

**Oral Memoirs**

**of**

**Gary Smith**

An Interview  
Conducted by  
Clinton M. Thompson  
May 10, 2017

Development of the Tulsa Medical College:  
An Oral History Project

Schusterman Library  
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## **Interview History**

The recording(s) and transcript(s) of the interview(s) were processed at the Schusterman Library, University of Oklahoma, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

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## **Collection/Project Detail**

The Development of the Tulsa Medical College Project was conducted by the Schusterman Library at the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa from January 2016 to June 2018. The project focused on the development of the Tulsa Medical College, which later became the OU-TU School of Community Medicine. The project consisted of 28 interviews with former and current employees of the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa.

Gary Smith served the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center in various roles, including Director of Internal Audits, Vice President of Administration and Finance.

Clinton M. Thompson was the first Director of the Tulsa Medical College Library and went on to become the Director of the Robert M. Bird Health Sciences Library at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

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Gary Smith  
Oral History Memoir  
Interview Number 1

Interviewed by Clinton M. Thompson  
May 10, 2017  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Also present: Mr. Smith's wife, Jan; Mike Lapolla; and Leeland Alexander

Development of the Tulsa Medical College: An Oral History Project

THOMPSON: Today is May 10, 2017. Would you like to introduce yourself?

SMITH: My name is Gary Smith.

THOMPSON: Would you like to talk about your career—your educational career and then into your professional career.

SMITH: Sure. I graduated from the University of Central Oklahoma, which back then was the—I don't know what they called it back then, but anyway, they finally recognized them as a university. I started—I was working in Norman—so, I started my master's degree, but didn't finish it when I moved to the Health Science Center because there just wasn't enough time to do that, so I couldn't finish it. How I got into the business area is I, after my first two years of college, I know my dad told me, said, "I've helped you do all of this, but you need to figure out what you're going to do because I can't afford to send you to school beyond much more than four years." So, I sit down and I looked at all the courses I had taken, and I looked at the one area where I had the most credit hours, and it was in the field of business. So, I got a degree in business administration with minors in management and English. And that's basically, you know, the education side of what I was able to do.

THOMPSON: Okay. What—where did your career start then?

SMITH: Well, I got into sales right after I graduated and decided that I didn't like that. So, I, there was, I read an ad, or, no, I went to a personnel agency and they had a job opening at the University of Oklahoma in Norman for an auditor. So, I interviewed there and got the job as an auditor and then after two or three years there, they moved the guy who was over auditing to the Health Sciences Center, and so I got his job as director of internal audits. And that's when I started getting involved, actually when I was director of auditing, I began to spend a lot of time

on the Oklahoma City Campus because there was just so many things going on. I think you have to, you kind of have to look at the backdrop of what all was going on to understand how that all fits together.

In 1970 or so there was a major financial crisis at the University Hospital. At that time, the University Hospital was governed by the State, by the Oklahoma State Regents—not the Oklahoma State Regents, by the University of Oklahoma Regents. And they were running, they ran out of money and the University of Oklahoma Regents got involved. And I remember distinctly there was this big meeting on the campus and it was full of people, and one of the Regents got up and kind of a belligerent way said, “These doctors up here are making all of this money and the hospitals are going broke; and so what we want to do is we want to do something to where some of that money’s going to come over to run this hospital.” So, they worked out a policy, which—I lost my train of thought—. They developed a policy whereas the foundation—they had a foundation up there that had all the grants and contracts; it was a private foundation. Of course, all the research grants were run through that foundation. And then they had the University Hospital, which the Oklahoma Regents were over. And then the doctors had kind of their own individual practice, and they were doing their own billing and collecting and so nobody really knew what all they had in their accounts or anything like that because none of that money was coming into the University. So, they set up a policy, which they basically say we’re going to dissolve the research foundation and move all those research grants into under the State Regents—I keep saying State Regents—under the OU Regents. And then they—I quite often lose my train of thought.

