance and Reformation?

HS: I think their real consideration was just what you said, that I could teach World and Linda taught U.S. You hired one of each of us, and George Beggs may have been thinking down the road that I would be able to help build a history program. I had some competencies that other people didn't have.

TS: Right. I'm sure that had to be a factor by that time. I guess if you got an upper level class once a year, you were probably doing pretty well.

HS: That's right. It was two or three years before I had a chance to teach an upper level class. I taught a lot of World Civ. And I was surprised when I got here out of Emory to find that you all were doing World Civ and not Western Civ.

TS: We were actually pretty early in doing that.

HS: Yes, I had to do some scrambling to prepare those classes on Asia and Africa.

TS: I guess so. Although, I think there were probably several who didn't put a whole lot of Africa and Asia in those courses in those early days, at least that's my memory.

HS: It was fun for me to learn about it as I was preparing to share it.

TS: So that really wasn't part of your preparation at Emory?

HS: No, no. It had been strictly European.

TS: And was their general education course Western Civ?

HS: Western Civ.

TS: So we were ahead of Emory in that direction.

HS: You were way ahead of us in that respect.

TS: We were going in that direction. Yes, I think, I can't remember, it was '73 or somewhere early in the '70s. So we had probably been doing World history for maybe five or six years by the time you got here. I say "we", "they."

HS: The department.

TS: The department had been doing it for some time. So you taught three surveys a quarter, and then gradually got to teach the upper classes. We actually got more students who would stay around for their junior and senior years. So we've had some growth. I'm sure nobody goes to an institution saying, "I'm going to spend the rest of my career there." They'll say, "This will be good for a few years." I've interviewed several people where this was the case, at any rate; I don't know if it was the case with you or not.

HS: I was just glad to have a job! [laughter]

TS: I know that feeling!

HS: After I accepted the offer, I ran into one of the young faculty in the history department at Emory, and he said, "I understand you got a job." And I said, "Yes." He said, "It's a four year tenure track institution?" I said, "Yes." He said, "We better put a sign up in lights on the roof of the history building!" [chuckle]

TS: Did you find it was difficult going from a private school to a—I mean, not that it was difficult for you, but difficult to get over maybe preferences for people who got their preparation in a public university? Do you think that was a factor?

HS: I don't really think it was, Tom. My education up to Emory had all been public from first grade through the BA, in public schools.

TS: I mean, I was just thinking, it's really depressing in that period if Emory is having trouble placing its Ph.D.s.

HS: They were. I still know some people who came out of Emory around that time who never found jobs in the field.

TS: Really? I interviewed Bowman Davis earlier who got his Ph.D. in the early '70s at Emory, and ran through that same problem. The job market was so depressed in the '70's.

HS: Right. I remember when I came to the job interview. I talked with Dr. Beggs first, and he brought me over to meet President Sturgis. We had a nice, polite chat. Dr. Sturgis said, "Do you have any questions?" I said, "No sir, I don't think I do." He said, "You don't even want to know how much you're going to make?!" [laughter] I said to him, "I'm just glad to have a job!"

TS: Right. Anything would be better than what you had. If I remember correctly they put you in a joint office with J.B. Tate.

HS: That's right. J.B. was my office mate for about ten years.

TS: Is that right?

HS: Right.

TS: And you somehow survived that experience.

HS: We were short of office space even at that early stage in the institution's development.

TS: Were we in the Humanities Building when you came?

HS: We were in Social Science.

TS: We didn't have the new Humanities Building when you came here?

HS: That's right.

TS: So we were in Social Science, and you all were upstairs.

HS: That's right. Next to Dr. Beggs's office. Under his watchful eye and also under J.B.'s influence.

TS: Right. Let me just ask, what was it that kept you at Kennesaw over the years?

HS: Part of it was the excitement of being at an institution that, from day one, was growing. The excitement of helping build a program. And a large part of it was the students. I've never once thought about leaving. It's always been challenging because of shortage of resources, but it has been exciting to meet those challenges, and to feel that we've had

wonderful students come through our classroom. We have given them the opportunity for a fine education.

TS: Right. How would you compare Kennesaw to say, West Georgia, in your undergraduate days, when you came here?

HS: Let me make sure I've got the question Tom. Compare Kennesaw to. . . ?

TS: Well, in terms of the students . . .

HS: Kennesaw in 1978 or Kennesaw now?

TS: No, I'm talking about Kennesaw when you first started at the institution.

