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Jerry Hoagland, County Commissioner

July 20, 2000

It was 1984 when we actually first took official action on this and I would assume – Howard Thornton came in to an executive session in late 1983 or perhaps early 1984 and said he had been over to the coffee shop in Frisco and some of the guys thought we needed a community college.

Dr. Anthony: Howard Thornton got that started?

Howard started the idea, so with that Bill Roberts and I and I'm sure Howard wasn't there because we would have to post-pone the meeting. He was the commissioner at the time. Invited about fifteen to twenty people from various parts of the county to lunch in McKinney at the county club and we simply posed that this group of men maybe there were some women there, I don't recall, and without reservation there wasn't any doubt in anybody's mind that we needed to move forward with the idea. The next step, and I'm not sure of the sequence of events, but I believe it was after that that I approached Bill Priest.

Dr. Anthony: Did you know Bill?

No, I got his name out of the newspaper, I don't remember how I got his name and had lunch with him asked him... I think he had retired or was semi-retired from Dallas County Community College. So I approached him about taking the _____ and all. And he said, well I don't really feel comfortable doing that because of my relationship with DCC, but he said I'll get you somebody that's good. He brought Ed Simonson in. Brought a copy of our contract in here with an edit and paid \$27,000 on it, outlines, everything and you'll find this good reading, really. Lot of people, names you'll find today even still involved. So then we called a committee of 100, each commissioner and the county judge as to appoint 20 people. Each for a total of 100 people and I think

Carey, we got, come over the committee of 100, idea for a theme and from there on it's pretty much outlined in this box as to what happened: had various sub-committees that were born and their recommendations. I just recently read this. The main thing that's not reflected in these records is the overwhelming support that we had for this. I was looking at the vote that permitted the district-district thing and I was a little surprised at how close it was. I mean everybody I talked to was in favor of it and it all obviously passed and created the tax rate and everything else that we had to do. Sue Olivier and John Aiken headed up the petition group and had to get a certain percentage of signatures on a petition. They exceeded that by about two and a half times what they needed which was good because all those people ultimately were going to the polls and voted for it. Actually they didn't because the voter turn out was much lower than they petitioned as you'll see.

Dr. Anthony: Jerry, a lot of people I've already talked to attribute to you the impetus, the energy behind the process.

What I was going to tell you a minute ago was Bill Roberts worked the Austin angle with the coordinating board pretty much and I was the liaison in the county and it was a labor of love. I've always had a soft spot in my heart for education – educational institutions and I couldn't be happier with what's going on with the college's influence it has had in our community.

Dr. Anthony: Everybody I talked to said you were the catalyst and Bill said that too. I talked to Bill last week and he did the Austin thing and I didn't realize how difficult the challenges were down there.

I think if we had been a year later that we wouldn't have gotten that. The economy was so bad, had turned bad, taxes were going up in 1986 shortly after all this happened and the coordinating board's crunch and the finances down in Austin, and I think the timing was just absolutely perfect, otherwise if we'd have waited another year or 2 years we absolutely wouldn't have gotten it. We wouldn't have gotten approval for it but they wouldn't have known, help finance the thing.

Dr. Anthony: When I came on board we were in a budget crunch. Tell me about locally, how did you go about selecting David and Carey to kind of head this deal up. You divided the county north and south?

We said we think we need two people, one from McKinney and one from Plano to give us some balance as far as co-chairs were concerned. At that time I really didn't know Carey well, but he had just served on another capital improvements program, I think in 1983 for a bond election and had done an outstanding job. He was with the commissioners court and selected those two guys. And all these names you're going to see in here are appointees of the court.

Dr. Anthony: Did you actually interview Simonson before Bill recommended him?

Bill recommended him, or basically he said, gentleman, what you need is outline a scope of services where it's all in here. Course I didn't have any idea about everything that had to go on. He recommended different committees. There were five committees.

Dr. Anthony: That came out of Ed's recommendation?

Yes. He was really the master mind behind the organizing everything for the coordinating board standpoint. So a lot of credit goes to him.

Dr. Anthony: You took an active role in the election process. Did you take an active role in soliciting people for the board?

Oh yes absolutely. As we got closer to the election time we said, hey we need some board members here so...

Dr. Anthony: That's right because the board was on the ballot at the same time.

Yes, so I actually needed a geographic distribution throughout the county, so Bob Collins lived in Farmersville, Dr. Sills in Wylie, I actually called a lot of those people and asked them to throw their hat in the ring, which they did.

Dr. Anthony: That was an excellent strategy because people are not going to vote for a board member that's . We obviously got an excellent board.

