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August 9, 2000

Colin Choupin

My first recollection is that I got a call from Jerry one time. I've known Jerry since late 70's. He told me what they were thinking of and would I help and I said I'd be happy to. One of the subcommittees they wanted to establish would look at all the potential options for providing a community college level education in the county. Be that we had with Grayson doing a similar project with Dallas because we'd be in closer more potential any sort of a high red bulldogging allowed. The cost factor and whether the voters would pony up for as much money was involved was something they were quite concerned about. They wanted to be sure that when they went to the voters they went through

_____ Collin County College that they could answer all the questions they asked of them from an economic perspective. So Jerry asked if I'd chair that committee which I did. Oh, it was an interesting process. We had some very fine people who were on who were very guarded about spending tax payers money, great devils' advocates on everything that came up they would tear to pieces. One stage I thought we may have a minority opinion on a minority report. After certain things happened, that disappeared. What we did, I think do was a very thorough job is to evaluating what would both be the economic consequences of any of those who turned us as against the level of caliber the education that could be delivered if we had our own. As we got into it we became more aware of a lot of dynamics, particularly the Plano market. So then it would expand throughout the rest of the county. Use to be in the early days '70s and '80s when you were doing planning you figured the thing to really take care of traffic going out of the city to work and almost by the time the college getting to be thought about and certainly by the '90s the situation virtually reversed. Today I suspect almost as many people come in to Plano from outside to work as go outside to work somewhere else. One of the other things I discovered in the early '80s was the need for East West traffic to be taken care of where's always South was the main demand. But East West is now...tremendous. I guess that's where some of that come from background of jury people commissions figured would be useful during this evaluation. And with that

we became real aware of the employment centers were in existence and very likely to come which was more of a feeling that our own college was likely to come. I guess in a synopsis somewhere it's that early role that I belong.

Dr. Anthony: So you were asked by someone to chair up a group?

Could not understand this section

That plus the petition group were the two majors....

If the alternative resources would have come back and recommended – no we should liase with Dallas and build a bigger one or – no we should liase with Grayson or some other. UTD was even thrown out into the loop

Dr. Anthony: So you stayed active, in fact you ran for the board on the slate and surprisingly did not get elected. Any perceptions as to what happened there?

Well most of the others were better known throughout the county. One thing that became very apparent in that campaign and another campaign for Governor Clemetts I was working on not at the same time, in context and the contacts, just how powerful teacher lobby is, particularly in Collin County and the teaching community really got out and supported the college and almost I would say, alone, provided the votes alone that were necessary. We were active with Sue in the petition side of things as well. I remember being in Sue's office with my daughter and her year old daughter stuffing envelopes and doing this and the whole nine yards. There were three generations of Choupins there involved in the petition.

Dr. Anthony: As Sue recalled the times bringing the petitions home in after pouring down rain, putting them in her dryer, drying them off putting them all over her floor.

It was a lot of activity compressed into a very short time. We were at shopping centers, tables and chairs, things like that on Saturdays. The only other thing we had a three week window within which you had to get in a significant number of voters were required you had to check that thing with voters.

Dr. Anthony: Any surprises in the process as you look back?

No, really looking back I think if anything I would been a bit surprised...a good feeling was the flow, it was smooth, the support was tremendous, everybody pitched in. there were no personal recriminations of that nature. This total enthusiasm and support, it was probably with all of the things to be involved in 25 years in town, the most collegial, the most enjoyable and the most fulfilling.

Dr. Anthony: You're about the 8th or 9th person that's said that, some of the politicians have said that.

Anytime I go to any of the campuses , I just really feel warm that I had anything to do with the start of it. Physically, they're very attractive facilities, but because of the students you see there. The knowledge and betterment of their life ... it's all those things that are the essentials substantial in my mind is also the college. Without it thousands of them would either not get the education they could use or have to go a greater distance to get it. When you think you're any way minusculely involved in providing that for generations to come feel the _____.

Dr. Anthony: Colin, you mentioned a decision to go with a college of our own but yet there was some other extraneous recommendations. How did that finally resolve itself into an agreement that this would be the way to go? As you look back on any characters you came across, any disappointments in the process?

No disappointment, no none at all. Nobody was trying to make this in any way their achievement.

Dr. Anthony: No special agenda?

No, nobody was trying to get any special recognition for it. It was one thing where vitality and real inherent merits of the cause was so strong that any personal ideas never came to anybody's mind. Just wanted to get it done. And so far as the nominees were concerned for the trustees our initial concern was that we had enough to fulfill the ballot requirements so that's how the slate came into existence and we went to Bob Collins and said Bob, you're one of the folks we'd like to identify. We'd like you to come on board and Bob said he had enough to do. When he really got to understand what it was we were trying to achieve and with his background and everything else and he became very enthusiastic and I was very glad to see he liked it because he could bring more to this table than a lot of others, including me, who didn't have that background in education.

