

**PRESERVING OUR HISTORY: ROTARY CLUB OF GREENSBORO**  
**ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

INTERVIEWEE: Stephen Cobb

INTERVIEWER: Kathelene Smith

DATE: September 28, 2010

KS: It's September 28, 2010, and I am in the home of Dr. Steve Cobb for the Preserving our History Rotary: Club of Greensboro oral history project. Hello, Dr. Cobb, how are you today?

SC: Good afternoon. I'm so pleased you're here, Kathelene.

KS: Well, thank you for having me to your home. Please tell me when and where you were born?

SC: Not very far from here. I am a native of Guilford County, and I retired in Guilford County. I was born here in Greensboro at the old Sternberger Hospital over on Summit Avenue. Parents who were farmers, and that's what my family was – farmers at McLeansville, North Carolina. Mom and dad were educated through high school. Mom went a year to Elon, but they were Depression babies. They were born in 1909, and in 1929 when the stock market crashed, they were twenty years of age. At that time dad had a farm, and he started farming in a big way then, and farmed his entire life, and was a very, very successful farmer.

KS: How was growing up on a farm?

SC: It was physically taxing. It was busy. Lots of fun times, but basically, let me give you an idea of how a farm day was spent when I was, let's see, twelve or fifteen years of age. We had cattle, sheep, hogs, horses, chickens, cattle, and milk cows. We had to milk those cows twice a day, feed all those animals before any work started on the farm. January, all the lambs came. February, the calves were born. March, we got the land ready for planting. April, we put in the corn. May, we planted tobacco. During the summer we worked the tobacco, got in the hay, got in the grains. Tobacco, at that time, was 800 man hours per acre – 800 man hours per acre when the tobacco plant was six inches tall until you harvested it. We pulled tobacco by hand early on behind the mule. Later on, we had a partially mechanical harvester, and tobacco was tied on sticks. The sticks were taken to a tobacco barn. Those sticks were hung in the barn and then cured for a week. And then, before we could harvest another barn of tobacco, we had to take that one out. So, our day started as early in the summertime as 4:30 and ended as late as 7 or 8 o'clock at night. So, when I say it was physically taxing, it was. But there are

lots of good times on the farm. We had two or three farm ponds. We could swim in those. We had a larger family. My father had three brothers and three sisters – and an extended family. And we all got together for July Fourth – you know, the Cobb family got together for July Fourth, for Christmas, for Thanksgiving. So, I was born and raised in a rather sheltered environment. I never saw the ocean until my brother-in-law took me there when I was sixteen years of age. We went to 4-H Club camp. We went to FFA camp – Future Farmers of America camp – but it was a very, very rural, and very sheltered, and very busy way to grow up with a lot of good memories. But something told me that this was not going to be for me. If you're on a farm, you suffer from the whims of nature. If it didn't rain, you had to irrigate. If it rained too much, especially in a rainstorm, you damaged the crops. You couldn't get the crops in because it's too wet. Nature plays such a role. When I was about twelve years of age I asked my dad, I said, "Why do you do this?" We were in the tobacco field, and we'd had a rainstorm and a windstorm – a lot of the tobacco was knocked over. He said, "This is what I love to do." I said, "Dad, this is not going to be for me, because I don't want to suffer at the whims of nature. I want to plan my life so that I can go to work if it's raining, or if it's not raining, and I can have a profession." He said, "That's good. That's what I expect you to do." So, two brothers, both college-educated, two sisters, both college-educated, and myself. So, five kids from a farm here in Guilford County – a farm that was worked 12 months of the year – all college-educated. In fact, once the tobacco came out of the field it had to go to market. And then, the corn had to come in. And then, at Christmastime we sold Christmas trees on lots here on North Elm Street. And as a kid, I had been in a lot of these Sunset houses at nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen years of age delivering Christmas trees. Little did I know I would be living on this street some day.

KS: Well, how did you work school into all of this?

SC: Not very well.

KS: Because I can't imagine having the energy.

SC: I graduated from McLeansville High School with between fifteen and twenty kids in my senior class. There are only 150 students in the entire school, first through twelfth.

KS: Wow.

SC: In the high school back then, they didn't have advanced classes or whatever. So, you just teach to the medium. I hardly ever cracked a book in high school. And I knew I was going to suffer from that. So, consequently, I had sort of a plan in my mind – when I had time to study, I could study.

KS: Now, did you have sports or anything like that at your school? It sounds like it was small.

SC: Just basketball and baseball. I did spend a lot of time with the 4-H Club Projects and was a state winner in a couple of those, one being Soil and Water Conservation. We raised baby beef cattle and sold them. And that's how I got my finances to go to college. When we made money on those 4-H Club Projects, that money went in the bank. When I went to college I had \$4,000 in the bank, and this is 1960. So, \$4,000 in the bank in 1960, how much is inflation? That money is probably – in today's cash – probably would be somewhere \$20,000 and \$30,000. So, that was a good start in life.

KS: Wow, sure was.

SC: And that's how all of us went to college. When we got ready to go to college, you know, it was never a question if you are going to go to college in my family – it was, where are you going to go to college? Everybody had a college education fund.

KS: Did anyone go back to farming?

SC: No.

KS: No? [Both Laugh] Y'all done it?

SC: We wanted off of that farm. That mostly came from my mother. She said, "You don't have to live like this." Although it is busy, and hectic, and it's labor intensive, this is not a stable way to get ahead in life. And they both knew that. That's OK.

KS: It has to be a calling almost.

SC: They were not upset that we left the farm. But mom cried when we did.

KS: I can imagine.

SC: I talked a little bit about high school. I graduated in 1960. If I had a favorite subject in high school, I think it would be science and math. I had no interest in liberal arts whatsoever, absolutely none. I know you're a liberal arts graduate in what you do today, but –

KS: But I'll tell you what, it is not – it's not too marketable. Science and math are much more marketable.

SC: But I knew that I wasn't college material. I had the money to go to college. So, I had to do something. My older brother was in the same shape, and he went to Elon College, which wasn't very far away, for one year as a day student. It was cheap. It was close by. So, I did the same thing. Enrolled in four courses in the

fall semester, four courses in the spring semester – Math, English, Biology and Chemistry. And during that year I spent my four years of high school in my first year of college learning what I needed to know to get a foundation in life. Now, that's not to say that the teachers at McLeansville High School were that bad, but it just wasn't taxing. At Elon, I knew I had to apply myself. And I left Elon after one year with straight A's, which put me into college at NC State [North Carolina State University] still having some money in the bank. And, wow, country boy come to town. I mean – remember I'd only been to the beach one time. And there's, at that time, I think NC State was probably 8,000 students. So, my exposure from high school with fifteen to twenty, to Elon with just the classes I were in, to 10,000 students was a remarkable learning experience, not only mentally, but socially. I had decent social skills, but I knew that I needed to learn how to communicate with people because I was going to do something more than a four-year education. I already knew that. So while there, I didn't participate in a lot of extracurricular activities. They did ask me to be on the North Carolina Livestock judging team, and we went to Chicago and did very well.

KS: How was Chicago after that?

