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Ernest Horaney Interview with Dr. Anthony

August 16, 2000

We'd go every evening, first of all the very first classes offered here was in the mid 70's – 76-77 – Truman Wester - -

Dr. Anthony: I knew Truman very well

And Truman came down and talked with Wayne Hendrick about offering classes. First they had offered up in McKinney and Wayne called up Truman and said there's opportunity down here for some continuing education classes. Truman and Wayne met and talked and at this time I was Secondary Circulum Director for the school district and Wayne and Truman met and started offering classes on Tuesday and Thursday at Plano Senior High School in mid 70's – 75-76 at Plano Senior High School. We had just opened PSHC in 1975 and so Dr. Hendrick thought this was a perfect opportunity to broaden the programs for continuing education. That's what they were initially. Then in a couple of years credit courses began to be offered and then the program grew and we had about a couple hundred students, maybe 250 – 275. Then along about 79-80, Wayne Hendrick and I met with Truman Wester and Hendrick said, Ernest how would you like to have another job and I said, what do you mean and he said well this is Dr. Wester and he says he's going to need someone down here to see that things go well and to publicize the program and this is the perfect opportunity. Dr. Truman offers to pay half of my salary and boy Hendrick jumped on that like and owl on a June bug. I mean he just loved that. He said you'll still be an employee of the district but basically what they did was pay ½ my salary and I was still with benefits in the district. So in about 1980 I started working half time for Grayson County and half time for the district cause Grayson paid half of my salary. You may want to edit this John but for a while I was probably about ¾ time for the district. And each semester that we'd start a new program then we'd start a new series of offerings. Truman Wester would come down with a load of groceries. He

had a garden with tomatoes, squash, cucumbers and all kind of stuff. He'd say Dr. Hendrick here's some stuff for you. So unique – here was the president of a college not only paying half of my salary but also bringing groceries from his garden – showing good will. So we grew the program from about 200 students when we first started here in Plano to well when we started in 85 we had close to a thousand students or more – credit and non-credit courses. Guess it was in 83 or 84 when Ed came on board about the year before we actually _____ changed it from Grayson County to Collin County. You came on board in 85?

Dr. Anthony: 85 – August of 85

Ed was here about 6 months to a year working with me. We would go out to the businesses and talk with them about the opportunities if Collin County had their own community college. Well then Ed would say, Ernest, how do you feel. I'd say fine Ed and he'd say, I'm at the Harvey – come on over and let's have a drink and we'd go over every evening and we'd mull over that day's activities – talk about the things that needed to be done and we'd have us a little drink. I had so much respect – I really did for Ed.

Dr. Anthony: Ed is really a good guy.

I really feel like if Ed hadn't done a lot of that work initially with me that we wouldn't have had a good a start as we had. I had the opportunity John to be involved in a lot of things that a lot of people don't and that's the “start up” of a brand new institution with a base that was already there from Grayson County to see it grow and become what it is today. Every time I drive by anyone of our campuses I just get a real warm feeling. I know that whatever little part that I played in it – it was still a part. You never lose that feeling to think that you helped start an organization that helped individuals to become better and that's what it's all about in education. In about 83-84 we saw the need, I think Wayne Hendrick did and he met with the commissioners initially. We had a series of probably 8 to 10 meetings in the Board Room of the old Cox administration building which is now an annex to school district on 15th street. Had a series of 8 to 10 county

commissioners and superintendents just sitting down and talking it out of what it would take for us to have a community college and the vision that was out there for this program to grow to the extent that it would serve the needs of the students who were at the beginning of their experience on the college level as well as - - and this was one of the critical things and I think this was the hallmark for not only our traditional students but to expand the program to include the needs of business and industry in a way that people never really thought about. So I've had just some wonderful experiences and I wouldn't take anything for them

Dr. Anthony: During the transition from Grayson to Collin County – and you'd mentioned that you'd worked with Ed – you worked – you actually served on one of the committees?

Yes, the Committee of 100 – the initial committee and then I worked with Ed and the other gentleman – I'm trying to think of his name – the person who was the finance man – he's passed away now but he was with Dallas County.

Dr. Anthony: Oh – Walter Pike

Walter Pike – sharp fellow – a good finance man in fact - -

Dr. Anthony: He worked for us for almost 5 years before he passed away.

Walter – initially it was Ed and I – then Walter came along and began to look at what it would take to set up the financial structure for the college – the tax base and _____ and working with the legislature and ensuring that this would happen in a timely manner. I really have to take my hat off to Ed and Walter and the work that they did and if I remember correctly they were both from the county commissioners there was some funding - - -

Dr. Anthony: Jerry Hoagland and Bill Roberts I think got the commissioners to fund - - - and also to hire a lobbyist out of Austin.

That is correct.

Dr. Anthony: I want to talk with her too cause I didn't realize how touch and go it was not only the vote here but the vote down in Austin was very close.

And you know Jim was very good about this. Jim Wilkins.

Dr. Anthony: When did Jim make the transition between Truman and

About 80 – 83.

Dr. Anthony: Yeah cause Jim was here about 2 years before me. No glitches in the transfer?

