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Dr. Anthony and Jim Dickson – Interview July 24, 2000

Dr. Anthony – thanks for all the nice compliments --- Jean

Dr. Anthony: Back on the topic, you actually ran from Farmersville but it was my understanding that there was a slate of about 7 of you that ran as a group.

Yes and I'm not sure who was actually involved in putting that slate together. Of course _____ was the contact guy with me and of course this was my 1st venture in running for anything other than offices in associations and things like that. Somehow this just felt good – a way to contribute and give back to the areas – things had been good for me in Plano and the things I've been experiencing in Farmersville and - - to take education to another level in the county. As it turned out I think all but 1 of the slate – if I remember right – was elected.

Dr. Anthony: It was a good representation - -

I had been out of Plano for several years and didn't know how I would run coming in from a small town but I remember I ran very well I think.

Dr. Anthony: I think I have the results - -

But I guess name recognition from being in Plano all those years really helped.

Dr. Anthony: Was there much – I know as you look at voter's tally in a small town it was not expected that voter's would be as supportive as it was in Allen, McKinney or Plano.

Yeah, that's true. The basic reason, the really big part was that they didn't want new tax. They wanted to support education but they didn't feel _____ since on the North side there was Grayson and far East you had Commerce that was close. So there was some that didn't see the need. In fact most of the smaller communities were not favorable as I recall. But I think that was the reasons – that they were close enough to Dallas, Commerce and Denton that we don't need this at this point.

Dr. Anthony: Some indication from some people that we would become a Plano college.

Yeah, I think in fact everyone just thought it would be in Plano, and of course when it moved into McKinney that was a positive and I think it helped us on down the line in getting some of the construction and other things done.

Dr. Anthony: And as I recall one of my first speeches was to Farmersville Garden Club and I announced _____ and got a standing ovation.

I think establishing the campus in McKinney at the very first was a wise decision but we struggled with that. If the campus was not in McKinney the people thought Plano was no closer than any other institution.

Because Plano _____ people, would they come to McKinney and of course we made that _____ and then of course we'd get into that just as quickly as we can and looking back it was a good move in bringing the rest of the county along. Didn't have anyone out there throwing stones at us.

Dr. Anthony: **As you look back on those years, is there anything that really sticks out in your mind as being significant?**

Well, I think that – I personally believe that the Presidential search, no doubt about that, was the most important work that we did right after we got organized and what have you. Lot of good people that we looked at – after we looked at you – think we felt that you'd get things done more than some. Some of the others talked a good game. You had actually accomplished some things and did not get your hands dirty. I knew there had to be a lot of hands on involvement because there wasn't anything here. Needed from ground up. I know you hadn't really done that but felt that you had the equipment to do it. But I think that was a big move and I think establishing the McKinney campus was a significant decision then Spring Creek Campus right away – and up and running. Quality facilities and staff was probably the key thing. I think I appreciated the quality and professionalism that was there.

Dr. Anthony: **Did you serve as base Chair for the whole length - - -**

At one point we felt or rather I felt that Sue Olivier had done a lot of work and at that time she was the (?) only female at the start and I was Chair

for several years then I felt that it would be good to have Sue's involvement from Plano as an officer and I think I served as Treasurer at that point. I felt like (?it was going to carry us out of McKinney) and I felt like it was Plano – our biggest constituent and she was in contact with lots of people and Carey and I talked about it a little bit and we moved in that direction.

Dr. Anthony: Back in early years being a Board Member are there any decisions that come to mind that was tough for you? Were you involved in the decision to buy this campus or had you already left.

No, it had been (?bonded) and just started when I left. I really didn't have a problem with that. I thought it would be good – thought we needed in Western – North Western part of county. Didn't know how it would fly but I thought it was good. I guess the only one that I wasn't involved with was Preston Park, the CYC there. I felt like this was close to McKinney but I felt like the population could serve a different kind of clientele, purpose and hopefully that has happened.

Dr. Anthony: Projection that it would take off.

Especially since the push towards business and industry and trying to get them involved and to utilize it. The toughest decisions back earlier – you know I really enjoyed all of it. I feel real fortunate to not have a lot of financial dilemmas at that time, put budgets together and stay up with that. The community still supported – I guess that 2nd bond issue and it was just a pleasurable time for us and I feel like we contributed to something that

would grow into what it is today – success and serving the community. By all indications it still does that.