SC: It was great. I had already been there twice to do 4-H Club projects. But this was fun because we left North Carolina in a van – two professors, and four of us that made the team. You were asked to be on the team, you didn't make it. But that was judging livestock, whether it be sheep, cattle, or hogs – one, two, three, four. Then going after that and giving the reasons you placed them in that order. And I really had the gift for gab talking about the quality of this, and the quality of that. In fact, I would have won that contest had it not been for the fact that I got a pen of hogs as they call it, or four pigs. The judging should have been one, two, three, four. I had it four, three, two, one. I scored a zero on the judging. But the maximum points you could get on your reasoning was twenty, and I scored a twenty on reasoning for putting them exactly backwards [Laughs]. I would have won the entire contest in the United States had I not done that.

KS: What pressure!

SC: No, no, it was fun. My major at NC State was just agriculture because I didn't know what I wanted to do. And then, I was there only two years because I was taking heavy class load. Money was close, money was short. And in three years I applied to veterinary school. So, after a year my major was Pre-Veterinary Medicine. And the subjects there were marvelous – Genetics, Chemistry, wow, Comparative Anatomy. Just – it was like, to me, those courses were like eating an ice cream because I enjoyed them so much. So, I knew that I was going to lean toward the medical field. And I applied for veterinary school in the fall of 1962. In fact, this is a true story, I went to the interview, and here I am, nineteen years old, maybe almost twenty sitting in a room. This is like a Congressional hearing, you know, they are all sitting around. You are sitting in this chair, spotlight is on you. And I had excellent grades. I had a 3.87 through three years of college. And

they talked to me about my grades and discussed some other things, my interests, and where I was from, my background. And then, the interview was almost finished. And the gentleman that was heading up this board looked at me, and he said, “How many recommendations to this board did you send in?” I said, “I sent three.” And he opened up a folder, and there was a half inch of recommendations in there. He said, “You’re required to send three, and we expect you to send three, but you sent between fifteen and twenty.” I said, “No, sir. I sent you three recommendations.” And at that time I remembered what they were. He said, “Here’s one from your congressman. Here’s one from a senator. Here’s one from the head of the North Carolina extension service. Here’s one from a professor at Elon. Here’s one from your high school, the English teacher. Here’s one from a here, and here’s one from here. And here’s one from – how did these get here?” I said, “I have absolutely no idea.” He said, “This board could interpret this as you are trying to get into veterinary school through political connections.” I go, “No, no, no. I have no idea where this came from, but I’ll tell you I’ll put my ethics, and my morals, and my ability to be intelligent, in front of you guys in a classroom equal to anyone else that’s applying to the school. But certainly, there’s no political pressure here.” And he closed the folder and put it away and said, “We’ll let you know.” So, I got out of that interview and I called my mom. And I said, “What’s going on?” She said, “What do you mean, ‘What’s going on?’” I said, “I was supposed to have three recommendations. I had twenty.” She said, “Well, I’ll be.” I said, “Do you know anything about this?” She said, “Maybe, but I’m not sure.” She had my back, right? So, campus organizations for me were limited. I did join a fraternity, a fraternity by the name of FarmHouse [International Fraternity], which was a well-known agricultural fraternity, a non-drinking fraternity. I didn’t have the money to drink. A social fraternity, and made lots of good friends there, friends to this day. But I was, basically, a student, and I didn’t participate in a lot of extracurricular activities. By the way, I did get into veterinary school in the fall of 1963. At that time, we were sending – State was sending – students to Georgia and Oklahoma State. They sent the students with better grades to Oklahoma State because they thought that was a better school. It’s 1,200 miles away. It’s a long way away.

KS: So, there wasn’t a veterinary school in North Carolina?

SC: No, it didn’t start until 1980. First class didn’t –

KS: Really?

SC: So, we had to send all the students in North Carolina prior to 1980 out of state. That year five students went to Oklahoma, and I think twelve went to Georgia. Georgia would have been just as much fun and a heck a lot closer and probably a similar education. But that’s where I went on the Southeastern Regional Exchange Board. Oklahoma would send forestry students here to get their advanced degrees, and we would send veterinary students there.

KS: So, this is the University of Oklahoma?

SC: No, Oklahoma State.

KS: Oklahoma State.

SC: Stillwater. Let me tell you about Stillwater. What does it invoke in your mind, Stillwater?

KS: Lakes.

SC: Some lakes, but mostly middle Oklahoma with ravines and canyons and not a very productive farmland. And I don't know why they call it Stillwater, but I can tell you that when we drove into town after driving for two days to get there, we got there at night and drove down the main street of Stillwater, and tumbleweeds were blowing in the town from the prairie. Not from the prairie, but from the hills.

KS: No, that's never a good sign.

SC: Yeah. 25,000 people, and 25,000 students. 50,000 people lived in the town, including those that taught at the college. So, it was basically just a huge college town. Oklahoma was fun. It was, here again, it was mentally taxing, because I worked just as hard there, if not harder, to make good grades. But the courses were wonderful – Anatomy; Histology, the study of tissues; Parasitology, the study of bugs; Pathology, the study of diseases. You know, all that first two years was hectic as the devil, but I just ate it up because it was so wonderful to know these things that all these professors knew, and every veterinarian in the world knew. But now I get to learn these things firsthand. And it's a marvelous learning experience. People of Oklahoma are good people. I wouldn't live there. It's windy. It's hot. In the fall when you get there, it's brown. In the wintertime, it's brown. The only time it greens up is in the springtime, and then I left because I did other things. I spent one more summer on the farm to gain some excess money for school. That's between my freshman and sophomore year. The next year, I worked for a veterinarian in Roanoke, Virginia – lived in the veterinary hospital. That was an experience. The next year I got an appointment to work as a veterinary student at Ralston Purina in St. Louis, and that was an experience. By the time I got out of veterinarian school, I had spent, let's say, seven years of intense education. And I didn't really know what I wanted to do. I honestly did not – there were so many possibilities. I could have gone on and gotten a degree in anything. When I mentioned the courses in Pathology, Parasitology, you can get advanced degrees in any of that. You can get a Master's degree in Small Animal Medicine and Orthopedics, all that sort of thing. I even traveled down to College Station, Texas, to take a look at College Station where Texas A&M had a veterinary school. But it was more desolate than Oklahoma.

KS: Yes.

SC: I said, I don't want to do that. The head of Pathology said, "You know, Steve, come on, let's talk about California, and let's talk about Cornell and New York." And I said, "I'll get back to you." So, I didn't know whether I wanted to do that, whether I wanted to try to go into practice, or specialty practice. I didn't know until I came home that spring. And all the guys were talking about the draft board was calling, because at that time I was 25 years old. And Vietnam was hot and heavy. In fact, Johnson has just announced his guns and butter policy for Vietnam. We're going to send a million and a half troops to Vietnam, and we're going to have peace and prosperity at home. I remember so well him saying that. And I'm going, a million and a half troops – who's going to go. Veterinarians in the military basically look after public health and food hygiene. Some of them do base medicine. I went to the draft board, and she said, "Ah, Mr. Cobb, soon to be Dr. Cobb. I just wrote you a letter. I just mailed a letter to you." She pulled it right off, and I opened it right there in front of the draft board and it said, "You will report for duty in the military before this particular date, or you will be drafted."

KS: Now, I thought that if you were in school, or something like that you didn't – if you weren't –

SC: I was graduated in May 1967.

