

WUAG-FM ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

INTERVIEWEE: Patricia A. Sullivan

INTERVIEWER: Joe Scott

DATE: Circa 2005

JS: Back to *UNCG Tonight* [radio program] with Joe Scott and Sarah Benedek. On the phone with me right now is Chancellor—Chancellor Patricia Sullivan, the chancellor of UNCG [The University of North Carolina at Greensboro]. Welcome to the show.

PS: Delightful to be here.

JS: So [pauses] I'm a CA [Community Advisor] of Ragsdale-Mendenhall [Residence Hall], it's a freshman dorm and—a lot of freshman, they ask me, they say "What does a chancellor do?" And, I try to answer them as best I can but I—I don't even think that my answer is very thorough, so let's get this from the horse's mouth. [Sullivan chuckles] What are the duties as a Chancellor of UNCG?

PS: Well officially I am the chief executive officer of the campus and I'm accountable to our Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors for the integrity and quality of the academic program—the quality of life and academics for students, faculty, and staff, and adherence to all of the policies of the Board of Governors, our Board of Trustees, and the state of North Carolina. And I'm sort of the chief cheerleader and spokesperson for the university.

JS: A cheerleader, huh?

PS: Yes, indeed.

JS: Were you ever a cheerleader in high school or college?

PS: No actually I wasn't, but I am one now.

JS: Ah, okay cool, so this is kind of a—a new thing. So, what is a typical day in the life of a chancellor? You know, what kind of things have you been doing today, what are you going to be doing today?

PS: Okay. First of all, let me say that there's no typical day, because every day is different from the day before it and the day after it. It's very much driven by whatever the agenda items are for the campus as a whole, the [University] System, the General Assembly, whatever. This morning, I usually get in real early by seven, try to get through the e-mail

messages and the correspondence, and I've had an appointment with the provost, an appointment with a student who wanted to interview me about Peabody Park, and now an interview with you.

JS: So this is the second student interview you've done today.

PS: Yes, yes, it's very nice to have these kinds of things. Normally, I meet with the vice chancellors about issues in their university divisions, or I meet with other people about different issues or concerns. Today I happen to be leaving to go to Boone [North Carolina] for the meeting of the Administrative Council and the Board of Governors, so I'll be gone until Wednesday afternoon.

JS: Sounds like—sounds like you're very busy, I mean, I hardly ever see you on campus, and—

PS: I'm here, and I really walk around a lot and try to talk to students when I do that when I'm here if I'm not travelling. I don't know if you know that we are in the silent phase of a capital campaign whose primary goal is to raise money for student scholarships, so I'm on the road a lot, taking the university message out to our alumni and friends in the hopes that they'll make donations to us.

JS: What's the targeted goal?

PS: Yeah, to help us help our students afford their education.

JS: I mean, monetarily, what is the target goal of the campaign?

PS: Well, our—we have a very ambitious, ten-year goal of more than 150 million dollars.

JS: Whoa, that is a lot of money.

PS: But immediately, in the next five years, we're trying to raise 78.2 [million], and the largest share of that money, about thirty million or so, is for student scholarships and graduate fellowships, so that's where we're really concentrating our work right now.

JS: Well, as a—as a student, you know, who's fighting to pay for their tuition, I want to say “Rock on,” and thank you for that.

PS: Well, spread the word, you are our best advocates, when we can bring prospective donors to meet our students, you make a very compelling case, and it makes it a little bit easier for them to want to write us checks.

JS: [chuckles] Awesome, awesome. So, our school has faced several new challenges this year, in terms of an increase in student population, and what I was wondering is, in your

opinion, what are some of the challenges that you think our school is facing either now, or in the near future?

PS: Well, top on the challenge is the growing enrollment and the capability of facilities to respond to that growing enrollment. As you may know, we're building buildings and we're renovating buildings that are part of the university bond program so we can have better facilities. The big challenge now is that we will have better facilities, but we're growing at a faster rate than we expected for those facilities to be brought on line. So right now, space is an issue, and also, the infrastructure support for all kinds of—of departmental and school and college work, administrative functions is stretched, and that's because we've been subjected to continuing budget cuts for the last six years, and over that six year period, we've had the cumulative loss of about sixty faculty positions.

JS: Oh!

PS: So even though we have been funded for the enrollment growth, we're still behind in that because we're just—we're not just getting the enrollment growth, we're also getting budget cuts. So instead of being able to put those resources into meeting enrollment needs, we have fewer dollars with which to do that, and that's been critical as we try to, for example, expand our wireless computing effort, upgrade computing facilities, upgrade campus facilities, and hire the best faculty we can—it's been a real challenge. That's been our biggest challenge for the last five years is—continuing to grow, to add new programs, [and] meet the needs of students while we get both plus funds and minus funds.

JS: Yeah. Awesome. Well, as you know, we are a radio station, and so this is a question I have to ask. I have to ask whenever you're playing the stereo in your car or just listening to something in your spare time, what kind of music do you like to rock out too?

PS: Well, I used to be a big rock fan when I was younger. I do it now occasionally—and when I can find time I do listen to WUAG because I've read the wonderful comments in the *Go Triad* about your fine work. We're very proud—

JS: Well, we're very flattered, thank you.

PS: I'm a big NPR [National Public Radio] fan, quite honestly [chuckles].

JS: Okay. What kind of bands did you listen to when you were in college?

PS: Oh, well, it was the age of rock, and The Beatles [an English rock band formed in Liverpool, England in 1960], and groups like that—The Grateful Dead [an American rock band formed in 1965 in Palo Alto, California] and—so those are ones that still tug at my heartstrings because they remind me when I was a young, carefree student.

JS: Did you ever go on tour with The Grateful Dead, follow them around—

PS: No I never did that, I went to concerts, but I never went on a tour.

JS: Oh cool. [chuckles] One last question, what is your favorite movie of all time?

PS: Oh gee.

JS: First one that comes to your head.

PS: I guess the first one that comes to my head would be *Doctor Zhivago*.

JS: *Doctor Zhivago*. Very, very classy film there. All right, well thank you very much, I know you're really busy, you know, you've got a lot to do running our huge university, I just want to thank you for doing this interview with us tonight.

PS: Well, you're welcome. I hope you're having a good time as a student.

JS: Oh, I'm having a great time. I think, you know, I think the key to having a great time as a student is to just get involved in as much as you can and make the best of it, you know?

PS: Yes, what are you studying?

JS: English.

PS: Oh, good for you! I just had an interview with a student English major about Peabody Park, and she really loves the program, I hope you're enjoying it.

JS: Yeah, yeah, I think it's pretty cool. [pauses] Did you get the liner?

PS: I do.

JS: Would you mind doing that?

PS: Sure.

JS: Alright, well, you can just go ahead and read that, and then we will call it a wrap.

PS: Okay. This is Patricia Sullivan, the chancellor at UNC Greensboro. And when I want to rock, I listen to WUAG 103.1 Greensboro.

JS: Thank you very much.

PS: You're quite welcome, I hope it goes well.

JS: Oh, it's going well, thank you, have a good day, all right?

PS: Bye.

JS: Bye.

[End of Interview]