

## UNCG CENTENNIAL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Mazie Bullard

INTERVIEWER: Anne R. Phillips

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[Begin Side A ]

AP: Introduce yourself—just tell us your name.

MB: My name is Mazie Bullard, and I reside in Greensboro. I have attended UNCG.

AP: And where did you grow up?

MB: All right. I was born in Davidson County in Lexington, North Carolina, and when I was about five years old, my family moved to High Point, North Carolina and then to Greensboro, when I was about seven years of age.

[recording error]

MB: You were telling me that you came here from another county when you first came to Greensboro.

MB: Yes. And I attended school here in Greensboro, North Carolina, and finished high school at what was Greensboro High School at that time, which is Grimsley now. And following high school, I came to the Woman's College at the University of North Carolina to take that wonderful one-year commercial course. And the one-year commercial course was for North Carolina girls—to train them in skills of office administration and management, and it was indeed an excellent course. Following that course, I worked in town at the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company for about five years, and then sort of retired from there at the birth of my first child in 1948. And when she was about a year old, someone told me about working at the university here on a part-time basis. So I inquired of employment here at that time and took a position with Mildred Newton, who was the director of admissions at that time and worked with Mildred Newton for a period of four years. And that was just a delightful experience working with her. She was just a wonderful administrator and a good director of admissions and a joy to work with. She was from Richmond, Virginia.

AP: What made her so special?

MB: Her personality and her—the way she treated people. She dealt with you as an individual and made you feel part of the organization and included you in the work as an individual, and she was just a joy to work with.

AP: And what was her title?

MB: She was director of admissions. And at that time when I first came, the admissions office was an integral part of the registrar's office, and we worked in that area for a short period of time. And then she was put out—the admissions office was put out as sort of a department—not as a part of the registrar's office. So I worked with her until 1952 when my second child was born. So I thought I was retiring for good at that time. And I stayed out for about four years and came back—or stayed out a while and came back in 1958—came back and took a full-time position in what was called the personnel office at that time. It was a joint office—personnel and purchasing. When I took that position, it was January the sixth, 1958. I thought I would be working there maybe two years, you know, had no idea I would stay as long as I did. But I did stay thirty years in that position on a full-time basis and saw many things come and go.

For instance, we were, as I said, the personnel-purchasing office and a part of the business office at that time. We were an office within a department of the university. The business manager at that time was Mr. [Wendell] Murray, I've forgotten his first name now. He was the business manager at that time, and that's what they were called in those days. And let's see, the personnel office and the purchasing office then moved into the business office itself rather than being outside. We stayed together with them for many years following that in the Foust Administration Building. Then when the Mossman Administration Building was completed, the business office was moved to that office, where we stayed about five years there.

AP: When was Mossman finished? When you did you move in? About what year?

MB: I don't have the exact date, I'm sorry, I can't remember.

AP: That's okay.

[recording error]

AP: You started working in Foust?

MB: In Foust. That's correct. The personnel-purchasing office was in the basement of Foust Building.

AP: When you first came here—if we think about the student body and the young women who were here—when you first came to WC [Woman's College of the University of North Carolina], what were the students like? What did you observe?

MB: All right. At that time, there were approximately 2,400 students—and I remember because I was working in the admissions office, and we had to do counts and things of that nature. And we kept up with students by the counties from which they came and then different things like that. The contact I had with the students mostly would be with student employees in the office, and they were just your good, average, wholesome girls that were interested in educational background and—

AP: Were most of them here maybe the first women in their families to go to school?

MB: Most of the ones that I came in contact with, I mean a lot of them were here for the first time.

AP: And were most of them from North Carolina?

MB: The majority were from North Carolina. I used to take—as part of my job in the admissions office, I would take the students who were visiting here or looking the campus over—I would try to take them on a tour of the campus. But we had a good many out-of-state people to come in and look over the university; they were very interested in this university because of the location here in the South and in Greensboro, and, of course, the tuition. [laughs]

AP: Ah ha, so that was a drawing card.

MB: That was a very big drawing card.