KS: You already graduated? So, you were –

SC: I'm getting ready to graduate. This is like, maybe March. So, I went back to Oklahoma, and I said, "I'm going to have to figure out what I'm going to do." If I don't stay in school, I'm going to get drafted. I could have stayed in the school, but I'd just spent seven years absorbing all this knowledge, and I was just – I guess you might call it, mentally burnt out with hitting the books. And I said, "I don't think I want to go to an advanced degree, and I don't think any other job other than an advanced degree is going to keep me out of the military. So, I'm going to join the military." Applied to the Army, the Air Force, and the Public Health Service. Some of the fellows before me, who graduated before me, had been in the Public Health Service. The Army wanted to send me to – after food school – to Vietnam, and the Air Force wanted to send me to Guam. And the Public Health Service offered me a position in Washington, D.C., as a research veterinarian at the National Institutes of Health. And if you don't know what the NIH is, it's the place of the most intense investigation into health diseases there is in the country.

KS: It's still extant isn't it?

SC: Yes. The research they do there is like out in space. So, I thought that would be a great opportunity, and it was. I was the – lots of research on animals, and the reason the veterinarians were there was to guide these researchers in the use of animals for research and protect these animals so they didn't suffer. So, I was the

liaison for the researcher, and the liaison for the animals. We had thousands of mice and guinea pigs. We had goats. We had horses. We had a dog colony.

KS: Was that hard?

SC: Was it hard to –

KS: I don't know, to handle animal research?

SC: No, not for me. Because I knew that this meant that we would all live a better life because of what they were doing. And I assure you, these animals didn't suffer under our care, because that was our job. And I had – I went in as a captain – and I had a major looking over my shoulder all the time: "You better look after the animals first." And we did. We did so they didn't suffer. So, that was a wonderful two years. But, you know, spending seven years in intense medical education, or education, and then spending two years not having to hit the books. I was going, "Wow, what a change." It was nice to come home at night and not have to study until ten, eleven, twelve, one, two, or three o'clock in the morning. But I sort of missed that in some ways.

KS: How was living in Washington during that period of time?

SC: It was – I was a stranger in a strange land. This was 1967, '68, '69. I think Chicago riots at the Democratic Convention were in '68. There were a lot of people that were against the military. There were a lot of hippies marching downtown. I was just totally removed from that. I felt like, in a city that size – I felt like an ant crawling out of its tunnel and going and getting my food, doing my job, and coming back, and crawling back in that tunnel. There is some night life that I participated in, but not in downtown D.C. I didn't appreciate the anti-war effort. I was in the military, basically. So, I didn't get involved in it. I did my time. During that time I came to Greensboro to visit the veterinarians in town because I was looking for a place to practice. And Dr. Ellis out on Battleground said, "What are you going to do for the next year and a half before you get out of the military?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "You got any time?" I said, "I got a ton of time. We get a months' vacation." And then, you know, if you work for the government they take days off for everything. So, basically, I had like six weeks a year. He said, "Well, I'll tell you what I want you to do. I'll plan some vacation. I want somebody to cover for me. So, if you don't mind, if you'll come down and work while I'm on vacation, I'll pay you well." And the pay in the military wasn't great. I was barely scraping by, just barely scraping by. In fact, to get through veterinary school – when I graduated from veterinary school I owed \$13,000. So, that \$4,000 I had in the bank when I got out of high school didn't last enough for seven years especially in Oklahoma at vet school. Although we went there for in-state tuition. But the fact that I was looking at \$13,000 which today would be, I don't know, \$75,000 of debt. That helped a lot, and I worked with him for about six or eight months. And then he said, "What are you going to do when you



graduate from the military?” Graduate from the military – “When you’re discharged from the military?” I said, “I’ll be looking for a job.” He said, “Come back here. We’ll make you a partner.”

KS: Wow!

SC: So, evidently, I must have impressed somebody in that hospital, perhaps Dr. Ellis.

KS: So, what kind of practice did he have – large animal or small animal?

SC: If you’re in veterinary medicine and in you’re in large-animal medicine, economics play such a factor, except in equine practice where the animal is more valuable. But traveling to farms, and seeing an animal sick, and diagnosing that animal, the question for the farmer was, “How much is it going to cost?” And the cow is worth maybe \$100, and to get the cow well if we could do it was going to be \$75. And there’s no guarantee the cow is going to get well. Well, that’s not a good way to make a living if you’re a veterinarian, putting animals down or, you know – I didn’t like horses. I didn’t care for horses. I didn’t care for horses in Oklahoma. I didn’t care for horses on the farm. So, large animal to me was not going to be the economic opportunity that I wanted. So, Dr. Ellis was a small-animal practice, mostly cats and dogs, but every now and then a snake, or a gerbil, or something like that. But I basically just practiced small-animal medicine. Then if you got a dog with a broken leg, as opposed to a cow with a broken leg, you not only get to practice medicine, you get to charge for your services. So, it’s a much more economically rewarding to be in small-animal medicine.

KS: Did you like being involved with the owners who were more emotionally invested in the animals, too?

SC: You know, that’s a good question. People ask me, who was I treating when I treated a pet. And I treated the client, and I got the pet well. If you’re across the table from someone, they don’t care how much you know, until you can show them that you care. And in the presentation to the client of the diagnosis, you have to talk about all the possibilities of getting this pet well. You know, “This is what could happen. Let’s talk about cleaning the teeth, or maybe an abscess tooth,” or something. And you arrive at the end, and you say, “You know, this is going to be painful if it’s not taken care of.” And, you know, one of my questions would be, “Of all the things we talked about, which bothers you the most?” And it will always be kind of the last things that I had mentioned. And my comment would be, “Well, you decide how far you want to take it, but I would suggest that we do X, Y, Z, but you are going to make the decision because it’s your pet.” And presenting it that way, you took the client’s mind from upstairs to their heart. Because that’s why clients bring pets to veterinarian hospitals. There are many reasons for purchasing something: greed, safety – there are six or seven of them. But the reason to purchase in veterinary medicine, the primary reason to purchase, is love. And what you have to do was accent that love so you could be able to

present the best therapy for the pet, which was really the best therapy for the client. Lots of wonderful – veterinary medicine to me, small-animal veterinary medicine was a wonderful, wonderful profession. And I was able to expand my horizons with that. The significant event in my veterinary career, the most significant event, other than the practice of veterinary medicine, was taxes [Laughs]. This is how it changed my life. I came to Greensboro and bought into practice with Dr. Ellis, and then four or five years later he retired. And I was – had to buy the practice from him. And there's a mortgage. Well, initially the tax rates were relatively low. The interest rates were relatively low. About halfway through that mortgage, which was ten years, the loan flipped over. And the interest rate went up to like 18 percent. But you still had to pay the taxes. Well, not only did the interest rates go up, but the tax rates came up. So, for me to pay a dollar on that loan, I had to make a \$1.60. So, every time I paid a dollar, it came out of my pocket. I had to pay an additional sixty cents. So, I had a nice practice that was doing very well. I loved the clients. I was a respected veterinarian. But I had no money. And I said, "How is this going to change? What am I going to do?" So, this friend in California, at a meeting he said, "Steve, you need to go home to build another veterinary practice. Then you can – what can happen if you do that, is you can start that process all over again and write off the interest payments. And that will help you on your taxes." And that's what I did – I started building veterinary hospitals and ended up with four of them. The one on Battleground, one on Pleasant Garden, one in Friendly Center, and one on Hicone Road. Then I retired in – kind of retired in 2007 – sold the Pleasant Garden practice, sold the practice on Battleground, but still owned the building there and two other practices. So, I'm still in veterinarian medicine, but I'm a pigeon manager. You know what a pigeon manager is?

