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Jim Edwards

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Recommended Citation

Anthony, John Dr., "Jim Edwards" (2000). *John Anthony Collection Interviews*. 20.
https://digitalcommons.collin.edu/anthony_interviews/20

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-----In David McCalls old building - guess its called sort of a conference room. The group that put that meeting together, I guess was the folks that wanted to find out how interested they might be and might focus on that concept and obviously my background in higher education appealed to them. I wondered why it was taking so long to address that as a county. But that's kinda how it started and we began to formulate a structure and identify leadership that could work on that structure and obviously try to develop a very broad base to bet people involved from all walks of life – government, business, education – all the citizens.

Dr. Anthony: Now were you there at the time -- - --

No, I was actually out of the mayor's office but I'm sure I was part of it and had been in that elected role and had been in Higher Education at that time for 20 – 25 years.

Dr. Anthony: So, what's your background in Higher Education?

Well, o.k. other than education, I came from Western Kentucky University and graduate work at Indiana.

Dr. Anthony: Was it Hill Toppers?

Yeah, Hill Toppers – Graduate work at I.U. and _____ at Michigan State in Business and Economics and except for the University of Virginia where I first taught in the mid-sixties everything I've done has been in private sector. I cam to Texas in '68, TCU as a very young department chairman in accounting and moved to SMU few years later and stayed there for 8 years and again started in accounting but directed the _____ program and most of the time teaching finance and business and accounting but getting bored with accounting. Some people describe accountants as boring.

Dr. Anthony: My background began in accounting.

Seemed like I picked that up some where along the line – then I sorta took on the reputation of being able to fix financially troubled institutions and at that time there were a few ----- Dallas Baptist College. Every time you saw an article in the paper it was referring to financially troubled Dallas Baptist College as part of their name. So I went there in 1980 – after the years at SMU – I went there as a financial vice president and wound up there as academic vice president and war there four years then after that I went to Southern Baptist Radio and Television (??) We were launching a cable network at the time, Interdenominational network so I learned just enough to keep that place afloat for 4 years, which became a national cable network, family orientated network. Then I went back into higher education and interviewed for some presidency positions several times, there again primarily in the private sector. Then went back to Union Tennessee. My wife and I are both from Kentucky so we thought we'd get back to our roots. We stayed at Union as academic vice president for 2 years then I thought I'd done enough in higher education. I'd been in accounting, antique business – very diverse background then I wound up as a consultant to a bankrupt college in Mississippi and they needed a president to bad that they finally talked me into it and I stayed there 8 years (William Carey College) then came back here. One of the challenges there and your familiar with, as college president, was they had 3 campuses and all with different missions – one in Hattisburg, So Mississippi, campus in New Orleans. All of them struggling with different problems. Pre-nursing program, then a little bitty campus in Gulfport, that again was a totally different mission down there. I took all 3 and gradually pulled them back to financial stability. We have ties in Texas now in late 60's. Our 2 oldest children are here and grandchildren are here so we decided to come back here and do some other things---

Dr. Anthony: Did you know Gary Cooker (??)

Yes, Ann (?) was academic vice president when my oldest daughter graduated from BPU (?) and when Gary went in _____ in 1987. I was one of those fortunate people who

weren't chosen and Gary was. That was a good choice for them because Gary has done such a great job.

Dr. Anthony: Yes, he has – great relationship.

He's class A – really a class person and I guess you've probably had some _____ and with his work in downtown Dallas.

Dr. Anthony: He's talked with me on several occasions regarding a position – could just never get a fit.

(More discussion regarding his work experience.)

Dr. Anthony: So you went to the meeting at McCall's – so that was your first contact?

Right

Dr. Anthony: Then you took on chairman's role of building committee?

Well building and curriculum – Those 2 were kinda tied together.

Dr. Anthony: What were some of the things that you talked about? What were some of the things that you discussed?