HS: I think when we first started that the two were in a lot of ways quite comparable. Again, we had the chance at Kennesaw to add quite a number of faculty in the first few years that I was here. There were some really good people among them. As you said a few minutes ago, it took us awhile to persuade more of our students that they could stay here for four years, and not just think about us as a springboard for something "bigger and better." But we had some great students. From the very beginning, I remember some of those first classes. As is still sometimes the case, you get everything from a traditional age student, who's not much interested in what he or she is doing here, to non-traditional students, who are incredibly bright and highly motivated, first generation college students who, like the non-trationals, understand the value of what they're getting here. [They] are willing to work hard to get it.

TS: I guess Kennesaw probably had a higher percentage of non-trationals than West Georgia would with their dormitories.

HS: We did have a much higher percentage of non-traditional students because we were entirely commuter, and West Georgia had its dorms.

TS: Did you live in the dorms?

HS: I did not. I take that back; I spent one summer term in the dorm there, just for the sake of the experience, but I lived twenty miles away, and like most of our students—all of our students—from the time from 1978 until very recently, I commuted.

TS: With that kind of background, you must have found it very easy to identify with the students at Kennesaw.

HS: Right. I was a first generation college student myself, and so I really did identify with a lot of our students.

TS: Did your parents encourage education?

- HS: Oh yes. My father never got beyond eighth grade, but he was a very intelligent man. Like a lot of less prosperous southern families at the time, he left school after eighth grade to make money and help support the rest of the family. My mother had a high school education, but both of them understood the value of education and understood that the world that they grew up in was changing. If you were going to make anything of yourself in the future, you needed to go to college. [That is], if you had the ability go on beyond the BA.
- TS: So there's where the emphasis on studying science probably came in. "Do something practical to get a job."
- HS: Probably so. And in high school, my science teacher really was very, very good.
- TS: What was the reaction at home when you said, "I'm going to be a history major?"
- HS: Well, my father had passed away by then. I'm sure he would have supported the decision. He always said, "Do anything you want to do. Just be the best at it." And my mother was fully supportive. I'm not sure she understood what it was going to take to get to a Ph.D., and what one would do with it. But that's what I wanted to do, and she was going to back me up.
- TS: Right. How would you compare Emory—of course, you only taught there one semester—but how would you compare Emory to Kennesaw when you started? It wasn't a shock because you'd been at West Georgia. But to go from Emory to Kennesaw in those days . . . how would our students, for instance . . . certainly they don't have the SAT scores that Emory's students would typically have.
- HS: The student body at Emory was much more homogenous. Undergraduates were almost all between eighteen and twenty-two. You're right, they had high SAT scores, and they were very grade conscious to the point, sometimes of becoming a little annoying to their instructors. [chuckle] I remember one young man who came to my graduate carrel after the class was over and said, "You gave me a B in that history class and that B is going to keep me out of law school." I said, "No sir, I did not give you a B in that class; you earned a B in that class. I'm not about to change your grade." I rarely had that kind of thing happen with Kennesaw students.
- TS: I've wondered sometimes if sometimes those students who are so grade conscious are not really conformists, and are not really interested in thinking on their own, just want to know what you think so they can put it down on a test.
- HS: Yes, I think that's very much the case. They may not remember what you think or what they put down on the test for very long, as long as it got them the grade they needed to go on to whatever the ultimate goal is. Very career conscious. Perhaps that's an even better word than grade conscious; they have a sense of entitlement, that they should come out of a four-year program with no problem at all and that they ought to be able to go on to law school or med school or whatever profession.

TS: And it's your fault if you didn't give them the A's to get there.

HS: That's right. [chuckle]

TS: Well, let's think a little bit more about your first decade or so at Kennesaw; you didn't have a lot of teaching experience. Talk about developing a teaching philosophy and strategy that worked for you at Kennesaw.

HS: It was largely on the job training.

TS: J.B. Tate used to talk about staying one step ahead of the posse.

HS: One step ahead of the posse. There were days during those first couple of years, especially. I felt that I was lucky to come out of there alive. There were days that it went so well that I came away thinking, "I can't believe they pay me to do this!" One of the things I learned was that it's hard to do discussion with a room full of forty-five, or, in some cases in those days, fifty or more students.

TS: Right. You know, our classes haven't really gotten bigger, have they in history?

HS: Not really.