KS: No.

SC: I heard this at one of the meetings, too. I thought it was pretty funny. I hope it is OK to say.

KS: Oh, absolutely.

SC: Pigeon flies in, messes on everything, and then flies away. Messes with everything, you know, makes a mess and flies away. But I'm much more than a pigeon manager.

KS: With four practices, did you move into more of a management position?

SC: No. No, what I did was hire a practice manager, which was the second smartest thing I ever did in veterinary medicine. The smartest thing I did was building other practices to get that tax load off. And, basically, saving taxes built these other practices for me. And the second best thing I did was hire a good practice manager. She didn't handle the veterinarians. She didn't run those other practices. The individual veterinarian was the director there. They didn't have a practice

manager. But all the other changes that came upon us over the years. Just think about when I got out of school everything was written on a five by nine card, six by nine card, and filed away. When I left veterinary medicine in 2007, and I haven't still quite left it, everything is computerized. It's a huge paradigm shift from writing to that. And that's how veterinary medicine grew. If I tried to practice medicine ten years after I graduated from veterinary school with the same knowledge that I had when I graduated, I would have been ten years behind because it changed so much. So, it was a constant job of keeping up. But I was able to hire quality people. I paid them quality salaries, and I was able to keep them. The only time I lost a veterinarian was when they wanted to leave on their own or when they didn't perform as they should have. At one time – six, seven, eight, nine, ten – at one time there was something like ten or eleven veterinarians working as associates.

KS: Wow!

SC: But I gave them free reign to do what they could do if they could do it well. I wouldn't let them attempt it if they couldn't do it well. So, that's a long story about veterinary medicine. But for me it has been a marvelous career, personally rewarding, financially rewarding.

KS: Well, that's great.

SC: Yeah.

KS: It sounds like you loved it all along. So many people get into their career, and they find they don't. So, it's nice to talk to someone who actually loved it all along.

SC: The other thing that was really nice in veterinary medicine, and I'll mention two things that changed my perception of veterinary medicine. The other two things – the other one thing was when we got together and built an emergency clinic because then we no longer had to get up in the middle of the night and go see emergencies. That was probably 1980.

KS: What a great idea.

SC: Yeah, that worked well. And that has started all over the country. You were talking about humorous events in veterinary medicine. You know, humorous event in veterinary medicine as you tell it later on, probably in the hospital wasn't very funny that day. I let a couple of animals escape.

KS: Oh no!

SC: One animal in particular was a dog, a German shepherd, in a run. And the alarm system went off about 11:30 – 12 o'clock at night, and I went over there, and the

alarm was still going off. And I opened the door to go inside – we always called the police – and looked the place over. But looking over the runs, I noticed this one run door had been pulled almost thirty degrees back, and this particular German shepherd was not there. I knew this dog. And the dog had gotten out of the run, opened three heavy doors with his teeth, and opened the door to the outside and left. And I called the family, and I said, “Sam escaped. I don’t know how he escaped.” He said, “Wait a minute. There’s something on the front porch.” He said, “Sam is here at the house.”

KS: He knew his way back.

SC: It’s about three miles.

KS: Unbelievable. That is – I bet your heart stopped, though.

SC: Wow. We had this other dog that – we used to have an exercise pen outside, and the fence was six foot high. Now six feet is pretty tall – you know, the door is 6’ 8”. Well, this dog – took it out to exercise, and he just climbed the fence. The lady didn’t live but a mile from the clinic, and the dog was going to be boarded for a month, and she was going on a tour overseas. We had no way to get in touch with her. The dog was gone. So, for a day or two we were looking for the dog. And I happened to get the address and ride by the house, and the dog was in the backyard inside the fence at her house, now. So, I went back and got some assistance from the clinic and went back over there. And when we approached the dog, the dog jumped that fence. So, this is like trying to catch a kangaroo. So, what are we going to do? We’ll see if he comes back. The next day he was in the backyard again. So, what we did while this lady was gone was feed the dog, and water the dog twice a day in its own backyard. When she got home the dog was there. She called me up. And she said, “Did you guys bring the dog home?” I said, “No, that dog was delivered a month ago by itself. I said we’ve been feeding it and worrying about him for a month.” She said, “How did he get out?” “He jumped a six foot fence.” She said, “I’m going to have to come over and see the fence.” She was not very happy – came over – she looked at the fence. She said, “My dog jumped that fence?” I said, “Yes, ma’am.” She said, “Hum, the only thing that could have kept that dog in would have been a razor wire.” And I said, “Yes, ma’am.” And I said, “Look, you’re nice, and your dog is fine, and I’m sorry all this happened, but this is a situation beyond my control, other than the fact that we are going to put some inside wire, some wire on the top at forty-five. Not barbed wire, just wire so the dog cannot get over the top of that.” And I said, “Please, don’t take this personally, but I don’t want to board your dog any more.”

KS: What a pain! Oh, dear!

SC: So, that’s humorous. The dog escaping is humorous. One of the funniest things – a good friend of mine is an insurance agent here in town, a little older than I am – and he brought his dog by one morning, about 9 o’clock, dressed in a suit and a

tie, looking really sharp. And I happened to go past the front. I said, “How are you?” I won’t mention any names. And he said, “I’m fine. Here’s so and so. I’m going to leave him with you.” “OK.” So, just as I turned around to walk back out from the back of the hospital where the treatment is, comes this Old English sheepdog, soaped up from head to toe, sliding around, sliding around – soap going everywhere – comes up front, jumps over the counter. And someone else is coming in the door, went outside, and my insurance agent friend was just getting in the car to drive away, and the dog jumped right in his lap.

KS: Oh, no! And I’ve had an Old English sheepdog soaped up, so I know exactly what kind of whirling dervish that is.

SC: We were right there. – got the dog out – and I looked at Louis, and he said, “I’m going to have to change clothes.” I said, “Discount.”

KS: Oh, no!

SC: I just said, “No charge today and get your suit cleaned.” He tried to pay me that afternoon. He never did send me the bill for the suit.

KS: Oh, no. I bet working with animals is great. There’s a lot of joy in that.

SC: It was very rewarding, very, very rewarding.

KS: Well, treating pets all day, did you have pets at home, or did you have enough at work?

SC: All the time. Always a cat, always a dog.

KS: Did you bring them home? Were you the type that would bring home strays?