AP: Were there other reasons that you think students might have been attracted to Woman's College?

MB: I think our program was good. We were a large women's college—if you recall, one of the three largest, I think, in the country at that time. And then the curriculum was good. They had good programs for young women and things that they were certainly interested in—our School of Music, our School of Home Economics, and at that time it was called the BSSA [bachelor of science in secretarial administration]—the secretarial administration area. So it was extremely good; the program was extremely good for girls.

AP: What was the student life like? Or did you know enough about it?

MB: Yes. It was quite different from what you see today. At the time I started here, in the dormitory area, they had restrictions: they had to stay in their rooms and study at night, Monday through Friday. I think maybe Friday night—I don't know if they got out earlier on Friday night or not. But after 7:30 [p.m.], they had to be in their rooms and studying until 10:30 or 11:00 [p.m.] and then lights out. The only reason they could go out during the week would be to sign out for the library or something of that nature.

In the dining halls, I remember that they were assigned to sit with a group at a table for one semester. And the evening meal was served family style, and it got them

acquainted with other people throughout the campus and other girls in other dormitories. And then it taught them, well, not only family-style conversation at the evening meal, but good manners and things that you wanted your young women to know about at that time. I think the experience was quite good for women to have that type of exposure.

AP: What about dress code either on the campus or off?

MB: It was very strict at the time I came. I recall that young ladies were not permitted to go to classroom with their hair in rollers. They were not permitted to wear their gym suit on campus—they were restricted to just the gym for that type thing. They were not allowed to, or they were asked not to, wear shorts at The Corner [Tate Street store] or in town. We tried—I think the administration tried to have the type of code that would make them acceptable for young ladies.

AP: What about faculty here? Could you make some statements about faculty say from the beginning of the time you were here because you saw a number of faculty members.

MB: Well, I don't know exactly how to make a statement about the faculty other than they were certainly dedicated people. I always thought that the people that they hired here to teach—I'm thinking of the female department heads that I knew at that time, like Lyda Gordon Shivers, who was the head of the sociology department. They were very dedicated to the role of teaching young women, and they were interested in their students. I remember when they would come to the admissions office to visit the director of admissions—you know, I would hear them talk, and they were always interested in their students beyond the classroom—even on a personal level. The director of the dining halls at that time was a woman, and let's see, I'm trying to think of other areas where the department heads—But as a group, I thought they were very interested in their work and seeing that their students succeeded in what they were doing. I always had that feeling about this place.

I would like to go back also and say that, as my children came along, there was a school on Spring Garden Street called Curry School—it's now the School of Education. But it was a laboratory school for the students at UNCG [The University of North Carolina at Greensboro]—well, what was Woman's College then—to do their practice teaching. And they had kindergarten through high school, completion of high school here. My daughter started in kindergarten at the Curry School, and each year she had the most delightful experience. I thought, "Gee, this is the best teacher we ever had," and the next year I would think the same thing about that teacher. They were very selective here in their faculty, and that's what meant a lot to me as a parent, as well as having attended here too.

The school was just excellent in teaching—classes were small. I would guess they had about thirty-six—oh, maybe thirty to thirty-five to thirty-six students in each classroom and each grade, and they got lots of attention, especially the children if they needed special training or help in some a particular area. Then we had the students here who were seeking to teach, you see, and so they were assigned to work with those students on reading, or whatever problem they might have. And I always wondered if the students that left here were as well-trained or as able to go on to college as students in the

city schools.

So when my son came along and attended Curry School—after he completed the ninth grade, the school closed. And they wanted to expand the School of Education. I think that the laboratory school had probably served its purpose, and they were moving on to other things, so the school closed. And he had to leave here and go to Greensboro High School, which was Grimsley at the time. And the students from here that went to that school—and that was Greensboro High School or Grimsley High School, was equivalent to a junior college in size because they had as many students at that time. And our students going from this laboratory school here ranked very high—not necessarily my son. He did very well, but some of the other young men and women that left Curry School and went to Grimsley ranked very high on their SAT [Scholastic Aptitude Test] scores and things of that nature where you could really tell the type of background that they had had. So you could see—you can get an idea of the type of background they were giving our young people as well as our students here at the university.