Dr. Anthony: He was a very good board member too.

I knew he would be, so I think that the trustees that got elected did a wonderful job and I don't have any regrets as to how it turned out. I'm sure it's made a lot of demands on their time, energies, knowledge and resources. It got good results, but I'm sure they've got even stronger good feelings about the place than I do. Plus a great deal of pride. That founding group could either make or break....

Dr. Anthony: They really did, they gave the administration of the college flexibility to go ahead, they didn't micromanage, and they were learning along with a lot of other people and it was a remarkable experience those first few years in getting it off the ground.

And another element about it in the following stages is none of the trustees have ever gone out on any personalized identification program. Low level and low keyed, as you could ever imagine, if they tried they couldn't get any lower. That has been a real success contrast the situation to the south. Did you hear about the Chamber of Commerce

meeting in Forth Worth? They gave in invocation and the minister says how wonderful it is to have such great leaders of the city and thanks God for all the benefits and everything else and so on and so forth. Then he says, God, thanks to you the biggest thing of all you've given us, were not in house.

Dr. Anthony: As I write this book Colin, anything I want to make sure I don't leave out.

Well, I don't think there's anything that I can think of that you haven't already of thought of, because some of the things that I raised here obviously you've heard, discovered or thought of. Essential elements in the start up phase was the commissions' court was visionary enough to get the idea they wanted to do it. And second, total support, enthusiasm, hard work, the whole group that they then enlistested to get it done. As from where you came on board and obviously knowledge needed there. In a year or so prior to that they told us there was another guy from the Dallas district, Bill Priest, and he came and talked to our committee and gave a lot of insight to us. He was very helpful. Didn't he also have some sort of executive role....

Dr. Anthony: He was the founding Chancellor there, in fact they just name a chair after him at the University of North Texas and I've been chairing that committee to fill that chair. He's an old friend.

So those guys certainly gave guidance in those days.

Dr. Anthony: What kind of relationship did you have with David McCall? Was he the king of the southern tier, did your committee work directly with him?

David and Carey basically worked together, probably had more. I'd known David for/from _____ probably earlier, always worked well together. I think Carey was a little more totally active or certainly active in the area I was working, so I probably had more to do with him than David. My real sense was that if there was anybody even

including the commissions court, once it got started, who dedicated and drove himself and really was the guy driving the train, it was Carey.

Dr. Anthony: He's done a good job all these years. I'm disappointed he didn't get the chairmanship again, but I guess it's time for some change.

This may be the one thing you asked notefully, has anybody else made that comment to you?

Dr. Anthony: Yes, Jerry Hoagland did and Bill Roberts too.

My sense of recollection is that once he satisfied himself as an _____ of the cause, then he darn well decided he was going to make it happen. His enthusiasm and his ability to get people on board and work and do all those things... I think that there was a perceptible individual as opposed to a perceptible cause that really made the thing happen, Carey comes to mind.

Dr. Anthony: He'll be happy to hear that – I appreciate your insight and appreciate looking at the information. Hopefully if you think of anything else...

I think the support of the teaching community was also a very important element of it and needs to be written, the petition drive too.

Dr. Anthony: Yes, I think Sue really tackled the faculty in the various school districts especially Plano.

And a lot of folks, if you add their spouses, sisters, brothers, you start on that...the ripples go along way.

Dr. Anthony: I have not talked to Wayne Hendrick, I'm looking forward to talking to him. Talked a little bit to Doug Cargo and a few others yet I have to wrap up. Some people I didn't even know were actively involved.

Willet Russ, I don't know if he's still with us. A dentist in Wylie...

Dr. Anthony: Yes, Dick Sewell was on our board and passed away. In fact I learned how he got 9 board members instead of 7. John Aiken out there was complaining that there was nobody from Wylie on the slate so when they added Dick we had 8 and we had to add another one to make 9. And that's how they got 9 board members. Tino told me he was upset cause he was left off the slate. I've got all these little insights here.

Well the way the slate was put together was really scrambling to find 9 people and so if we didn't make a call to somebody, I'm sorry.

Dr. Anthony: Jim Nelson told me how he got on the board, funny as the devil. I guess you probably heard the story... David McCall said, asked him if he would run if Ted Dickey would not, he's almost convinced Ted Dickey that Ted Dickey would run, and Jim said if Ted Dickey decides not to run I'll run. And David said, well Ted Dickey's decided not to and he said that's how David got me involved in Leadership Plano, the same way. If I decide not to do it for another year would you be willing to fill in. Good family.