SC: No, we didn’t do that. We didn’t do that, because we had two small kids. But a funny story about this yellow lab that we had, Freda. We lived out in Summerfield at the time, and this new neighbor moved in, and all of a sudden I would come home every day, and this yellow lab would be at our house – every day. A really nice dog. ‘Cause she, too, would jump the fence, about a four-foot fence, and come over and play with the kids. We haven’t talked about our family life yet – we will in just a minute – but my wife told me, she said, “We’re going to have that dog.” I said, “How are you going to do that?” “Charley is going to give us that dog.” She said, “I’m taking these two boys over there,” and they were about six and three, six and two. And they are going to say, “Can we have Freda?” And she said, “And he’s not going to be able to say no,” and he didn’t. So, they got that dog. I’d get up in the morning – I had to get to work at a fairly decent hour – get up at 6:30 and get the boys up, and I’d go in there, and there were double single beds in this one room. The two boys and the dog would be in one bed under the cover. And I’d say, “Who’s under that cover?” And the dog would go [makes

- noise] because she slept in the kitchen. And when we put them to bed, one of them would go over there and get her and lead her back here, and they'd get in bed with her. So, that is a fun story. It's a fun story. I didn't get married till late in life.
- KS: Sounds like you were so busy, I don't know when you would have had time.
- SC: After I came back to Greensboro in 1969, I met Deb a year later. And we were married in '72. And she's from Asheboro, and she's Chapel Hill educated. She had been working for Cypress Gardens. Then she came back to Greensboro and was working for a local bank. So, we got married in 1972 and had two wonderful kids, which was enough for us.
- KS: Two boys.
- SC: Yeah. And they originally started at Greensboro Day School, then they went into public schools. They both went to Carolina. When they didn't have something to do on Saturdays, they had to go to work with me. And going to work and being there at seven o'clock on Saturday morning was not something they wanted to do. When I say something to do, I'd say, "Look, guys, you can do whatever you want to on this Saturday, but if you don't have anything to do, you're going to come to work with me," when they got old enough. I'm not talking about when they are seven or eight years of age. So, they delved into sports: Football, and basketball, baseball, and T-ball, and Scouts. Both of them are Eagle Scouts.
- KS: Oh, great.
- SC: Yeah, so they had busy careers. They swam in the summertime and were good swimmers. The oldest son went to Carolina, worked here in Greensboro for a couple of years, and then went back and got his MBA. He's now with a healthcare company in Raleigh. The younger son worked as an investment banker after Carolina, and then went to Northwestern and got his MBA. And now he's with Lowe's Corporation down in Charlotte.
- KS: So they're both close?
- SC: Yeah. I told them four or five things, but I said one of the better things you can do is stay close to family. I know so many people whose kids are in Texas and Chicago. They all have grandkids, and it's tough – but I don't know where ours will end up. They may end up in some other state.
- KS: But it sounds like you've got some grandchildren, too.
- SC: Yes, three. Everything is working there, working well. Going along just like maybe I had planned it. Some missteps along the way.

KS: Doesn't sound like many! So, let's see. We talked about living in Greensboro. How has Greensboro, North Carolina, changed since you've lived here? Of course, you said you grew up in a very rural area.

SC: I remember Greensboro when Greensboro downtown was the place that you went shopping. There was Belks and Meyer's, and all those sorts of things. In fact, they were still there when I went off to school in 1960, or started going to Raleigh. And between 1960 and 1970, downtown Greensboro became deserted because it all came to the suburbs, and I think that is somewhat the same story for Guilford County and Greensboro. What was king is no longer king. Textiles were huge employment in Guilford County, and the whole Triad. Tobacco – I don't know if you like tobacco or dislike tobacco, but that's not the point – I'm talking about the employment and the money that it brought in, a lot of money to this county, and to the Triad, and furniture. All those industries have basically left. Do you know, and I heard this probably ten or twelve years ago, and I'm not sure where I read it – I read that North Carolina, back in the early '80s before all this happened with textiles and furniture, had more small manufacturing jobs than any other state in the Union. And that Guilford County had the highest number of small manufacturing jobs in the state. That tells you how many people were employed here in this county. That has gone. So, what's happened to Greensboro is the same thing that happened to downtown Greensboro. We're in the process of trying to reinvent ourselves. And many folks will say we're going to become a transportation hub, and certainly FedEx would say that that is probably true. That's maybe the reason Dell came here – I don't know whether they're going to stay. But hopefully, we can find ourselves again. Because we're never going to find textiles. We're never going to find tobacco. We're never going to keep furniture here. So, the heydays of Greensboro were prior to downtown Greensboro, prior to 1960 – 1965. The heyday for –

[Tape Stops]

KS: This is tape one, side B and Dr. Cobb and I were continuing to talk about the change in Greensboro, especially downtown.

SC: So, we missed the fact that downtown Greensboro was vibrant and growing and also it's deserted. Then we also went to the fact that tobacco and textiles and furniture, were very vibrant for this county and for the Triad, and now that's gone. And we're trying to reinvent ourselves, and I don't know where we're going. I think we were very lucky to have those things, but they're gone, and we're searching for the new us. Were it not for the universities in this town, Greensboro would really be suffering. I mean, you look at GTCC [Guilford Technical Community College], and Guilford College, and Greensboro College, and what Elon College has done. And then, throw in A&T [North Carolina A&T State University] and UNCG [The University of North Carolina at Greensboro] – that brings a lot of employment. It brings a lot of money to town. The coliseum has helped us – the natatorium is going to help us. I don't know if downtown

Greensboro is ever going to be anything other than it is. It's going to be a living space as opposed to a shopping space. But maybe we'll find ourselves.

KS: What do you think about the changes they've made as far as the living spaces? They've put a lot of money in condos.

SC: Well, those things are self-supporting. People are living down there. And, you know, I've only been there – that's too young a scene for me, but I've been there four or five times, and it's busy at night. It's busy at night. I don't know how busy it is in the daytime, other than a lot of folks are living there.

KS: So, what do you see as some of the issues facing Greensboro such as population growth, economic growth, leadership, race relations, water shortage? We've talked about some of those. Anything else, any other comments?

SC: Population growth? We need jobs. Economic growth? We need jobs. Leadership needs to be talking about the fact that we need jobs and try to get them here, even if we have to give them incentives to come here. The next note here is race relations. That's come a huge way, a long way, since I graduated from high school. When I was in high school there was separate education for black and white. They had their own schools. Now all that is integrated. But race relations has come a long way, and I'm sure it's got a long way to go. But jobs are what we need. And we have the ability to educate and place. I don't know how we are going to get folks educated who don't care about being educated. That's maybe an issue that's much larger than me, and it's been a problem for a long time. Rotary is in school mentoring – in schools mentoring kids. The school issues here in the country are tough issues. There are a lot of students and not as much money as we ought to have, but maybe the money could be better spent. Water shortage is taken care of – Randleman Dam next Tuesday is going to start sending water to Greensboro. So, I think we've handled that. Now, we got to look past that. If we can become the transportation hub, and if we can become the more vibrant community that I would like for us to be such as Charlotte, which has all the banking. Of course, they've been hurt, but they'll come back. Or such as Raleigh, who has a number of universities. They've got North Carolina State there, plus, the state government. I think Raleigh is going to be solid forever. Charlotte was a little suspect. I think now we may be even behind Winston-Salem, because at least they do have some huge manufacturing plants over there, especially in tobacco. So, I'm not sure where Greensboro and Winston are.

KS: We're going to fit into that.

SC: Yeah.

KS: Any ways that you can think that Greensboro could improve the quality of life for its citizens? You mentioned the natatorium. I think that will be – any kind of



sports arena is a good thing. They've done a beautiful job with the baseball stadium.