We obviously addressed what were the existing projected teacher needs of the entire county and how diverse they might be given the fact that in 1980's Collin County was heavily agricultural or rural but the tax base and the technology base being in this part of the County or in Plano and try to project what we thought some of the future was going to be educationally, economically and what might work in some locations and could be build on differently in other locations and did a lot of research on _____ I didn't have

a lot of experience in Junior Colleges but had a high regard for their role. So I looked at the Florida system. I looked at California, Arizona, New York and a couple of other states and said O.K. what are they doing in metropolitan areas or what is the role that they have as primarily would fit our institutions and what are they doing on emerging programs in regard to industry and how is industry going to change. At that time and the city was really coming to grips with the legacy development. Our role was to focus on economic development, business development and transportation. And so Collin Creek Mall opened shortly after I was mayor so I didn't have anything to do with that but the whole legacy negotiation – toll way quarter (?) extension – State Hwy 190 – I was like Rom Harris on (??) council and looking to see what all was to happen from a business standpoint and in population – what kind of role could a community college play. Just how that may evolve over time so that was my summary (_____) my approach to the data base and obviously that drove decisions – where the campus's should be – what kind of central administration function could make that work. And that it should start in McKinney for all kinds of reasons. That was center of the county. It is county seat – it was community that was going to be larger than Plano someday and consequently that had to be where we should start but obviously Plano was going to provide the major part of the tax. The East Plano location obviously fit Allen, Wylie and that area and it was a matter ultimately defining what would happen up in this area. Frisco and McKinney will be larger than Plano at some point. It's been exciting to watch.

Dr. Anthony: It's unbelievable isn't it – in driving down Preston Road. I've never ceased to be amazed, there's been a study done – a master plan which identified the various campuses and I'm still trying to find out about it – to give someone credit for doing that. It was masterful because I've never seen anything so accurate in my life to predict population, demographics in planning where the campuses were going to be and what was going to happen – 15 years ago, to hit the nail on the head like a crystal ball. Were you in that?

That was primarily Doug Cargo – with all due respect it really was. A lot of people were involved in that decision of where the campuses were to go but actually Doug Cargo identified those locations.

Dr. Anthony: I can't think of anything more important at that time than developing that because that was so viable in the first year, year one-half, the struggle with growth.

Well you had the right kind of trustees and

Dr. Anthony: Yes we did and still do.

Absolutely and that also was a process to take credit for – that group – cause when you think about it coming from the outside – going to the polls – voting to create the entity, tax rate, bonding authority, bond issue and the people that were going to start running it. It was a pretty incredible thing to happen. I'll say this to you – I don't know whether I've ever said this to anyone else – I probably got more satisfaction out of that than anything that happened even while I was mayor although I had some incredible things that happened when I was mayor and I feel that I accomplished a lot while I was mayor. But seeing that come together with me being an educator – seeing an entire county and region come together and what they could be then of course there was trying to find someone to start all of this up who had your stature and abilities, was exciting for everyone and especially for me was very satisfying - - -

Dr. Anthony: Now Bill Roberts and Jerry Hoagland have said the same thing. I did not realize of course coming in after all that groundwork was done and I just hadn't realized how tough it was to get that thing approved by the state. The county commissioners weren't to overly enthusiast about it were they?

Well, there were some of the people who didn't see the need or the immediate need so there was no question of having opposition – probably 2 out of 4 opposed it. The Judge

and Hoagland would take the primary initiative and I would guess Howard and Hatcher were 2 swing people that were still involved with campus (??) board.

Dr. Anthony: Howard made a statement regarding that he was tired of paying out-of-district tuition for his daughter and of course the rest is history.

Right – right

Dr. Anthony: On your meetings – was there much controversy?

No, not really. I think most people saw that yes there are those kinds of needs. Meetings were well publicized and pretty well attended. We weren't going to try to do all that we need to do at once – take it one step at a time and be pretty conservative with out tax base. Obviously those needs are going to evolve – medical side, public safety side, and technology side. There was something there in one sense for everybody. Everyone could relate to medical, public safety maybe not as many could relate to technology. I feel that the role for the community college has done very well.

