

## UNCG CENTENNIAL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: M. Matthew Mauney

INTERVIEWER: Missy Foy

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MF: I'm in Raleigh, [North Carolina] with Matt Mauney. And if you could start with some general stuff like where you're from and when you went to UNCG [The University of North Carolina at Greensboro] and just kind of—what your major was, just some general stuff like that first.

MM: General stuff. I'm from Raleigh.

MF: Okay.

MM: Went to school in '83. Went occasionally part time, occasionally full time and matriculated in August of '89. Oh, I was in the communications department in the broadcasting cinema division.

MF: Is that a BA [bachelor of arts] or a BS [bachelor of science]?

MM: BA.

MF: BA. Okay. Why did you choose UNCG? Was there a particular reason? [pause] Or was it just one of those college decisions? [chuckles]

MM: No, I pretty much decided I wanted to do something with film at the time, and the only two that—it was either film or music production in some way. Anyway, I narrowed it down to film at the end and didn't like [University of North] Carolina's [at Chapel Hill] emphasis. So I picked Greensboro, and I thought the campus was nice at the time.

MF: Yes, so you went and looked at the campus first?

MM: Yes, I went—

MF: Yes, a lot of people do that.

MM: —and visited, I guess it was in May before I went to school here.

MF: Yes. And you lived in the dorm.

MM: For one semester.

MF: For one semester?

MM: I lasted one semester.

MF: Oh, and then moved off campus?

MM: As soon as possible, yes.

MF: And what dorm?

MM: Phillips.

MF: Okay. What did you think of dorm life?

MM: Not too much. It was [pause] not very conducive to studying.

MF: Yes.

MM: Very hard to keep any kind of schedule. It was very loud and at irregular times. And I guess underneath all that I'm too—maybe private a person to [unclear] with so many people. It made me feel uncomfortable so I moved off campus—

MF: Yes.

MM: —in my second semester.

MF: And then stayed off campus the rest of the time?

MM: Right.

MF: Living off campus compared to living in the dorm—even though, well, even though there's a large like town-student population at UNCG, the people who lived real close around campus a lot of times don't really consider themselves town students. And did you still feel pretty connected to campus where you were living?

MM: Somewhat, because I had a meal plan to begin with, but I kind of gradually got away from that. There's a definite difference immediately upon moving off campus because there it was totally isolated, a bubble world. As soon as I moved off, I realized there's a whole city around that didn't revolve around the university.

MF: Yes. So you get more attached to Greensboro—

MM: Yes.

MF: —as a whole instead of just UNCG, yes. Also, I guess following that same idea—Tate Street—a lot of people have told me became more the focus of their college experience

than the classroom. And what would you—how would you respond to that?

MM: Well, it was nice to have at times, but I wouldn't say it was the focus of anything.

MF: Yes. Now on Tate Street most of the clubs that used to have music don't—either don't have music now or they have closed down or something, but during the time that you were there, there was still a lot of clubs that would have musicians coming in.

MM: Yes, Fridays was still there when I first got to town.

MF: Yes.

MM: That was good.

MF: Yes, I guess that was like the big attraction for a lot of people. Well, for a certain group of students from UNCG, it was sort of the night club scene on Tate Street.

MM: It was nice because there was so much music coming through there.

MF: Yes. Also with Tate Street, it sort of developed this infamous reputation, which some people say is unwarranted, but that it was the scene of a lot of drinking and some people say a lot of drug use down on Tate Street. What do you think about that?

MM: I never had any problem with it. The worse thing I encountered was getting hit up for change occasionally.

MF: Oh, by street people.

MM: Yes, that got tired, tiring, but that was my worst experience down there.

MF: Yes. What do you—being a male student at a school that has a history of being a women's college, did any of that seem to carry over during the time you were there?

MM: Not really—maybe because my department was not unbalanced as far as the male/female ratio there. And it was changing quickly from the time I got in there to the time I left as far as achieving parity. So the little part of the university I was in I didn't notice any overly—traditionally female—.

MF: Yes.

MM: There's a word I'm looking for.