TS: And we're lucky across campus. There's more than luck involved of course, but some of these other departments have talked about how much larger their student enrollments are. We've been able to hold it down to forty-five or fifty, haven't we?

HS: Right. And in the old days, if you got a class of fifty or more, you didn't even think about calling it a double section and getting credit for teaching two classes.

TS: Right.

HS: I learned, I have to say, largely by trial and error, that you do have to think of the content of the course that you want to convey, but you also have to convey it in a way that is going to keep the students interested. I said my father and grandfather were great storytellers; I think that background helped me a lot in the classroom. Especially with survey classes, but even with upper level classes, I try to construct a narrative with the students. I don't think there's anything wrong with going in there and telling a darn good story. As long as there's substance to it, it's going to keep the students' attention, and they're going to remember it. I varied the narrative of the lecture with a good deal of Socratic method, stopping and asking the students questions, trying to draw the information out of them. That encourages them to actually do the reading and to come to class prepared. You don't want the professor to call on you, and it become apparent to everybody that you've never even looked at the material.

TS: You actually called on people by name?

- HS: I've done both. I've just thrown the question out to the room and tried to get the discussion going; but, particularly if I have the sense that students in the class were slacking off a little bit on the reading, I'd call on individuals by name and say, "Mr. So and So, tell me about this."
- TS: In terms of your lectures, story telling, Socratic method, became your style of teaching?
- HS: That became my basic style; I've learned to incorporate PowerPoint and some of the more modern technologies in class, but it hasn't altered the basic style very much.
- TS: How do you use PowerPoint? Do you do it for photographs?
- HS: I do a basic outline of the material and intersperse photographs along with the text. You can't put a whole lot of text up there because students become so involved in writing it that they stop thinking. But images help them a lot. Whether you're talking about Renaissance architecture or you're talking about the Battle of Marathon, you can do a simple illustration up there, and show them how the Greeks and the Persians maneuvered on the field.
- TS: Yes, I would think, especially for teaching some of your Italian history, if you can show some of those old buildings and works of art, the Sistine Chapel ceiling or whatever, that that would certainly help a lot.
- HS: Yes. I always had difficulty—I love slides because you get such a high quality image from slides—but I always had difficulty going back and forth between making the slide projector, put the image I wanted up there for just a few seconds and then going back to lecturing. With PowerPoint, you can sort of plan it ahead of time and have the image pop up on the screen exactly when you want it, assuming the technology's working.
- TS: [chuckle] Which it doesn't always do. So you find PowerPoint definitely better than the old chalkboard?
- HS: I can do either one, and I've had students tell me they preferred PowerPoint. Others say they prefer it when I just go in there with some notes and a piece of chalk. They tell me I'm a little more spontaneous when I just have my piece of chalk in hand.
- TS: Right. Anything else on the philosophy of teaching? You had to come up with a testing policy and all of that.
- HS: I had to come up with a testing policy that, at the same time, has some rigor to it, but is [a] fair testing of the [material]. Whether it's the World Civ class or an upper level class, I want students to come away with some idea of how the world in which we live got to be. What different historical eras and what different cultures contributed to our own day. It doesn't matter so much to me if they remember dates, you can always look up dates; it doesn't even matter that much whether they can recall that it was such-and-such a king who created this part of English law, but I'd like them to know how the modern notion of

law and citizen's rights came to be. I like them to know how the modern nation state evolved out of earlier forms of government.

TS: I was interested when you were talking about mentors earlier, that the examples you cited were almost all out of classroom, things that you remember about professors. Is there anyone that you modeled your teaching style after? Or is this just something you developed by seeing what worked in the classroom?

HS: Primarily my undergraduate professors, Goodwin, and one that I didn't mention that I should have included among the mentors, Ben Kennedy.

TS: Yes. And he did I guess French history, didn't he?

HS: He did French history and the first upper level class I took at West Georgia was with Kennedy. He was the terror of the department at the time. He's the one from whom I got the notion of calling on students by name and asking them for specific questions.

TS: Oh. I bet he was a terror.

HS: And if the information was in the footnote, that was no excuse. You should have been reading those footnotes, too.

TS: Since the examples that you cited of mentors were out of classroom things for the most part, did you have any philosophy of teaching of things beyond the classroom with your students? Or were you too busy teaching all those classes of fifty?