SC: Yeah, I think those are the things that corporations look at when they come to an area. And if you're going to improve the quality of life for your citizens, it's not only for the ones that are here, but it's for the future people that are going to move here. So, if I was a corporation searching for some place to locate my company, I would look at the possible workforce, which I think FedEx is a great example. I would look at the schools, which right now are in a touch situation. I would look at the amenities of the community – the ability to go to UNCG and see the theater over there, the ability to go to the coliseum, the ability to go to baseball games, the new natatorium. Those are all things that I think are pluses for Greensboro, but until we find ourselves, we're just going to have to go with the best we can. Because I think the possibility of bond issues being passed are nil in the next three or four years, the way unemployment is – and unemployment here in Guilford County is about 10 percent. And it's as high as it's been – I think it was a little higher last year. But that's the highest it's ever been in my lifetime – in my lifetime.

KS: Now, do you have any connections to the local colleges or universities? I know, of course, that you went to college out of the city. But have you been involved?

SC: I've been somewhat involved with Greensboro College – when Craven Williams was president – with a Character Education Program that we got involved with the Scouts and with the schools, middle schools. But it didn't – it wasn't very well appreciated by school administrators. It worked for a year, maybe a year and a half. Had to give up on it. I'm pretty heavily invested in the School of Veterinary Medicine at NC State, donations, fairly hefty donations. I was fairly heavily invested in the athletic program at NC State. But in 1985 – oh, let me get my years together – 2007, when I sold the first practice to Dr. Whitley, I had in an envelope my season basketball tickets, and my season football tickets. He said, "What's this?" I said, "Open it up." He said, "What's the charge?" I said, "I've been paying all my life. Now, you can start paying." NC State has never had a good athletic program. In fact, I talked to my good friend, Larry Tysinger, who – we do a lot of fishing together and been friends forever. And we were in Florida, and I called Ty on the phone, and I said, "Look," I said, "Carolina didn't have such a good football season, did they?" He said, "No." And I knew they weren't having a good basketball season. I said, "What about their basketball season." I said, "It's not very good either." He said, "No." I said, "What do you make of that?" He said, "Well, for the first time in my life I feel like a State fan."

KS: Oh, that's just mean!

SC: That's what he said.

KS: Were you ever involved in local politics, national politics? Was that an interest to you?

SC: I've been involved in veterinary politics here on a local level and on a state level, meaning this – the Guilford County Veterinary Medical Association, the North Carolina State, the North Carolina Veterinary Medical Association. I've been asked to get involved in politics in Greensboro locally, but here's my problem with politics outside my profession. I've never been a divider. I always want everybody to be happy. Meaning that I want all the clients to come to the clinic to have a good experience. I want all my employees to have a good experience. When you become involved in politics, you become a divider. Because fifty percent of the people are not going to like you, or let's say forty percent if you get elected by sixty percent. So, you're always going to have the problem of, you know, "Why did I get into this if I knew that people were going to be so upset with me if I voted to the left or right?" So, I will never – I thought about it. I was asked. But I'll never get involved in politics, because I do not like to be involved in divisive situations. I never was, and I don't think I ever will be.

KS: Now, what about philanthropic causes – you said you were heavily involved in the Boy Scouts, as were your boys –

SC: Yes.

KS: Any other organizations that you want to mention? And then, of course, we'll talk about Rotary.

SC: Other than donations to the colleges, I was on the board of directors of the Scouts, and I was president of the Scout council in 2001 – it's nine counties. That was fun. That was – being president of a Scout council is like having fifty hands because every troop runs itself, and underneath you there is a Scout executive and a staff. So when I say fifty hands, you're able to look over this umbrella and talk about the problems that may or may not occur and try to solve those problems before they do. And the largest problem with Scouts and many organizations today is the ability to raise funding. And here, again, back when Greensboro was cooking – back when textiles, and tobacco, and furniture, were king – the Scouts had no problems because the presidents of those companies would just write a check for \$5,000. All that's gone. So, our major problem in Scouting was not that the troops perform well, was not that the kids misbehaved. The major problem with Scouting, and remains to be today, is to try to fund Scouting so they can remain successful.

KS: Oh, my goodness, we've bought and sold our share of popcorn at my house.

SC: Did he enjoy the Scouts?

KS: My son loved the Scouts. As a matter of fact, I became heavily involved also and was like a Den Mother in the Cub Scouts and was heavily involved as he went through. Went to camp at Raven Knob with him, the whole bit. And it was really a great experience for us both. He didn't continue on too far into Boy Scouts. He went more heavily into sports, but –

SC: That's the change. That's what's happening today.

KS: They make you choose – everybody makes you choose almost.

SC: You're going to play soccer, or you're going to play baseball, or you're going to do basketball, you're going to do football, or you're going to do Scouts. Because if you're in Scouts, you've got a monthly trip. And it's a commitment.

KS: Right.

SC: I made my guys do both.

KS: Well, we tried to do both, and –

SC: I didn't make them. I heavily encouraged them.

KS: – when he stopped Scouts I felt like I was personally invested in it. I was upset. I was like, "Can I go on?" But it was a hard decision, and one that I wish that the coaches were a little bit more flexible about.

SC: When I say, "I made my boys do that." My comment to them was, "You know, when you get past twelve, or thirteen, or fourteen, these other issues like sports are going to come into your life. What I'd like to see you do is get involved in Scouting and become an Eagle Scout. The sooner you become an Eagle Scout, the easier you can sort of lay off Scouts and do these other things, which is what they both did.

KS: That's ideal, and I certainly wish that my son had gone that way. Instead, it was just – he was spread way too thin in sports. He was trying to kind of do everything, which they can do almost everything when they're little. But at some point they have to start choosing. And he chose, I think, later. But that's a wonderful, wonderful program. It really is. We had a good program.

SC: It's hard to beat Scouting.

KS: It really is. Now with Rotary, how did you get involved with Rotary?

SC: I was in another civic organization in the early '80s, and I just didn't appreciate the fact that they basically did almost nothing. And I had heard about Greensboro Rotary, and Bob Foxworth was a friend of mine. And he said, not knowing I had