THOMPSON: You’re fine, sir; don’t worry about it.

SMITH: But, then they set about putting together what was called a Professional Practice Plan. And that’s where all the doctors—oh, and they mandated that the University in Oklahoma City would develop a plan for putting together a system where all the billing and collecting would be done centrally and in the midst of all that—as I was spending a lot of time on the Oklahoma City campus in around the early seventies, and things became so chaotic during these changes that, I mean, there was something going on all the time and it wasn’t all good. There was no organizational structure. They put a—and all the administration at that time reported to the Ok—to Norman. So, in my capacity as, when I became, I started out as director of financial services, I actually reported to a counter-part in Norman; and the Human Resources office reported to Norman, all the administrative functions reported to Tulsa, I mean to Oklahoma City, not to Oklahoma City, to Norman. So, they wanted us to run the Health Sciences Center like all the Norman campus was doing and nothing fit. I mean, we didn’t have so many credit hours; we didn’t have systems. To justify their purchase in Norman of this big new computer, an IBM computer, they said the Health Science Center’s going to have to go underneath, under that computer system. And nothing worked. I remember when we did a budget and the system was

set up very quickly and we had these print outs of all the people's names and all that, half of those things we went in and finished on a typewriter because the system couldn't handle it. So, needless to say that was not a very pleasant experience.

It was during that time that the Tulsa Medical College was established in 1972. And so, I was supposedly responsible for helping get the administration started and the systems going. So, that's when Leeland was hired. And I don't remember who hired you, but I think—

ALEXANDER: The dean of the College of Medicine.

SMITH: The dean of the College of Medicine. I remember interviewing you and there was a guy that they sent up there before Thurman came, and his name was Harold Zalin. And I think, Leeland, you ought to remember him because you couldn't stand him. He was a terrible administrator. And the main reason they moved me up there and they removed the director of financial services and they removed the—they kept the administration still under the guy from, the vice president at Norman. When Bill came in, Bill Thurman came in, he learned very quickly that if you don't control the money, you don't control anything. And so I think he pretty well told the Regents that he wanted total control of all the administrative functions as well as the academic and fiscal structure, and that was granted. So, during that period of time I became, at some point at a later time, I was, became the vice president of administration and finance at the Health Science Center where I worked until I retired. In Tulsa there was so many things going on back then that it's hard to remember all of them. I mean, there was just something all the time. I remember that we, for some reason, we were coming over to Tulsa, I guess Leeland to work with you in setting up a lot of the administrative functions and then—let's see what I was thinking about then? I'll tell you my brain is just not working right.

ALEXANDER: Gary.

THOMPSON: You're all right.

ALEXANDER: Gary, you came over at least once a week if not more than that. I came down there once or twice a week also as we were starting.

SMITH: That's right, yeah, Leeland. And then when Bill Thurman, as far as the Tulsa Medical College, that was his baby, and we never, nobody besides Bill actually had a whole lot to do with Tulsa except in some of the just administrative tasks, you know, accounting, management, HR, and all of that stuff. So, when we were trying to figure out where we were going to put them, and they started out leasing space in an office building and had the administration there. And then they had affiliations that they established with the hospitals in Tulsa. Hillcrest was a big player, St. Francis. So, they would conduct their clinical training through there. And also for the first