HS: No, I told Cope Goodwin in that last visit that I had with him that I had only recently come to appreciate the amount of time I took up with him with my other professors at West Georgia. I was forever dropping by their office, just wanting to talk about history, about the college experience, about where I was going to go from here, and I don't think I ever had one of them say, "I'm busy, can you come back later?" As I got further along in my career, busy with all those classes and with committee work and all the administration that takes up our lives, there were times when I consciously had to stop myself from saying, "I'm busy, would you come back later?" I realized how much those people had given to me of their time, their knowledge. I tried to always return that care for my students that they gave to me.

TS: I guess I was thinking of how very early in your career at Kennesaw you got involved with Phi Alpha Theta, as the advisor. I guess you were in Phi Alpha Theta at West Georgia, and that was our history honor society. It was really active in the early '80s, when we were actually producing our first crops of history majors: Retha Stephens and so on.

HS: Suzanne Marshall.

TS: And you were the advisor at that time.

HS: Yes. But an advisor can only do so much. You really have to have that active group of students, like the students you just mentioned. Like the students we've had in the last few years in Phil Alpha Theta.

TS: Of course, Suzanne went on to Emory.

HS: To Emory to get her Ph.D.

TS: I assume you had a little bit to do with that.

HS: She has a successful career teaching and writing. I think a professor owes his students more than just the classroom experience; if you have knowledge about the profession or about the way the university operates, if there's a way you can help a student in any area, I think you really have an obligation to do it. I found out on our return from our Study Abroad Trip in Italy that one of the non-traditional students who had gone with us was interested in library work and librarianship after she finished her bachelor's. I hadn't taught her in class. She is not even a history major. But when I got back, I called up our Director of Libraries, Bob Williams, and arranged for her, Bob, and I to have lunch together. He laid out the options that were before here and hired her, more or less, on the spot to serve an assistantship.

TS: Wow. How far back does the Studies Abroad program go as far as your involvement in it?

HS: The program I direct in the summer now began in 1999, and I took over as director in 2000.

TS: Our Studies Abroad, was that the first time that you had actually taught in Studies Abroad program, in 1999?

HS: I taught for the first time in 1984.

TS: Okay, because I thought it went back a long time before then.

HS: Yes, and a program had run that originated out of the University of Georgia, though in the '80s all the study abroad programs were centralized downtown, and they had a bumper crop enrollment that year and were adding some additional teaching faculty, and I was lucky to be one of the ones that was chosen.

TS: Right. It's 1991 that you receive the Distinguished Teaching Award, and I think you had been a finalist several times before then.

HS: Right. Twice at least, I think.

TS: I think you've really largely answered this question already, but what attributes do you think you brought that caused you to win this award at Kennesaw?

HS: I have to say winning the award was the greatest honor I've ever had because I know the nominations come from your students. Long before I won the award, I served on the selection committee. I know how strong competition is and how tough it is for those. Thinking back over twenty-five years or more of student evaluations, I think my students realized that I love history, that I'm excited about the discipline, and I want to convey, not just facts, but that excitement, that love of history to them. The other thing that they say pretty consistently is that they know that I care about them. One of the things you mentioned, I had been finalist a couple of times, one of the things that may have affected the committee's decision—I have no real way of knowing—is the fact that I was nominated pretty consistently over the years by my students.

TS: How would you define a master teacher?

HS: A master teacher. Someone who is, first of all, a master of the discipline, whatever the subject might be; someone who, no matter how long he or she has been studying or teaching a discipline, is still excited about it. You have to be organized enough, I think, to present your material. Whatever mode of presentation you use, be organized enough to present your material in a way that other people can understand it; spontaneous enough to take advantage of what some people call the teachable moment, you know, that moment when that student says something that had just never occurred to you or asked a question that you never thought of. I think we've all known people who were masters of their subject matter, but who simply could not teach. They either weren't organized or weren't excited or they were so organized they couldn't possibly stray from the prepared text without completely losing their train of thought. I think another thing that goes into the mix is the ability to read one's audience.

TS: I was thinking on the spontaneity. I hate to think how much of what I teach nowadays has resulted from a comment that a student would make in a class. I never thought about it that way before so next semester I can present it.

HS: Incorporate it.

TS: Exactly.

HS: I don't want to waste time in the interview here but just an aside, I attended a funeral back in Haralson County a few weeks ago, and a young man was asked to say a few words about his uncle. He walked up to the microphone in this little country church, hardly anybody was wearing a coat and tie, simple country folk, and in the first sentence he spoke he used the word "archetype," and I thought, "Son, you can't read your audience, can you?"