been in this other club, “Why don’t you come to Rotary with me?” And I joined in the fall, I think November 1985. And, you know, basically was a member because I wanted to kind of see what was going on. Because I wasn’t sure I was going to stay. And in the summer of 1998, Stuart Fountain, who was the incoming president, went to the national meeting that was in Chicago and came back to me and said, “Steve, Rotary is going to start a program called Preserve Planet Earth, and I know you were on the program committee last year, and you were in charge of programs for a month, and you brought four environment programs to us. Do you have an interest in the environment?” I said, “Yeah, I really do.” I have a huge interest in environment. I’m not a tree hugger, but I don’t like to see the tree cut down if it’s not necessary. So, he said, “They’re going to start this program, and there’s going to be a conference this fall in Chicago, and we’re going to send you up there, and I want you to bring something back for us to do.” So, I go up there – very nice, Mayflower Hotel right there in Chicago. There’s probably 1,000 Rotarians from across the country there. They did these all around the world, but this was the one in the eastern United States if you can call Chicago Eastern. I think they had one on the West Coast, too. Speakers were marvelous. And, then, they had this panel – and the speaker that I liked the most was Werner, W-e-r-n-e-r, Fornos, F-o-r-n-o-s – and on this panel he just blew everybody away. He was just so heads – what I thought, he was so far ahead of everybody else in his intellectual thinking about what was going on with the environment that I thought he just stole the show. And basically, he was head of the Population Institute in Washington, D.C. And he said, “The problem in the world is there’s finite resources, and we’re not using what we have very well. But we’re also overpopulating the world, so those resources are going to disappear. And in the process of overpopulating the world, we’re not only doing that, we’re causing human suffering.” Which, in a nutshell, is what’s going on. So, I met with him afterwards, and I said, “I’m going to bring you to Greensboro, and we’re going to have an environmental conference.” He goes, “OK.” He said, “Do you have this approved?” I said, “No, but I will.” So, I come back, and I said, “Stuart, we’re going to have an environmental conference.” He said, “OK, what are we going to do?” I said, “We’re going to invite the other clubs.” So, we went out to the Marriott at the Airport and invited in Werner. Had about 150 Rotarians from all five clubs and a dinner meeting, and he just gave a wonderful presentation. So now, I’m out of gas. I know we’re going to bring Werner to Greensboro, and he’s going to talk about these issues, and I said, “What am I going to do next?” And I was just at a total loss. I mean, you know, you can’t march. What are you going to do? And he looked at me and he said, “Steve, you need to plant trees.” I said, “Plant trees?” He said, “Yes, plant trees. Get the community involved, plant trees, so you can call attention to what’s going on.” So, I got the other five clubs to go along. We got money from the North Carolina Division of Forestry to help us. We got free trucks to go pick up the trees. We worked with the forester here in the county. We got free advertising on TV, we got free advertising on radio. Time Warner Cable made us a video to send to the schools and to send to the Scouts. And over the next five years we planted a million trees, 200,000 a year, with the scouts and with the students and with folks who wanted to pick up trees. So, the

project didn't cost us very much at all, not very much at all. But when I approached the Scouts, they said, "We don't want free trees. We want to plant trees." With the students in middle school, they took the trees home to plant. Whether they got planted or not, I don't know. But all got to see the environmental video. "We want to plant trees." Doug Thorn, Scout executive, said, "I'm going to help you." I said, "OK." At this time I wasn't involved in Scouts. I never was in Scouts till they asked me to be president after this first project.

KS: Really? That's skipping a lot of offices. [Laughs]

SC: Doug said, "We're going to – you're going to plant trees, and we're going to help you." I said, "OK, we've got to find some land." So, I approached the Parks and Recreation Department – at that time Greensboro had bought 1,500 feet back from all the lakes. And there's three lakes here in Greensboro. They had a lot of land at the landfill, and they had a lot of acreage along the Greenway between Greensboro and High Point. So, we would dedicate three Saturdays in the fall, two or three weeks apart, and we would get the Scouts together in a particular location and plant trees. Well, this is the first day – I was amazed – we had about five acres of trees, and we brought in special sycamore trees to plant along the Greenway. I said, "Doug, how many people are going to show up?" Because I have no idea. One hundred and fifty people showed up. I'm talking about Scouts, and moms, and dads, and dogs, and grandmas, and aunts and uncles. We planted that five acres in about an hour and a half.

KS: Really, like you dug holes?

SC: Yeah. They all showed up with shovels – it was amazing – and planted them nicely, too. Now, they're forty feet tall – it's a beautiful span of sycamore trees. I've been back to see them. But one of the more poignant comments I'm going to make to you about my life. We finished planting those trees, announced to everybody we were through for the day – there's snacks and Cokes over here. And everybody had turned to leave. And I got a tug on my leg, and I looked down, and there's two kids, probably brothers. And one is about maybe seven, and one's about eight or nine. And this taller kid is crying, and he's muddy. He's got mud – you can tell he's been planting trees. And he said to me, "Where are we going to plant some more trees?" And I said, "We're through planting trees today." Then he really started crying. He looked up at me and he said, "I haven't planted enough trees to save the earth today."

KS: Oh, my goodness. How do you comment to that?

SC: I sat down beside him and gave him a hug, and I said, "Before this project is over, you will." It brought tears to my eyes then, and it kind of brings tears to my eyes now.

KS: Me too. That's incredible.

SC: That's when I knew that project was going to be wonderful, absolutely wonderful – and it was. It was marvelous. We planted trees for five years. That brought me to the final year when we planted a million trees, and we just about pushed and pulled everybody that we could for trucks, and Cokes, and all the other free videos, and all those other things. And I told the president, "I think we need to finish this up." He said, "How are you going to finish it up?" I said, "Let me give it some thought." So, I called a couple of presidents of the other clubs, and I said, "Do you want to finish this up?" They said, "Yeah, five years is a long time for a project. We're getting tired of you, Cobb." I said, "OK, let's do something to finish it. Let's do a park. Let's build a park." And I had already been to the library, because it was just being constructed on the south side that faces Market Street – between the library and the parking garage was a huge area that they basically didn't have any money to do anything in. So, I said, "What are you going to do over there?" Said, "Well, we have a committee working on it." I said, "Well, let me go see Parks and Recreation," because they would have to take care of it. It's public property. "And let me go see the city, and I'll see the members of the other Rotary Clubs, and maybe we'll put a park there." And we're able to put together about \$25,000 to put in a Rotary park, which is between the library and the parking garage. And the one millionth tree is planted there.

KS: Wow!

SC: That park is also dedicated to Mr. Arnold Schiffman who was a Rotarian from Greensboro for a long, long time. His family also helped to build that park. We brought in Governor Hunt, had a groundbreaking for the park. All the Rotarians went out to Koury Center for a huge luncheon, Governor Hunt spoke, and we stopped planting trees.

KS: What a way to end it!

SC: Well, I was out of breath by then.

KS: What a bang. That is a great way to end it.

SC: Out of breath by then.

KS: Well, anything else about the Rotary?

SC: Well, They asked me to be on the board because I refused to do anything other than plant trees. And I was on the board for two or three years, and then they asked me to become president. They sent me to Singapore for the national meeting.

KS: How nice! How was that?

SC: They would have paid for my wife and me to go, but I thought that was too much money. So, I paid for Deb. And we had a wonderful year. I had two years, basically, because they do president-elect and then president. So, we had a great year. We continued all the programs we had in the past. This was the year '99 – 2000, all the dot-coms were cooking. Everybody was afraid their computers were going to fail. You know, the economy was just really marvelous – raised a ton of money, just more money than we ever raised. We went to Moldova, sent some Rotary Club members to Moldova to start a Hospice, which was a wonderful project. That was the fall – the fall of '99 is when Hurricane Floyd devastated Eastern North Carolina. I mean, from Raleigh east was a mess. And folks had already donated their money. So, I said, "How are we going to help these people? This is a once in a lifetime situation." And the Rotary spends a lot of money locally. They send some money nationally, and they send a lot of money international, but we never spent money in the state. So, I talked to a few members who said, "Yeah, I'll help you do something." So, I called Tarboro, and I said, "You guys need housing?" He said, "It's horrible." So I said, "We're going to help you build a Habitat for Humanity house." He said, "We're going to need some money." I said, "I know. We're going to come with money and manpower." So, I called Jim Melvin of the Bryan Foundation and told him I wanted to go to Tarboro and build a house, and we're going to go down there and help them. And I said, "Jim, I need some money." He said, "Well, all the money in Mr. Bryan's Foundation is for use here in Guilford County." He said, "I don't think we have ever been outside Guilford County." I explained to him what was going on, people in the east part of the state are hurting. He said, "Let me call you back." And he called me back about thirty minutes and he said, "We're going to give you \$25,000." He said, "The first time the Bryan Foundation has ever been out of the county, but Mr. Bryan would like this." So, we raised, in addition to that, through individual donations – and I could name you fifteen people right now that gave us \$500 to \$1,000 – about \$40,000 to \$45,000. And we gave that to the Tarboro Habitat, and we went down there for three Saturdays in a row and built that house.