two years, all the students would do their basic sciences at Norman—no, at Oklahoma City; and then for the next two years their clinical work and the residency program was conducted in Tulsa. So, we begin to try to find a place to put the health sciences center up here, to find a place where we could bring things together. And that's when, as I recall, Billy James Hargis was an evangelist here in Tulsa and he had got—there was a big scandal, and anyway, they had a campus there and so he was out of it, and I think a Baptist church bought that campus. Well, somehow or another we got to looking at that. And Lloyd Rader was very close to Bill Thurman, and Lloyd Rader and Bill Thurman came over here and we looked at this place and thought that would be a good place for the main campus to be. So, Lloyd Rader, as I recall, they had a lot of money back then and he helped do the work on the campus over here. And I remember when we were going about trying to buy the campus, we had a meeting with the Baptist church officials. I can still remember us—I think it was Leeland and David Walters and me. We had this strategy where we were going to go in there and we were going to low ball this thing and we were going to put it on them and walk out with that campus. Well, so we had a big meeting with a round table, and they had several of their people there. I tell you what, by the time we were finished, they not only got what they wanted, they got even more than that! So, we did not do as well—you know, we thought we were real good negotiators, but I'm telling you, those boys, they just out did us for sure. A lot of construction went on and they were able to move a lot of the administrative areas and the doctors' offices all in one area, and the campus developed over a period of time. And I guess it was from there that the campus here—from there they moved here and developed the campus here. Now, that's really about—I mean, there's a lot of other things going on, but that's the one thing, that negotiation with the Baptist church was one thing that stuck in my mind all these years. But—can you think of anything that might trigger my response?

THOMPSON: Well, let me ask you a question.

SMITH: Yeah.

THOMPSON: Because we haven't had access to people who were in Oklahoma City as the legislation was passing to create Tulsa Medical College. Do you have any inclination about those interactions and what Oklahoma City's reactions were to the legislature passing the bill in 1972 to create the Tulsa campus and how Oklahoma City was looking at that at that point in time?

SMITH: I think, as I recall, Oklahoma City was not very enthused at all about coming over here. And, because the Dean of Medicine also was going to be the dean over here, as I recall. But they did not like it; they did not want things moved away from Oklahoma City. So, they fought it, but there was nothing they could do about it, you know, they had to, we had to develop it because of the legislation that was put in place. And I don't really know all the mechanics about—I don't remember what the—what all was generated, that came about, the legislation came about, I don't

remember why or who was involved in that legislation. Probably—well it was before Bill Thurman. So anyway, they were not overjoyed about the, about having to come over here even though they were going to be doing the clinical work over here. There was always something going on, Leeland, as I recall with the hospitals. There was always issues. We hired Mike, Mike Lapolla to basically come in and take over all the clinics and develop, you know, the clinics that we needed over here, and he did a wonderful job there. And Leeland and Mike and I, I think we worked very well together. And as time went on the Tulsa Medical College really just began to blossom and became, you know, where we are right now. But again, it wasn't that Oklahoma City wanted to come over here.

THOMPSON: One of the things that I picked up on during the interviews, and you slightly tapped the hammer on it just then, was is that it appeared to me during these interviews that people were selected to work up here and then pretty well not micro-managed at all, pretty well turned over to them to do the work that needed to be done and was truly just kind of supervised. Was that your impression? And it sounds to me as if that's how you handled the administration side of the house as well.

SMITH: Right.

THOMPSON: I mean, I've heard this on the clinical, on the faculty side, but I'm assuming that that also—

SMITH: Well, on the administrative side, Leeland pretty well took care of all that, Leeland and Mike, took care of all the administrative functions over here. I would come over and occasionally we would get together and meet, and if there were big issues that affected them we would work on those, but Leeland and Mike pretty well had free reign. I mean, I certainly wasn't breathing down their neck on anything I can remember; they always just took care of everything and developed good relationships with the hospitals. And Leeland probably, and Mike, knew there was a lot of thorny issues always between hospitals over here and the Tulsa Medical College. But they worked through all of those. Now they have this beautiful campus here and everything is running like a well-oiled machine, isn't it?

THOMPSON: People in your offices in Oklahoma City that you remember during that period of time that were working with people in Tulsa? Any of those come out?