AP: That was a good experience.

MB: Another thing that impressed me with our faculty was when my daughter—after she finished at Curry School here on campus, she came right on over to UNCG to complete her education here. But one thing about her was that she had not had math after the ninth grade, so when she took the college math—it wasn't her favorite subject so the instructor that she had in our math department here on the campus recognized that she needed some help. So here, as large as the university was at that time, that instructor suggested to her that she come to his office and do her homework so that he could observe what she was doing and thus correct what she needed and show her what she needed in order to bring her up to par. And I thought that spoke so well of faculty—to take that much interest in a young person and to see that he was that interested in seeing that she made the grade.

AP: About what year would that have been?

MB: That would have been in the late 1960s. She graduated here in 1970.

AP: You were on campus when the school went coed, and what was your feeling about it, but also what was the feeling of students and faculty?

MB: Personally, I was very excited about it. I was most interested in seeing us widen our horizons and bring in young men; I thought it was a very good move. I don't remember any adverse comments. I'm sure there must have been somewhere along the way—that people that did not want to see the change. But I don't recall that. I worked in the personnel office at that time, and at that same time we were still associated with the business office very closely—we were part of that office. And the business manager at that time, who was Mr. Henry Ferguson—they seemed to work things out so systematically to go along with that move. I remember Dr. Alice Schriver, who was in our health department here on campus at that time. She worked with Mr. Ferguson on many projects and things—they were all very pleased to see us grow and expand.

AP: Were most of the young men from North Carolina, or did they make an effort to recruit from out of state?

MB: Oh yes, I'm sure they did. Now I wasn't in on that as much. I will say this: all efforts were put forth to expand our curriculum to include courses that would attract men. For instance, we did have and still have an excellent School of Home Economics, now the Environmental Sciences, of course. That was a good school, but men would not have been so attracted to that. Maybe some to the School of Music, but a lot of emphasis was placed on building areas that would attract young men, like your School of Business and Economics.

AP: Who do you think led that path to start more programs that men might be attracted to?

MB: Well, of course the administration—I felt that they worked well together on that. I don't recall exactly what year—it was 1963, of course, that we changed, and I guess Dr. [Gordon] Blackwell, [chancellor], and Dr. [Otis] Singletary, [chancellor], probably laid the groundwork—I'm not sure.

AP: Did they meet resistance? Did other faculty say "Wait a minute, let's look at things?"

MB: I'm sure they must have, but that part I did not know about it. I was not in an area where I would hear that much of it, but I'm sure there had to be some resistance. There's always resistance to change. But I think even with some resistance, it went very well.

AP: What about when the university first admitted blacks here—African-American students?

MB: That was probably in the early 1950s, when the Supreme Court passed that law. And as everything else, in all change, I'm sure there was some resistance to it. But I think the university has handled change very well to overcome the resistance that comes up with any problem.

AP: Were any people in town opposed to the university's admitting blacks, Afro-Americans?

MB: Probably so, but realizing that things in the law must be carried out, I think they accepted it. I'm not well versed on the controversy. I think sometimes I try to forget controversy. [laughs]

AP: Yeah, yeah. What about the students themselves, say, white young women—how did they accept?

MB: I don't think the students objected. I think they were more or less—they accept things of that nature. They realized—I think their age and their generation was ready for it. I would think more ready than the older generation would accept things like that. I don't recall any controversy as far as students were concerned.

AP: You were here for a number of years. And you came here—you lived and worked through many administrations. Who was leading the campus when you came?

MB: When I came to work here first—Dr. W.C. [Walter Clinton] Jackson, for whom the library is named. And he was a very scholarly person, a good administrator, and I always associate him as being a scholarly-type chancellor or administrator. And Dr. [Edwin Kidder] Graham, [Jr.], I think about him—he was dynamic in his way; he had a different way, different appeal.

AP: How was that?