MF: Let me pause this. [background noise] Also, another thing I want to ask you about is: Residential College [first living/learning community] was like for some people a really big thing on campus, Mary Foust [Resident Hall]. What do you remember about Residential College?

MM: The College itself, not a whole lot. About half the people I wound up meeting or knowing on campus came from there though. That was rather interesting.

MF: Was that because they were in communications or just because—

MM: No.

MF: —they were people you met?

MM: No, just people I met and felt worth knowing. It seemed to attract a different crowd at the time. It changed toward the end. The people that were coming through RC [Residential College] was not—I didn't really know too many people at the end there, but at the beginning it was a nice little community.

MF: What kind of student seemed to be attracted to RC?

MM: [pause] Different. I don't know any one specific characteristic or—that they all possessed. Just [pause] seemed like they were more interested in learning in and of itself, not—

MF: —learning just to learn not to learn like a specific thing or something?

MM: Yes, which I'm not saying one is better than the other, but that seemed to be their focus.

MF: During the time that you were at UNCG, also, they opened up a coed dorm. What was it?

MM: Coit, yes.

MF: Coit. Yes. How did that seem to go over?

MM: Fine as far as I know.

MF: Do you remember after it opened, how it seemed to work or—?

MM: I don't recall hearing any problems, but, like I say, I wasn't on campus so [recording error]

MF: Also fraternities were still pretty new in the '80s. Do you remember much about the Greek scene on campus?

MM: No, I stayed away from that too.

MF: Yes. Did they seem to have a big presence on campus or—?

MM: No. I just went to school [unclear]

MF: Also during that time the drinking age changed on campus and that changed sort of the

administration's view of alcohol on campus. And I guess it was at that time that Spring Fling suffered rather mightily. There were no more kegs at Spring Fling and—how did that whole idea of the drinking age change? What seemed to happen among students, yourself and other students you knew?

MM: Well, I was riding the crest of the change; it never affected me directly. I was always of age by the time they raised it—nineteen, then twenty-one. I suppose there's a—we were told they couldn't drink; they just didn't drink in public.

MF: Yes.

MM: It seemed to be the only change as far as it affecting the social functions—there were several. If I recall correctly, there were several times they would have kegs in Elliott [University] Center for one function or another, which was quickly ended when most of the students couldn't drink. Yes, it did seem to stifle a lot of the activity which is—doesn't say a whole lot for the majority of the student population that it takes alcohol to motivate them to participate in something.

MF: Yes. Another topic: I don't mean to jump around so much, but another topic I wanted to ask you about is—well, there are two. One is about I House [International House] with the international students. Did you know any of the students that lived in I House?

MM: A few, yes.

MF: What kind of students were there, and how did they seem to fit into campus life?

MM: [pause] What kind of students? I don't know; they were just students. I wish I had been over there more, actually, because they did have different outlooks not on anything specific in school just in general, I guess. They were always interested to find out about—would you repeat the question? [chuckles]

MF: Yes. With I House, some of the students that lived at International House and Shaw [Residence Hall], how did they seem to fit into the stream of campus life and what type of students did they seem to be?

MM: I don't know about the stream of campus life. I wasn't in the stream myself. As far as I could tell, no different from anybody else. As far as what kind of students, the ones I knew [pause] I don't know of any difference between any other students.

MF: Yes. What do you remember about the nature of race relations on campus? Do you remember anything? There was always some controversy coming up now and again about Neo-Black Society [association of mainly African American students] or some of the black fraternities or A& T [North Carolina State Agricultural and Technical University, Greensboro, North Carolina] students coming on campus. What do you personally remember about race relations? [unclear]

MM: It was—any problems that I was aware of were from word of mouth. I remember people griping about there's not a Neo-Black—if there's a Neo-Black Society, why is there not a Neo-White Society? Remember one time in class—it was a communications class—I believe Communication in Society. I believe we were addressing that specific issue about why there are set-aside programs. And something was said about the professor—I mean, he—I forget how he phrased it. But he used it to talk about race relations in general, I guess. And a couple of people got offended and walked out, I remember.

MF: By what he said?