There were thirteen names on the ballot. I didn't remember all that and I don't remember the nine that I called, I do remember some of them. I think Tino was one of them.

Dr. Anthony: I guess the slate is seven or something like that and you're going to run as a slate. Tino ran and Bill Crawford, Joey Anderson. I think Sue was telling me ran as kind of an independent who they all got elected. A couple members on his slate that did not. Collin Choupan, and Cargo.

I called and asked him to run but didn't win.

Dr. Anthony: Their names are on the ballot you know. Collins' been a good supporter of the college. Cargo was one that didn't win, he was a banker from Allen, someone said. I think I have that in the records somewhere. Jerry, any hurdles that you saw initially when you look back, timing issue? Anything locally that came out or any real strong opposition or organized opposition?

There wasn't any organized opposition. I think the negative vote was simply whether to vote their pocketbooks probably, taxes or property. Everybody I came in contact with it was the most positive campaign I've ever been involved with. More than being supportive and non-negative comments.

Dr. Anthony: I understand that there was not unanimity initially in the court of the commissioners court, two members that were not supportive?

Well, Wallace Webb and Richard May...I don't remember them being active.

Dr. Anthony: What happened to those two fellows? Are they still around?

Richard is dead, he died, and Wallace is still alive but he's active in construction business in Blue Ridge.

Dr. Anthony: Is Howard still around?

Howard's still around, he's down in south Texas and I don't have his phone number, so you might want to make contact with him.

Dr. Anthony: Judge Roberts said the same thing. He said Howard had tried to get his daughter into Dallas or something, had to pay out of district tuition. He was talking to some other people in Frisco and they said the same thing you said, well, why can't we have a community college?

I was talking to some guy at the coffee shop that morning, he said they encouraged us to create a community college.

Dr. Anthony: And this was in Frisco?

Right, and I didn't realize it at the time – he brought this up that there had been an attempt in 1963.

Dr. Anthony: Yes, I think David McCall, Sr. was somehow involved in that. I'm going to talk to him later next week.

But the timing wasn't right I guess.

Dr. Anthony: It's my understanding they approved the district, approved the community college but didn't approve any funding or anything else...there was no way to support it. Jerry, as you look back over the spurley years. Anything stick out in your mind that ought to be part of this book as I write it? You know, this may turn into a movie, so...

I don't mean this to be patronizing you, but I think the smartest thing the board did was hire you. Because you are the catalyst that brought about everything positive that's happened with that school and a lot of the credit goes to you.

Dr. Anthony: We had a lot of good strong county commissioners support and of course the board was just outstanding. We haven't had a bad board member in the fifteen years this college has been in existence.

Has anybody give you a picture?

Dr. Anthony: I have that picture of the first board. The only one who's missing from that picture is Sue Olivier and I asked her about that and she said immediately after the election, because she was still working, she was still hyped up on a petition, she had kind of a health breakdown.

They worked her tail off.

Dr. Anthony: Yea, that's what she said. She said she just totally broke down. In fact they made arrangements, you and Judge Roberts to swear her in at a later time and she did that. Yes, I have that picture. In fact I want to include... Carey gave me some early newspaper articles about the people standing out there with the yellow roses, so I'm going to try and include that picture as well.

I guess the main thing I can say to you just to break timing was right. It was providential in nature because it could have come anytime before or after that time in history, it might not have happened. You see, there was a real ground swell of support at that time.

Dr. Anthony: And it was basically all across the county.

Yes, there was actually voting by precinct but I didn't analyze it that closely.

Dr. Anthony: Jerry, if there may be some other material with county commissioner action, who would I contact to see about looking at those?

These records should be in the county clerks office.

Dr. Anthony: I may have everything here I need.

There's even information in there about the property, I don't know why, Bob pulled that out which he had up in McKinney.

Dr. Anthony: I think that was a smart move too. I recall going out to Farmersville about a week after I got here to speak to the Ladies Garden Club and they were very concerned about everything being in Plano. The first thing I did I wanted to announce that the board is in the process of negotiating for a campus in McKinney. Thirty little old ladies got up and applauded. They just thought that was wonderful.

We tried very hard to overcome that perception and that's why we had Carey Cox from McKinney trying to have a geographic representation throughout the county and on the board too.

Dr. Anthony: That was good distribution. In fact, there were periods of time, there was a time in Plano, officially, one official representation and that was Margaret

Reynolds for a while because Alana had moved out and Tino had moved out. Sue was in Richardson. It was a good distribution.

Sue was definitely one of the people I called and I can't remember if she already had in mind. I just don't remember all those details.

Dr. Anthony: She obviously, I interviewed her last week. She brought in some name of people even I had not heard of that worked on it, but of course, your name kept coming up as being the impetus behind it.