MB: He was trying to make things move. Dr. Jackson was smooth and, you know, that sort of attitude. But Dr. Graham came in, and, of course, that brought some changes, some controversy and some changes.

AP: How did the faculty accept his leading? Or how did they go along or not go along with his leading, Dr. Graham's leading?

MB: I think there was, sort of like—part of the faculty agreed with him and part of them did not. So that it brought some controversy—the changes, and he brought some changes. Dr. Blackwell again was a good leader and more of the scholarly—and I don't know how else to describe it other than a scholarly leader, one that was most interested in the academics and knew how to lead in that capacity, and yet a good administrator, too.

Dr. Singletary came in. He was a tremendous leader, a very dynamic personality—that sort of thing. I don't recall the controversy when he came as I did with Dr. Graham. Dr. Singletary was just a good leader, good director, and caused things to happen. So then he moved on very fast, too, to other areas.

When Dr. [James B.] Ferguson came in—and I viewed him again sort of in the category of the scholarly person who had a deep, deep interest in people and students—he always had time for the students, for people, for employees and the faculty—a person that was well loved and who had a deep interest in people.

And, of course, Dr. [William] Moran is a good combination of all of them, I think. I think he certainly is very scholarly and interested in academics, and I think Dr. Moran has made things happen on this campus too. You've seen a lot of changes in the campus—the buildings and the things like that have been brought up to date rapidly. We've had some building all along. And I think back to 1963 when went coed—so much emphasis had to be put on bringing in faculty and building coursework and things of that nature that had to attract young men that maybe other things had to be put aside—like building your staff, and maybe other things that you would like to do. He had to put more emphasis on that. So maybe by the time Dr. Moran got here, we had gotten to that point where he could improve the campus to some extent.

And I think of the dormitories, when I say that because they have just done such pretty and nice renovations over there. I love to walk by and look at the windows—they replaced the windows even, just to update them a little. And, of course, they've done many more things than that.

I personally—looking back, I think all of these leaders have been good leaders.

They have each had their own personalities, their own things to bring to this university, and they have done it very well. And, of course, any time you bring change, you're going to have a little controversy and maybe more at other times than others, but they've all been good leaders. I've been very pleased with the growth of the university. And I think it's something to be proud of. I'm proud I could have been a part of it.

AP: Well, you certainly gave a lot and saw quite a bit on campus.

MB: Sorry I don't have more of the details of the things that I think maybe you—. When you work in one little niche, you sometimes don't hear everything. [laughs]

AP: Well, sometimes you do and sometimes you don't.

MB: Sometimes you hear what you don't want to hear too.

AP: When Dr. Graham was here, what do you think would be the nature of changes that he wanted to bring about most? Earlier you talked about his personality style, the changes he wanted to bring about. Dr. Graham—how would you characterize that?

MB: You know, I don't know. I'm not—I really don't know. I know that there was a lot of controversy and objections and things of that nature. I don't know what he wanted to change. I'm just not versed on that enough to even discuss it.

[recording error]

AP: We were talking about administration and faculty and students. Was there any one time or any decade that was a time of greater change more than another?

MB: It seems to me that change has just been aggressive. I mean, as we move from one administration to the other, there's been change, but it's been steady. I can't think of any one thing that stands out in my mind more. I'm sure the change from Woman's College to a coed college has certainly been dramatic and brought about changes in the styles. But it seems like even with—it's been progressive and even steady and smooth as change can be. Change is, as we said before, is never accepted by everyone, and you can always expect someone to want to know why do we have to change: we've always done it like this, why do we have to change. You always had a certain amount of that, but you just have to go along and roll with the punches, and it seems like that's what we've done. We've moved on and overcome any adverse situations that have come about as a result of change. So that's the way I view it—the way the change has taken place here at the university.

AP: For you personally—what do you feel was the best time of your work here? Your time here? Any special accomplishments, achievements, or special joys that you had?

MB: I always feel like every day is just a new challenge and that it brings something new that day. I've just enjoyed every day of it, really. I don't know of any time that's been bad or any time that's been more outstanding than others—I've just enjoyed it all.