No and Jim was very good about this. Grayson was here and Grayson had built the program and really done a yeoman's work. But he was very gracious and I think he could see the handwriting on the wall in terms of the growth that was going to occur in North Dallas thru Collin County that eventually there would have to be a community college here. So he was very cooperative in all the dealings. He provided all the student count that we needed; contact hour funding that we had to have for the base for the financial planning _____. So I really have to appreciate him. You've not visited with him yet?

Dr. Anthony: No – Jim's not doing well. He retired about 3 years ago. He has a nerve disorder. I'm not sure which one it is but he's not doing well physically. I do need to get in touch with him. He's moved down around Kerrville.

Well I knew he had a place in Central Texas somewhere.

Dr. Anthony: Truman still in Sherman I guess.

Yes

Dr. Anthony: I run into him occasionally playing tennis.

You're kidding.

Dr. Anthony: I saw him about 2 years ago, a little heavier. I saw him playing in 100 degrees – I said Truman I wouldn't do that. He's 15 maybe 20 years older than me. Well now Ernie you also – you were kind of responsible for the Grayson program up until 85 then you also helped us with the transition. I know you and Walter worked closely together in the transition of the college and I know you worked for us as I recall. Is that correct?

That is correct. I continued to coordinate the program. For the first 2 or 3 years when we moved from Grayson to Collin County I still ran the program here.

Dr. Anthony: As you look back on your experiences are there any that you want to make sure that I include in this book? I don't want to make it dull history if I can help it.

I can appreciate that. Other than what I've said I guess John I can't think of anything else. I know that the first time we registered, the offices of Collin County Community College were in the cafeteria at Plano Senior High School.

Dr. Anthony: Yes, I remember that.

And you were there and I was there and a lot of students - we had a lot of students. I remember for me it was not to unlike every registration that we'd had every fall semester when we were at Grayson. But it was really interesting to watch how those individuals - newly employed individuals - full-time at CCCC - were so excited and eager. And particularly I noticed Toni - - -

Dr. Anthony: Toni Jenkins?

Yes, is Toni Allen still with us?

Dr. Anthony: Yes, Toni Allen now Jenkins. She became my Administrative Assistant the year before I retired then Carey came on board then Jack Gray left so I said Toni would _____ in that position so he made her Executive Vice President. She got her doctorate, I believe at East Texas in Commerce.

Well she was so excited and just ran from table to table and she would come up to me every once in awhile and say Ernie do we have everything we need for this registration. Ernie are you sure this room is big enough? I'd pat her on the back and say Toni - everything is going to be just fine.

Dr. Anthony: Toni is still that way. Lots of nervous energy. Very good employee. I keep telling people that she's the oldest employee we have cause she was the first we hired. She was actually hired before I came on board.

Really, I thought she was hired after - - -

Dr. Anthony: I was hired but I didn't come on board till August. But we needed someone here to work with Walter so we brought her on board so she was actually here before I was. She's a good lady.

She is.

Dr. Anthony: Any - - - you mentioned Wayne and of course Jim – anyone else you think I need to talk to.

You've talked to David McCall?

Dr. Anthony: Right

And his Dad?

Dr. Anthony: Board members – Choupen

I tell you somebody else that might give you some inside information regarding the transition – from the perspective of Grayson that first year is Roy Renfro. He is, I think he's Executive Vice President for Grayson County College and head of their Foundation Program. Roy was Director of Continuing Education for Grayson County College and I was Assistant Director.

Dr. Anthony: Is Roy still there?

Yes, you might want to talk with him cause he might have some insight from their perspective of the first year of this operation and the transition from Grayson County College to Collin County Community College.

Dr. Anthony: O.K. I may do that.

Dr. Renfro would be a good one to visit with and the president now – I've forgotten

Dr. Anthony: Shiedmeyer (sp) – Allen was Dean of Instruction under Williams. I don't think he was there when Truman was there.

I don't think so. But that's it John. I think that's about all I can say.

Dr. Anthony: O.K and thanks and if you can think of anything more – just give me a call.

I will and what's your timetable?

Dr. Anthony: I'd like to get all the interviews done by mid October.

O.K.

Dr. Anthony: I started in June cause people get old and forget things and we've had 3 board members who have passed away who were part of the original board members so I want to get those finished by mid October. I've got a lot of material that's been given to me by Judge Roberts, David McCall, and Sue Olivier. I can probably start writing November thru June and have a draft ready by next year at this time then I'll probably come back and talk with a lot of people.

Have you toyed with any titles?

Dr. Anthony: No, not yet. There were just so many people involved and it just seemed like it came together. Someway I want to tie the title in with Wayne Hendrick, he played a major roll. The County Commissioner, Howard Thornton pushed the commissioners cause his daughter was paying out-of-district tuition at Dallas. There was an impetus there that brought that together. David McCall earlier _____ Whisenat's (sp) dad, Johnny Whisenat (sp) tried to get a college started in the 70's and it didn't go so somehow all of that came together then precariously not only with local vote but Judge Roberts said that the night before the budget was to go to the governor the college was not in there. At 5 o'clock in the afternoon – he got a call and it wasn't in there and at mid-night he got a call and

said we got it in. It was that close so I want to try to capture that it was not an easy process but on the surface you look back and everything moved so smoothly. If you come up with a good name – let me know.

O.K. I will.