Well, the only thing I did was try to get thing organized – calling on Ed and getting the committees structured like that. Everybody went to work, I mean, just wasn't any, didn't have to crack the whip with these people because they were all out dedicated workers and they were very diligent about their effort to get the college passed.

Dr. Anthony: Any characters you came across, any unusual circumstances that came up during that period of time, other than Ed?

I don't recall any. Even after we had that petition we were a little bit fearful that the coordinating board might not permit us to have the election. So they had to prove having the election even though we had the petition. So I guess we feared a little trepidation there. But I don't recall any. Sue and John and their people, I mean, they sat out in the rain.

Dr. Anthony: She was telling me about going to the Plano football games and sitting out in the rain and getting the signatures. They'd bring the signatures to her and she'd put them in her dryer. We had a good talk last week. She's doing fine healthwise. I think she's had a bout with cancer. She had some chemotherapy four or five weeks ago. Seems to be doing alright. She's very cryptic. She told Carol... she swore Carol to secrecy, so I don't know how much breast cancer. Did the county commissioners court have any role in the selection of the first president or

the recruitment or any of that sort, or was that pretty well turned over to the board?

The board handled all that.

Dr. Anthony: They kept you apprised about how things were moving along?

We might have, and I don't remember. We fronted all the costs getting and paying the ad.

Dr. Anthony: And are the expenses related to selection of the president.

Well, we might have, I don't remember. I don't remember if the board went and borrowed, because they didn't have any money.

Dr. Anthony: Dr. Pike had borrowed some money, either on the property tax rate base or on the basis of some stuff they regularly get from the state.

I didn't remember exactly how they got their initial funding started but I guess that's...

Dr. Anthony: I have the first budget – compared to where we are now. It was \$60,000 or \$80,000 or so.

We paid Ed \$27,000 and gave him back another \$5,000 or something like that on the loan.

Dr. Anthony: But it was still a year, on and off...

Well he was hired in April, when did you come?

Dr. Anthony: I came on in August of 1985. They hired me. Carey called me. I was out on a fishing trip, Lake Oregon, trout fishing trip and I got a call on a short wave radio and that's probably early July, late June and I wanted to give Portland a sixty day notice, so I came on about the 15th of August. That's when Carey and the board said we want classes in September. I said usually they give the president about a year to plan his staff. Walter was here as a consultant and he and Ed were working together. He and Ed and I. I came down a couple times before I actually reported full time on August 15. and we had a little office over here at the public bank building and there were three of us in that tiny...we had one desk and one telephone and the three of us in that office. So we'd rotate, walk around, drive around. And then of course we moved over to the building on 15th where Lee was very active in the changes, blond haired gal. She had kind of a secretarial office. She got us on some pretty decent property over there and then we kind of expanded from there up to Carey's place in McKinney even less expenses his payment costs. I recall just dealing with the Bealls Mall people then Osmond people located over there where we're located in the current facility. And every time I drive by that Bealls Mall I say thank God we didn't make that decision.

I guess after anything worked like through September that year so Cal, he was involved in over a year. Actually I probably made contact with him in March and we actually hired him in April

Dr. Anthony: Jerry, as you look back over the fifteen years of the college, anything, any disappointments, bumps in the road?

Absolutely not. I think it's just more...

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

That's taking place, I saw they're contemplating to become a four year institution.

Dr. Anthony: They're looking at some four year classes, I guess, I don't think that'll fly by the coordinating board. The only way they could get that done is by circumventing the coordinating board and going right to the legislature . I think they'd be better off working with UNT and UTD and try bring more four year classes on campus. Carey Israel, and Carey's got a good idea there. And actually I know the students take classes at our college, pre-register for UNT so when they come to Collin County they're already admitted to UTD or UNT. I think he's gotten an agreement from administration but has not gotten an agreement from faculty. I'm afraid they're going to have trouble getting that through the coordinating board. Of course, when you circumvent them you alienate them and make things more difficult. I think the biggest issue the electronic era, costly and you can replace thing every year and still...then or labs. I don't think that'll ever happen. I think, like Mike Collins and I had a good discussion about this the other day, electronically you can replace information, resources like libraries we're not going to need warehouses and books as such... All those thing are accessible. Education is still a social process, socially interactive, people aren't up for sit and interact with their computer. So I think campus designs and change will have a lot more electronic training. People still learn by sitting in a small classroom and professors exchanging ideas... they can ask questions. Look at Governors' State University that Colorado is pushing. I think they've been in operation for three years now and gone through six hundred students across the county.

COULD NOT TRANSCRIBE THE REST OF THE TAPE...BATTERIES?