Dr. Anthony: Did _____ chairs, board of trustees ever cross your mind or were you not interested? Some of the people who were involved I never knew and some I hadn't met till interviews. They had instrumental roles. Then as soon as the college was established, I never saw them.

Sure it crossed my mind but it wasn't something I entertained seriously and let me give you an analogy that Judge Roberts couldn't relate to – when I first became mayor I was very politically naïve but I had learned how to work the grass roots political process and the smartest thing to do was pay attention to people like David Griffin and Bill Roberts who are the closest parallel to what we did with the community college - was the tax appraisal district. Creating how tax rates were going to be collected in Blue Ridge, Royce City, Allen, Frisco and etc. David Griffin and Wayne Henry and 3 or 4 other people led all of us who were the political types thru that process and they knew when to

give to that group who could sabotage it and when to keep a certain degree of control in Plano and Southern part of the county. _____ in initial process was in setting up the board - - - they gave more of the control away than anyone would ever have dreamed and it worked like a charm. When you started looking at what kind of people can provide leadership – some of us said no and let's face it – I was mayor for 2 years, a persona that some people followed and were very supportive - I also had some political negatives that have carried straight into a new group and my standpoint even though in balance I think it would have been very positive. I wouldn't think of doing that to the group. I guess the closest person to that original group – probably two would have been Sue Olivier and Bob Collins – both of them are people with very high integrity – very much into public service roll and so they were naturals for that even though both had their detractors and they were in for the right reasons and with Collins having made the shift in where he lived, it was just perfect and when we're finished, I'll tell you a story or 2 about Bob. I haven't seen Bob for 15 years. The stories I can tell you, I don't want on tape.

Dr. Anthony: I'll tell you one or two too. I saw Bob last week – played golf with him.

Did you?

Dr. Anthony: He's retired and doing well – Sue's got some health problems

Is Bob teaching?

Dr. Anthony: Yes at A & M College – a couple of business classes.

Anyway, that's really a long answer for that but no I really never seriously considered myself for that. There were people like Tino and Carey Cox, folks like that who were so much better choices as far as I was concerned.

Dr. Anthony: That made my 15 years very easy, very productive. Jim as I write this book, is there anything that you would like to go into the book? That you can reflect back on?

I would just say that the timing was right in the Collin County for a group of citizens to come forward and put together a plan that would serve future generations and do it in a way that there was no question about what it needed to be and what it could be – how it could substantially invite the quality of life into this county and this region and that’s what should happen in that whole process from my standpoint it was a group of people very unselfishly put the broader side of _____ way out front and never lost site of that.

Dr. Anthony: As you look back – has that been accomplished to some degree?

Incredibly so – absolutely incredibly so. In fact you’ll get a chuckle out of this - - - in working in country properties and a little bit of development work and trying to stay out of Collin county while I do it - - - in fact I took my real estate courses down here on Preston Road – and the quality of people that are there are first rate – choosing shaping that program. Mary and Pat Banta –

Dr. Anthony: Two good ladies.

Mary and Pat Banta and Rich Frasco who is incredible in law. I worked with Rich and so I see some of the fruits almost daily that they’re all quality people and they relate to students extremely well and they have the professional integrity that you want them to have and they are all working for far less than they could be if they were working in “hands on” real estate. But they’re doing it for the greater good and I guess that’s the thrilling part from my standpoint.

I think all of this is because of you – I think anyone could have come in with a certain set of credentials and a certain set of experiences and done a reasonably good job but to go

where I think the college has gone and beyond the next level and the next level and beyond that because of your efforts and leadership is what I've been thrilled about and to see all this. I commend you and the board and now Dr. Israel. And I won't wait so long to meet him.

Dr. Anthony: Don't, he's a good guy. Joe I appreciate your time and comments and now for your earlier comments.

I kinda forgot - - -