KS: Wow!

SC: I didn't get to go. I had a kidney stone at that time.

KS: Oh, no!

SC: But that was an exceptional project and something that has never happened before, never happened since. We were the gold club in the district that year. And to top it all off, we placed in the chapel at the newly built YMCA, a Rotary time capsule that has things from since 1917 when the Greensboro Rotary started. It's about two and a half feet wide and four feet long. It's going to be opened in 2050.

KS: And where is it located?

SC: In the floor of the chapel of the new YMCA. And there's a plaque on the wall. And we already have current Rotarians and their kids assigned to open it up.

KS: Oh, that's wonderful.

SC: I made sure they are going to do that, because we made some pictures of it, and I gave it to them.

KS: Oh, that's great! What a great project.

SC: So, Rotary for me has been – it's been quite an adventure, a wonderful, wonderful adventure. It's brought a lot of fun and fellowship in my life through the people that I have met there, through the people that I've met in the district – a lot of exposure to people that I would have never known. So, fun and fellowship. It's – to me, it's also a learning experience because of not only the things I did in the club, but because of the programs every week. I think you presented part of a program, and you were well received. But programs every week. We just had a program on Honda Jet. I don't even know how to – I didn't even know – I knew they were there, but I didn't know they had 500 people employed. Those are the kinds of things that need to happen to Greensboro – Honda Jet, FedEx, Dell, that sort of thing is going to save us. It's going to – well, not save us because we're going to be OK, but get us out of a malaise. So, the programs are great. But the opportunities to serve, and do the things that I have done, is marvelous. And I think most – I think most Rotarians feel the same way – to give something back.

KS: Wonderful organization.

SC: Yes, it's been great for me.

KS: Now, one thing I do like to ask about, too – is that I realized after doing some interviews that people really enjoy talking about their hobbies. And what you like to do. And I know you like to fish.

SC: Yes.

KS: And you've got the war wounds to prove it, apparently, on your hand.

SC: I have a dislocated finger from the last fishing trip.

KS: You really throw yourself into it, apparently.

SC: Yes, I dislocated my finger.

KS: So, what do you like to do for fun?



SC: Well, we fish and play golf mostly. And my wife is a good golfer. And, so, my golf game – I can still fish, but I can't play golf right now because of this dislocated finger. But I didn't start playing golf until 2007 because I never had time. Do you golf?

KS: A little bit.

SC: Here's the problem with golf. You have to perfect the game, and then you have to keep that perfection, then you have to find the time to play.

KS: Right.

SC: Well, I had some time to practice, but I didn't have a lot – with four veterinary hospitals, and the family, and all these things going on with the Scouts and the Rotary, and all that sort of thing – I didn't have a lot of time to play. So, when I got three or four hours off, I didn't want to go out there and beat a golf ball around and score over 100. I had rather go fishing if I could.

KS: Fishing is easier.

SC: And we have a little place up on Hyco Lake that we've had since the kids were teenagers, early teenagers, and the fishing was pretty good in the fall and spring. Summertime is kind of hot. And then, we also surf fish in the fall on the coast. My partner Larry Tysinger and I have a big truck with a box on the back we converted into a living quarters. So, it's like a four-wheel drive motor home.

KS: What do you surf fish for?

SC: Anything that's in the surf.

KS: Like Spanish mackerel, or?

SC: We're talking flounder.

KS: Flounder.

SC: And Virginia mullet, and black drum, and red drum, and blue fish, and we've caught a few tarpon.

KS: Really?

SC: Yes.

KS: I'd be afraid that you might get a shark or something.

- SC: We got some sharks, yeah. But you don't – you fish for sharks with wire. We fish with monofilament. With monofilament the shark will bite that off. He's going to keep the hook, but the hook won't hurt him. And then, in the process of all these other things, the one thing I didn't mention was we have a fishing attractant company. We make – manufacture a fishing attractant. It's called Carolina Lunker Sauce. Lunker means big fish.
- KS: Is it like a chumming? It's like a chum?
- SC: You put it on your lures. You put it on your plastic lures – and you put it on your soft plastic lures, and hard plastic lures – and it's time released, and it will leave a scent in the water.
- KS: So, what kind of fish does it attract – anything that you're fishing for, or particular types of fish?
- SC: Well, you go with flavors, and the flavor determines what that particular fish is eating. For bass, bass love garlic, and they love crawfish. They also like – the flavors that we have for them are also menhaden and threadfin shad, and we make it in a liquid that you put in a plastic bag and put the soft plastic lures in. Let it marinate. And the great thing about our product it bonds to soft plastic, and it sheds off. It's basically like putting on waterproof suntan lotion, and if you go swimming some of that is going to come off in the water? Well, we use those same kind of chemicals in these oils to – we put it in polyethylene beads, microscopic polyethylene beads. And then, we coat it with these products to make these beads separate. So, originally it was an oil in the beads. Now, it is water soluble. Then we add agents to make it cling to the lure.
- KS: Do you do it for salt water, too?
- SC: Yes. That's amazing. What an idea.
- KS: The problem now is that it's expensive to make, and the fishing industry is not in such good shape – the fishing and boating industry is not in such good shape. But we're all over the country. We just lost Bass Pro Shops, because they said our product is not selling. It costs \$12 - \$13 a bottle. It's expensive to make. So, they'll call us back. But right now – but we're in Gander Mountain and Academy Sports. We're in Dick's [Sporting Goods]. We're in Cabela's. We're in lots of tackle stores all over the south.
- KS: I'll look for that. That is great! I'll have to try some of those.
- SC: I'll have to send you some.
- KS: I love to salt water fish. I never had too much luck with freshwater, but I love to fish for salt water. So, what a great way to diversify!

SC: Yeah, that was fun.

SC: I experimented with all of that, and then traveling to all the local shows all up and down the East Coast, and then traveling to the I-cast show which is an international fishing show in Las Vegas with my sons. In fact, my son ran the company and got it going for the first three years, right out of MBA school. And what better thing for a kid to take a company that's little known and bring it to market. Everybody dreams about that out of MBA school, to bring my own company to market. And it's never going to be anything huge, but it has been fun, and it's a diversion. And it's still working. We don't manufacture. We contract manufacture.

KS: So, you're still busy?

SC: I'm busy enough.

KS: That's great. Anything else that we haven't covered that you would like to talk about?

SC: Well, I know we've talked about lots of things. I'd just like to say that I spent my entire life in this county except for six years, four years in Oklahoma and two years in the Public Health Service in Washington, D.C. Greensboro has been very, very good to me. It's been very, very good to my family. It's a great place to – and I'm not talking about veterinary medicine, I'm talking about – it's a great place to raise kids. There are wonderful people here. If I had it to do over again, I would have come to Greensboro not strictly because of veterinary medicine, but greatly because of veterinary medicine, but also because I don't know of any other place I would rather be. Thank you for this interview.

KS: Well, thank you, sir. I appreciate you having me here. I appreciate the interview.

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[End of interview]