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**Carey Cox**

John Anthony Dr.

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Carey Cox

June 12, 2000

**Dr. Anthony: How did you get involved originally in the community college?**

I got a telephone call in the Spring of 1984 from Jerry Hoagland asking me if I would come to a meeting to talk about a community college for Collin County, Spring 1984. So I went to the meeting and it was Howard Thornton, Jerry Hoagland, Bill Roberts, David McCall and myself.. five of us. So we talked about it and David and I agreed to co-chair the group which at that point didn't have a name. It later became the Committee of 100. We decided to form the Committee of 100 which became 600 before we got all through. And we gathered signatures on the petitions in the fall of '84. Culminating with the general election which was Reagan's first landslide victory and huge voter turn out in Plano and we were able to get 25,000 signatures. So that was my original involvement.

**Dr. Anthony: Can you think back on some interesting experiences that happened during those early years prior to the... anything fixed in your mind that, well this was a little different, this was kind of unusual. Any characters come out of the woodwork or anything?**

After we got the petition we went to the college board in Austin and that would have been Nov., Dec., 1984. And they instructed us as to the procedure and they did authorize calling of an election in April 1985 to elect the first Board of Trustees, to float \$70M in bonds and to set the tax rate at .10. I believe those were the three issues. When that was successful then was when we formally hired Ed Simonson. And Bill Priest was very helpful and Bill put us in touch with Ed Simonson on the national search of Dr. Anthony, would up with Dr. Anthony. Not a lot of funny things happened because it was just a lot of work. The college coordinating board said that they'd never seen 25,000 signatures on a petition. Ed Simonson was probably the first person to say to the trustees that this was a significant opportunity for a president to come in here. He was probably the first person I heard say that. That was later confirmed by the finalist that we interviewed and then

became common knowledge once we got started. There was an effort to pass a community college back in, I don't know if it was in the '60s or '70s... it was to be located in McKinney. It was probably late '60s because the VA hospital became the job corps center came was vacant and so became they had the facility, they tried the creation of the district passed but the taxing authority did not pass. So they did not create the district in late 1960s.

**Dr. Anthony: Opposition, any organized opposition to the creation of the college?**

No, it was just an uphill fight from an education standpoint because we were surrounded by some college. The Dallas County system was a very strong and some people had suggested, not very many, but some, that we align ourselves with Dallas County system. But what prevailed was the view that we would stand on our own. We investigated the alternatives with committee of the Committee of 100. Part of their responsibility was to investigate whether there was another way to provide a community college service in Collin County. And they investigated the alignment with Dallas, the alignment with Gresson and ultimately decided we were strong enough to go on our own. So we did. I don't remember many funny things except Bill Crawford taking exception to the serving the fish with the eye still in it. When we were having the lengthy interviews with the presidential candidates that you, John, were a part of.

**Dr. Anthony: That and piggy tail...**

Yes, that and piggy tail and having that fish with an eye in it. And no majestics.

**Dr. Anthony: If you look back over the fifteen years were there significant events, issues that stuck out in your mind that you're especially proud of?**

Oh, easy. First graduation... hitting shoulders above everything. That was the first recognition type went, the first time that we'd been exposed to... the music and the colors

and the students and everything that was with it. That was a high point and I'm not sure anything ever surpassed in the whole fifteen years.

**Dr. Anthony: I think that was the only one we had outside too.**

Yes, it was under the pecan tree at Central Park Campus. It was a windy day and very hot and humid and blustery. And we had an old upright piano that was plinkin out the song. Who's the girl, Billie something, Billy Cunningham was the first speaker. Seems like I can remember her speaking outdoors in that setting. I think there were eleven graduates. But it was a big deal to us. So that place has always had a special warm place for me personally. I suppose the first death that we had, who was Dick Sewel was an event that I would remember. We've had others that have been equally important but that was the first time the family had been disrupted so to speak, the original family, the first shock. The opening of the campuses and the buildings was such a lengthy process that it was not an event. It was an evolutionary thing that took a very long time, took a lot of itty bitty steps and it's hard to remember. I mean we have them and they're wonderful, but it was not an event like the opening of the campuses anything like. They kind of all run together.

**Dr. Anthony: Anything else you want to say...who do you want to play you if this turns into a movie?**

Boy, they'd have to be way down the line. but I think the, I would put as a high point when we – when outsiders first told us what a big opportunity this was. I'm sure that the first time we heard that it was just, it kind of rolled off, but when it began to sink in how big this thing was going to be and that was not at any particular time. I think when we began to realize how big this thing was going to be and how quickly and that it became not a trade school type of thing at all, but became more a full blown college in every respect. There was a lot of satisfaction and a lot saying I'm glad I got on early.

**Dr. Anthony: Any disappointments in the fifteen years that stand out?**

No. We never feel like the college gets the proper recognition locally from the hind folks, but it receives more recognition nationally than it does locally. But I suppose that's always the case in anything. It is recognized as an important asset for the county and the people in the county. We have to struggle for publicity sometimes. We're well known other places but we're taken for granted and I suppose that's really the way it should be. So there's not really a complaint. It's just the college is there, always has been, always will be.

**Dr. Anthony: I think if you ask people individually they're very pleased, but collectively they have other priorities.**

And then it's always a turf thing with other political entities.

**Dr. Anthony: What do you see for the future?**

Carey Israel thinks it's going to be that the growth is going to be as big as the growth experienced in the past. No whether that means that we have fifty to sixty thousand student, I don't know. He's optimistic, his staff is optimistic. There's a lot of land left in Collin County to be developed and I don't know when the end will be and big we will be finally to build out the whole county but our size is probably connected to the size of the county. So to have fifty to sixty thousand students is not unreasonable. Whether it ever becomes a four year institution or not is a whole different ball game, and I don't know. We don't waste much time thinking about it. We're asked about it always.

**Dr. Anthony: Other campuses, you think they're still interested?**

Well, you your campuses are six or seven miles apart you just need larger campuses as opposed to more campuses. The area in the eastern part of the county will eventually be able to do something with either Rockwall or on our own. That continues to cook on a slow burner. We would like to do more on the eastern part around Wylie, but there's still no density of people. Then Spring Creek, unless we can get into structured parking which

is the only way that thing could be expanded. We'd need to go to multi-level parking and that could certainly happen. It could be in a            there and that's obviously the center of the population density so that's where the largest numbers are. Frisco campus may eventually be their largest campus, just don't know.