I think we've seen a lot of changes, even in the department in which I worked. For instance, I'll cite that and I guess you gauge the university by that. As I pointed out, I was always in the personnel office, and it was always an integral part of the business affairs office. And right about the time that I was planning to retire in 1988, you know, money began to become more available to build departments and things of that nature. Small departments couldn't expand over the years because of building the academic area to attract our men—that's what I mean by that. So since that time, since 1988, the chancellor and vice chancellor for business affairs, Mr. [Fred] Drake, have changed the personnel department to a department of human resources—to expand the programs that are offered to the employees because you've seen employees grow as you have the student body over the years. So things had to change there. And again, it was a wonderful change. It was something that was needed for many years—to bring in specialists, people that were specializing in certain areas, personnel work—in order to build these programs for the employees. And I think they've done a good job of getting that off the ground the last two years. And that's why I've enjoyed coming back and helping in the department a little at a time. You know, I've enjoyed seeing it grow and change.

AP: So you have noticed all of that. By the same token, we might ask what were some of the most frustrating times for you or the worst times? Were there any unpleasant times?

MB: No. I think I have a tendency to blank out bad times. [laughs] I don't like bad times. I dwell on the positive. And so I don't recall anything that was especially bad. We've always had to work hard in the office, and I've enjoyed that. Any time we've had changes that we've had to implement, why we've try to do it in the best way we could, you know, with what we had to do it with. So I don't really recall anything being bad. [laughs] Maybe I'll go home tonight and think about it, but I don't recall bad times. Hard work and changes, and certainly there have always been aggravations along the way, but you overcome that by just going on and doing what you have to do.

AP: Since Woman's College was traditionally a place for women—for administrators, for teachers, for students—was it in some ways a training ground for women, and how did you see that here on campus? Was this a place of leadership and strength for women, maybe in days when it wasn't that popular for women to lead or to be strong?

MB: I thought it was. And I thought that, as we commented earlier, we had a lot of women who were department heads at that time, and they were very effective. Your academic departments were headed by women. They were good leaders and offered a lot to the students and helped the students to become leaders. Yes, I thought indeed it was a good place for that. I'm trying to think of some instances for you.

AP: Any particular department heads or leaders that you think of—or deans you think of?

MB: Oh, I always think of Dean Mereb Mossman [dean of instruction, dean of the college ,

dean of faculty, vice chancellor for academic affairs], of course, as the dean of deans. She was an excellent leader, and she was good to work with. She helped those around her and was a good role model, a good leader, mentor. And of course as I pointed out, Mildred Newton, with whom I started. We had—let's see, people in the—well, when our registrars were women back in those days, and the lady who was in charge of the dining halls—it was operated in a little bit different fashion, because it wasn't quite as large as it is now, of course. It was headed by—and it was sort of like an academic area. [laughs]

AP: It was headed by a woman? Was she from this area?

MB: No, she was not. And that's the sort of thing too—so many of the faculty were not from this area. They were from other areas. And one thing that I saw among the faculty at that time was how close knit they were. They looked after each other. They didn't have family here that could attend to their needs or take care of them at times when they needed it. And I saw a great bond there among the faculty.

AP: Were many of the women single faculty members?

MB: Yes.

AP: Would you say majority?

MB: I would say the majority was single.

AP: And what do you think brought many of those women teachers and faculty members to Greensboro?

MB: Oh, I think the opportunity—the opportunity of working in a large college at that time, a college setting, and certainly then we advanced to the university status. But I think they saw opportunity and they welcomed it, and they did a very good job.

AP: And they were dedicated?

MB: Very, very dedicated.

AP: Well, it's good to know. Thank you for your time today, and it was good to visit.

MB: Well, I hope it's been helpful.

[recording error]

AP: When you came here to work with Mrs. Newton, you came as her secretary and worked—you said you split the job with—?

MB: Yes, she had one position and I worked in the mornings, and the then other girl came in the afternoons. She had a variety of secretaries in one position.

AP: So you worked closely together.

MB: Yes.

[End of Interview]