TS: [laughter] Yes, probably not too many people in there that, they may have pulled out their dictionaries when they got home, "Now what was that about archetype?" [chuckle] Well, that's certainly important. Let me ask you something that's related to this and certainly a part of our job description. What we do about the balance of teaching, scholarship, and

service, and how all that fits in with being a master teacher. I know you got some, what was that, Philosophical Society?

HS: American Philosophical Society, a couple of small grants.

TS: Yes, your trips to Italy to do research on the Frescobaldis. I know this has been a problem for a lot of people coming to Kennesaw out of graduate programs that are excited about research. They hit Kennesaw, and they have a heavy teaching load, and not necessarily a lot of resources to do scholarship with, particularly if [they're] in a field where [their] sources are all over in Italy. It cuts down on how many times you can run to the library.

HS: That's right. [chuckle]

TS: But you did continue to do that research with those grants. Why don't you talk about that a little bit.

HS: In my life, and I think so far this institution, the culture of this institution is teaching has to come first. You have a duty to those students to come into the classroom well prepared; give them you're very best. As you noted, service has always been a big part of the job here. When, as department chair, I work with our younger faculty, I try to guide them into some sort of balance, so they don't take on so many service applications or such profound service obligations [that] they can't do the scholarship that's so very important to them. I managed to keep a pretty fair balance until I went into administration, and as my colleague Helen Ridley and former department chair, said to me once, "Administration is the death of scholarship." You simply can't put the time and energy into it that . . .

TS: You can't do a good job at everything.

HS: You can't do a good job at everything. I've been very lucky that the college and university has understood my interest in Study Abroad, although that made me take those weeks out of the summer, which I consider really still part of my service obligation, as well as the mentoring side of teaching. But for me, I would say that teaching has always been first. There was a struggle between the obligations of service and scholarship, but because of the decisions I made about my career, service or administration eventually run the day.

TS: Right. But I think what you're saying in part is that maybe when you came out of West Georgia, your burning interest was not to be a writer of books in the field, so much as to be a good teacher.

HS: To be a good teacher and—I did eventually see myself maybe publishing a dissertation, writing a book or two along the way—I sort of thought that was part of what an academic did. As you said, I've gotten some grants. I've got an essay in a book here and an article out there, but I don't think I really was prepared for the service load that comes with an

institution like this. I'm glad that I've had the experience, so that I can try to help some more young colleagues.

TS: Why did you decide that you wanted to go into administration? Is this something that had always interested you? You started out as assistant dean or associate dean?

HS: Assistant dean, yes. The year before the position of assistant dean became available, I had worked with our then dean, Don Forrester, on some university assessment, something I had never done before. It was really my first brush with administration. Seeing how decisions get made and where decisions get made and how individuals are able to influence those decisions. The spring quarter, it was then 1996. Laura Dabundo moved over to chair the Department of English, and the assistant dean's position became available. I applied for it [as] I think just sort of as a challenge and a change of pace and another way of getting a look at how the show gets run around here. I went into it with the idea that it really didn't matter to me whether it lasted a quarter or a year or a couple of years. I don't think I had any intention of sticking with it, but I continued to be interested in how important decisions that affect the college and the university and our departments are made and how perhaps I could use experience and connections across campus to help everyone, from the student who has a problem with her professor to the departments and the college itself.

TS: So it really is a form of, it's an extension of teaching in a way when you're helping students work through problems.

HS: It's mentoring in that sense and it's a form of service as well. Somebody's got to do this. [laughter]

TS: Well, I'm grateful that you wanted to do it. [chuckle] Talk a little bit about how Kennesaw has changed since you got here.

HS: Wow. When I'm interviewing candidates for positions now, I always walk them around the old quadrangle and say, "This was the junior college. The building where our department is housed, the Pilcher Building, was the junior college library, was the library when I arrived. It was one floor of books." It's hard to know where to start. When I came, you'll remember we had just over 3,000 students; in a few years, I was proud to see us at 5,000, but never dreamed we'd get to 10,000. And when we had 10,000, I couldn't imagine that we'd ever see 20,000. And now, 20,000 seems inevitable. Along with this, your size of the student body, the faculty positions haven't increased as rapidly as they should have, but we're so much larger now than we were then. Our fall faculty meeting is in the gymnasium, I understand. You'll remember when the entire Social Science Division could meet in one of those larger classrooms in the Social Science Building.