MM: Yes. I believe that the gist of what he was saying was that why do we— it comes down to why there are such things as a Neo-Black Society and scholarships just for white students. He said it came down to guilt, and that ticked a few people off.

MF: A few white students or black students?

MM: No. Black students.

MF: Black students?

MM: Yes. That was about—everything else was just rumor. I guess everywhere you go you're going to run into people, students, who want to judge somebody without knowing them. I don't think there's—I didn't notice any—I don't think there's disproportionate than anywhere else you'd find.

MF: Yes. Also, during the '80s there were a lot of physical changes that took place on campus. But what strikes you as some of the biggest changes that occurred during that time?

MM: I don't know, it's like they all happened right as I was leaving. Of course, my tuition went up to pay for them a good deal. And then right when I left they were coming around to being finished. Going back and seeing it now, the biggest things I noticed are the PAC, the cafeteria is all done up nice with some, I think, shops, some of the vendors or whatever are open later now, which is nice. Back—you didn't get in there by a quarter of seven [pm], you didn't eat.

MF: Yes.

MM: When I was there, that would probably be the thing that I would like the best about going back—the fact that if you're stuck in the library and you don't get out of there until eight [pm] or so, you can still run by and get a snack. The PAC is nice, the Physical Activities Complex.

MF: Yes.

MM: Weight room is much better. I'm trying to think what else did change. The art building [Cone Building] was the only other—just hideous from the outside.

MF: [laughs]

MM: But the inside is pretty good. That's about the three big things that strike me as different from when it started.

MF: What do you see for the future of UNCG?

MM: I don't know. One of the reasons I really liked the school when I picked it was it didn't have a whole lot of sports. I mean, it was a [National Collegiate Athletic Administration] Division III school, didn't have a football team.

MF: Yes. And now the school next year is moving into Division I.

MM: Division I. So that might change things, so I don't know if I'd choose to go there again. I mean, that wouldn't weigh that heavily on a decision I guess, but—it was nice to be away from that kind of atmosphere that you see at [North Carolina] State [University, Raleigh, North Carolina] and Carolina.

MF: Do you think the physical growth is good or bad for the university?

MM: I don't know. They're growing as far as student population goes along with it or does that maintain pretty stable?

MF: I think the student population is about twelve thousand right now, and I don't think that's much more than it was when—

MM: That's about twenty percent more than when I was there.

MF: Yes, maybe some—but that's including graduate students.

MM: Yes. I think that size is—I wouldn't like to see it get any bigger. Of course, I'm not going to school now, so, but if I was coming up again, I kind of liked it the size it was. It offered a nice alternative. A really small school into something that was just so large, you get lost.

MF: Yes.

MM: Like twenty-five, thirty thousand students. I believe it was about ten thousand when I was there. I thought that was a good size. So if they continue to push growth as far as quantity of students I don't think it's—I don't think it would be very advantageous.

MF: Is there anything you can think of that you really have a burning desire to say that I may not have gotten around to?

MM: You mean, like, general gripes on my mind?

MF: That's fine, yes. [both laugh]

MM: Well, we haven't really been talking about the academic side all that much.

MF: Okay, yes.

MM: The one thing that I remember—the two things that really stand out while I was there. One, I had a different advisor every year which does no good. I mean, there's no point in having an advisor if he doesn't know the history, where you've been, where you're going.

MF: Right.

MM: And to have some kind of—even just know who you are. I never kept someone—yes, I never kept the same advisor from one year to the next except for like the last two years and then I never saw him because they had a graduate assistant, approved everything.

MF: Oh yes.

MM: So I was not advised. And then the department head or—let's see, if it's the communications department, it's the broadcasting division—the head of that division, one, two, three, I think that changed about every year or two, two years. They had three different heads of the department. It was a very unstable department while I was there, and that was upsetting. It seemed to go in the wrong direction too.

MF: What do you mean?

MM: As far as—anybody worth keeping, I think they might go. And so when I left, the department, I think it was very—if they had kept the right people it could have been ten times better than it was when I left. Those are my main gripes.

MF: Okay. [laughs] Well, thank you very much.

[End of Interview]