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Jim Biggerstaff

John Anthony Dr.

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Jim Biggerstaff

8/17/00

Dr. Anthony: When did you first hear about the involvement and how did you get involved, who approached you?

Jerry Hoagland was my first contact and I served on a committee with Richard Abernathy and I was trying to think back as to what the people that were interested were subdivided into committees that would respond to whatever answers we needed to have for legislation. I assume those were needed to the consultant, lobbyist in Austin. and I recall the grass-roots portion of it distinctly. I remember sue Olivier going from door to door. She was relentless at that level to go to the business people that were at that point in time and I'm sure to individuals as well, I think a lot of that was a big marks reason for it's success. Maybe not so much in getting it established, but in the early stages. Afterward that's a responsibility, so many people trying to get it set up. I'm sure after your selection and the basic foundation for the college, a huge amount of credit should go to that early planning because obviously without that good foundation we wouldn't be where we are today.

Dr. Anthony: And that's why I'm spending a lot of my time on those early years trying to focus on when that foundation...

I think that some spirit is extremely important for the advancement of the _____ college district, where embarking on times when it is equally as important as the beginning. I think we need to credit that foundation after that, your guidance is instrumental. The continuity we've had over the years has been extremely important to deal with changing administrations every 30 minutes. and it makes a world of difference when you're trying to build an institution.

Dr. Anthony: And continuity within the Board too. Jim, you worked on the committee with Abernathy. I think that was on curriculum programs. As you reflect back, are there any issues or concerns that came out of those early meetings that you can reflect on. Everybody that I talked to was amazed at the number of participants of people.

There was a tremendous amount of participants. As I said, grass-roots level. I know as far as the group was concerned there was a great concern that it be the very best it possibly could offer and I think that that did happen was worth every bit of extra effort that went into it. Nobody was interested in having it a get-by kind of curriculum or anything else associated with the college. It was very important work that over the years has become evident that that was the philosophy. It wouldn't be having the accolades that it now has or that diligence at that point in time.

Dr. Anthony: Did you become involved actively in getting it passed?

I could say I served on the committee and I was active in trying to solicit the vote. My recollection was the response was outstanding as far as that's concerned and I think that was related to the back of the legislature and I think that that had a lot to do with even being able to get it cause that was not any outlook that there would be any community colleges in the state of Texas. As far as we were concerned, that was the last-dated effort to be sure that we were that final school. As it turned out I think there's been one or two.

Dr. Anthony: Just one in the last 15 years and that was of course South Texas.

And we might not have seen that had it not been for a lot of different factors, but it's, I would say, the things that come to my mind the most, the diligence as far as the early planning was concerned. The response of the citizens that wanted it to be a first class institution and were willing to fund what ever needed to be to get that accomplished. I think that has been one of the most meaningful factors in the growth of Collin County to have the institution that we could provide the people to go into the local workforce

whether it's a baccalaureate level later on or whether its just job training at a two year level and that's as you are involved in economic development issues you see that all the time.

Dr. Anthony: Jim did you give any thoughts earlier for running for the Board?

No, it never crossed my mind. Actually I'm not sure how I became interested in the foundation. I did at some point in time could have been when several of the people that I knew were serving and as I was able to see what was involved in the college – and to believe in the importance of the foundation I think in the importance of the foundation I think of this if nothing else a way of keeping the college in front of the people. I'm a firm believer in taking whatever means you can with as many of the citizens as possible can know about the college and that's one way to do it.

Dr. Anthony: I think you're leadership is cheer there, and I have nothing to gain by this, but your leadership is cheer. It took us to another plateau in that relation, and I think probably more than any you got our name on the book not only statewide but locally.

What I observed when I came on board was there were men and women coming in four times a year and sitting around the table and weren't getting anything accomplished and my time was more valuable. Tried to make it into something that would be meaningful and as far as I was concerned or I wouldn't be there and fortunately with the help of a lot of good people, staff-wise, board members, we were able to see how important it was and other board members could see that so when they were not willing to just come in and be a token board, and that was what it was at that point in time. I think there just wasn't a clear understanding of what their role was in the early stages. You have to go back and understand that in the early stages maybe it's a time to really understand what your role is and perhaps that just took a while to – just coincidences, my time came along... it was obvious at that point in time I think it served a good purpose and are being able to

influence colleges all over the state. State-wide perception is good and beneficial to other schools.

Dr. Anthony: Jim, as you reflect back is there anything you want me to make sure that I put in this book? Any event, any individuals, any credit, issues you think I ought to put in there?

More observation than anything else, and this goes back to just the plastic service the college provides. I think the first time that I realized that the foundation that \$100 or \$200 scholarship which wouldn't necessarily been much of anything financially to you and I. That is to particularly some person who's just gone through some traumatic death in his/her life and does not have the money to go to school and needs to prepare themselves totally for life's work and what the college can do and what the foundation can do to help has been a most meaningful thing... that made it easy for me to go and spend my time and try to do whatever I possibly could to see... That certainly is not the only story that you're involved with but it's a very important aspect, and it also point what I viewed the most important thing that the community college system is that you can respond and they can almost turn on a dime. Where a university system takes long. So you can change with what your needs are at the time and it's ever-changing, I know it's changing daily. But I think just to be able to visually see the type of help you can provide and what part the college can play in people's lives.

Dr. Anthony: Anybody you think I ought to be talking to that I haven't, any name come to mind?

I think I've mentioned everybody and I know there, just from the sheer amount of people that were involved in it, I'm sure there must be others.

(chit-chat previously transcribed).....