Dr. Anthony: Were you involved in the selection of the people that served with the Master Plan?

Yes, that's changed names a time or two but I think that was _____ and Associates and also group master planning , well I've drawn a blank on that – it's been so long.

Dr. Anthony: They really hit the nail on the head. I remember seeing the Master Plan and it was so in tune with the times.

They were a very professional group and they did their homework and built a quality situation.

Dr. Anthony: So as far as your concerned your time on the board was productive?

Oh yeah, not only productive as on the part of the college but it was personally satisfying. I probably grew a lot myself during that time. Of course by background is mostly on the finance side so and having been a school superintendent and in the education field – so I guess this all has been a unique experience for me and to see this go to the next level and see how I've contributed from that standpoint. I wouldn't trade those years for anything. It's probably one of the most rewarding things that I've ever done.

Dr. Anthony: I know your contribution – I'd love to have a superintendent with that kind of experience on the board because they bring a totally different prospective.

Some folks may think that's a disadvantage but the community didn't think that so at the time I guess – hopefully that I was productive. Having been in Plano for as long as I was then of course serving a smaller district, I was able to see how a community college in this environment could really help students coming right out of high school as well as the need for teachers and regular individuals to benefit from continuing education and those types of things. Rewarding times – I wouldn't take anything for them.

Dr. Anthony: Any disappointments or (?glips) that you can look back on?

We were going so fast during the time that I was on the board that I don't remember any (?glips) or anything like that. I don't remember any "pot holes" or anything. Cause we had to charge ahead and if we made some mistakes, I know they would come back to haunt us at this point. But I think we were moving so fast and having to do so much that I guess in a lot of ways we were very fortunate that the decisions that we made were the right ones, moving as fast as we had to move and that probably helped me as much professionally as anything. As just getting into supertendency and has helped me in Corsicana in having to move so fast has helped my thought process to move a little faster that it has in past. Bur of course coming out of Plano were constantly having to move ahead. Maybe that experienced has helped me with this in moving so fast – about 5 campuses in Plano then and

there were about 33 when I left. So during that time I was serving in that district in all different capacities and that benefited me when I got on the board.

Dr. Anthony: Any characters you ran across that you'd like in the history other than Bill Crawford who - - - -

Laugh – Oh shoot, well let's see, well our board stayed pretty much together most of the time except Bill coming on there toward the end when I left. He was good, he was – had to stop and think about the board – almost get too close once in awhile – need someone to stop and question and I think he did that. Glenn did that some – I think that's good that you have those checks and balances. Even if there were differences of opinions with members – we were still able to work together as a team and left it there in the boardroom and went on.

Dr. Anthony: Not any special interests?

No not any that I recall at all. This is what we have to do and got to get it done. We all have our own personal ideas about it but we came out of this collectively with the best decision and then go on. I don't recall ever a time that we were really crossways with the board.

Dr. Anthony: No, I think Carey really did a very good job in keeping --
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We were kept informed – maybe just the right mix at the right time.

Dr. Anthony: Jim as I write this history is there anything that you want to make sure that I get in there?

I guess the biggest thing is the citizens group that really got this thing up and going – the “Committee of 100” or whatever they called themselves. A lot of credit needs to go to those individuals and the leadership of that group and _____ of legislature _____. Those folks had a vision and I think they deserve a lot of credit. Some of us were fortunate enough to be elected to serve on the Board and I think that Board as a whole was dedicated in carrying out the wishes of that group and stayed in touch with individuals out of that group to make sure that their vision was implemented. I want to make sure that those individuals in those communities are given credit.

Dr. Anthony: I’m going to talk with all co-chairs of those committees.

I think they need some real credit and they’ve put in a lot of hard work and the founding board had a great time. It was not only a service to the community but it was personally rewarding and we felt it was not only making a contribution to young people but to the citizens really of Collin County and the surrounding area. To the citizens that didn’t have the opportunity to receive training and take a step toward further education if that’s what they wanted. Re-training and services to businesses and I think that was the approach we took. To enable citizens to keep the life long learning going of high quality education available and I think that’s been accomplished.

Dr. Anthony: Jim thanks and I appreciate it.

You bet.