TS: Even in one of the smaller classrooms. [laughter]

HS: Yes, that's true. We've always been short of faculty, short of money, short of classroom space, and the student body keeps growing faster than we can build those things. They all keep growing at a pace—and I understand we're breaking ground this fall on the new Social Science Building—which will be the biggest classroom building on campus. The workload for everybody, we were just talking about that, has continued to grow. It never seems to lessen. All those committee positions have to be filled. One thing I am pretty sure we've kept within our college and I'm very proud of, is the emphasis on teaching and on students, the notion that students matter. I have probably said this to you, but I've had a chance to interview a number of our alumni who have come back to apply for part-time teaching positions so they can get some experience and make a little bit of money. I always ask them why they want to come here, when there are other places in the metro-area they could teach part-time. Many could be TA'ing on their own campuses, and everyone has given me some version of the same answer, which was, "I want to come back to Kennesaw to give another generation of students the experience I had as an undergraduate."

TS: Wow.

HS: They are so proud of the teachers they had here; they're goal really is to emulate those teachers and give back to another generation of students the undergraduate experience they had. It makes me proud, and I still keep hearing from students that our faculty is accessible, that our faculty care about them, that they're getting, in some senses at least, a small college undergraduate experience at what has become a very big institution.

TS: At least once they get to their majors.

HS: At least once they get to their majors and sometimes in those survey classes if you happen to get the right person.

TS: That's good. How would you describe the intellectual climate on our campus now, and has it changed over the years for the better or worse?

HS: It's changed. There's a great deal more emphasis on scholarship than there was in those early days. There's a little more support for it when they provide faculty with some travel money; I think a little more generous than we were in the past. One of our newest colleagues, John Turner, just this summer had an invitation-only paper at a conference in Belgium. I was able to pool resources with our Institute for Global Initiatives and round up the money on short notice that he needed for European flight, conference fees, hotel, and so on. You mentioned some of the early grants I had. One of the reasons I was able to get to the two NEH seminars was because they were aimed at institutions where there was a heavy teaching load, not much time for scholarship, and very little money to support scholarship. Those were pivotal experiences in my life. There's a lot more scholarship being done; there's more scholarship I think at a high quality level. There were always scholars among the faculty, but those folks did it largely out of their own hide and out of their love for scholarship. The one thing that worries me a little bit is

when the sense among many of the younger faculty is that they have to produce if they're going to become tenured, if they're going to get promoted.

TS: Is this a true perception or a false perception?

HS: So far, and again, I'm confining myself to our department and our college. Faculty still have the option of concentrating on service, rather than scholarship, if that's their inclination. I hope that that remains the case; frankly, because some people are geared more toward service, and those obligations have to be met. I can imagine a time in the future when that's no longer true, when you must get those articles and refereed journals, and when you must publish a book to become promoted.

TS: It seems to me that the young faculty are pushing for that more than the older faculty.

HS: I think they are pushing themselves, in a sense. They're the ones who are raising the expectation. Some do it—maybe out of ambition—but I think some of it is just uneasiness, that “If I don't do this, then no matter what they're telling me now, I won't be secure in the future.”

TS: Right. So you see this as a problem of the present, that the unhappiness that brews—I guess all of us, when we didn't have tenure and promotion, were paranoid about everything anyway, weren't we?

HS: Yes, I suppose so.

TS: But you think it's worse now in terms of the scholarship expectations.

HS: In terms of the scholarship expectation, exactly.

TS: Do you think that it's affecting teaching?

HS: I haven't seen any sign of it because the younger faculty I know who are good scholars, are also good teachers. They're doing scholarship because that's what interested them, but that interest in knowing about the past carries over into the classroom as well. I think there is also a sense of discipline and a work ethic that drive them, and scholarship that also is going to drive them and prepare them . . .

TS: In the classroom.

HS: In the classroom, exactly.

TS: I'm glad that I started here, and went through Kennesaw when I did because I'm not sure I could compete with some of these young guys that we've been bringing in recent years—if I were starting at that level now.

HS: And the institution I think is going to change because of them. We're able to attract top-notch teachers and scholars, and the more of them we hire, the more of them we're able to keep, the more we're going to be able to hire in the future.

TS: Okay. Well, I know you've got an appointment to run to, and I think we've pretty well covered the waterfront here. I really appreciate you talking with me.

HS: Well, it's been great talking with you, Tom. It's always fun to reminisce about the past of Kennesaw and think about what might be coming down the road.

TS: Well, thank you very much.

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