SMITH: Well, one thing about when we were connected to Oklahoma City, in addition to them, it got so bad up there that they removed, as I said, they removed the director of business affairs, and they also removed the HR person because she was terrible, and she hired the guy that'd be on campus, and the doctors weren't getting paid on time and hiring somebody was just a major, major issue. So, that's when Bill Thurman came in. He split up all of that, and we then had our



own HR person, our own financial side of things, all administrative functions came under him. Bill and I had, from my perspective, we had a very good working relationship. And Bill did some very good things. But then in 1980, '81, Bill took the job at OMRF (Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation), and so they needed a provost for the Health Sciences Center. Well, Lloyd Rader was involved in getting Don Halverstadt that interim position. And the idea was—Don had, you know, a thriving practice—and the idea was that he would come over there on an interim basis and working with Lloyd Rader on the buildings and stuff, and after a while they would hire a permanent provost. Funny thing about it is, that time went on, Don Halverstadt began to like the job so well that he wanted the position and he had a lot of support, but I think, what I've always heard kind of doomed his that is the fact that Joe Turner, who was the OU president's kind of right hand thought that there was too much, too cozy a relationship between Lloyd Rader's functions and the Tulsa Medical College, so Don did not get the job. And then I don't remember who came in after that, but—

THOMPSON: Dr. Rich.

SMITH: Huh?

THOMPSON: Dr. Rich.

SMITH: That's right, Clayton Rich came in. Clayton was a good guy to work with. He kind of left you alone and did a fairly good job. The Health Sciences Center is just, when looking at higher education, there's nothing like it in terms of just the function of higher education entities. It's nothing like a regular, normal university campus. They're just so different, and that's one of the reasons why Bill Thurman again insisted on having control over that, which was, in my case, was one of the best things that he was able to accomplish.

SMITH: Well, we were talking about—

ALEXANDER: We were talking about those accounts, the Practice Plan.

SMITH: Let me go back to what Leeland said about the meeting where we were negotiating the purchase of this campus from the Baptist church. I don't remember which Baptist church it was, but when we had that meeting I remember this now Leeland reminded me that we were to go in there and Leeland was going to open our negotiation with a prayer, and then they were going to have a prayer as well, and so after the prayer, and after we were holding hands, and we quit doing that, that's when they nailed us. They just totally nailed us. All of our bright ideas and strategy just went out the window. And also when Don Halverstadt was—Leeland re—I came over here quite a bit when Tulsa Medical College was first established, but when Don Halverstadt came in, I can't remember what all was going—what was going on at the time, but

Don Halverstadt and David Walters, who was associate provost, and me [sic], got on this little single-engine plane and flew over here. It seemed like we were over here about once a week at least, and I don't remember really what, I can't remember why we were doing it, why it was necessary for us to do that, but we spent a lot of time in the air.

ALEXANDER: We flew back and forth almost once a week, if not more.

SMITH: Yeah.

ALEXANDER: And the other thing was that Halverstadt was so close to Rader when we bought the campus from the church—we had no money and the campus looked terrible because it had not been kept up. They couldn't keep it up, that's why they sold it, and our faculty, all of our chairs, had voted not to move—Halverstadt brought Lloyd Rader over one Saturday morning and Lloyd Rader walked through every single room.

SMITH: I remember that.

ALEXANDER: Every single building. And that Monday morning I came to work, and here were all these men working. I had no idea who they worked for or what they were doing. I had no money to pay them. And they never, ever billed me.

SMITH: No, that's exactly right. He pretty well funded the whole development of that campus.

ALEXANDER: They put new roofs on, they re-painted, they put new carpets, took out walls, put walls in.

THOMPSON: Can I ask you about some people that were up here?

SMITH: Sure.

THOMPSON: Do you have any recollections of Dr. Fitzpatrick?

SMITH: Yes, um-hm. I mean, I don't think I had any, I don't remember having any dealings with him.

ALEXANDER: He was terminated shortly after Thurman came.

SMITH: Was he the interim?

ALEXANDER: Who?

SMITH: Fitzpatrick.

ALEXANDER: No, he was the dean.

SMITH: He was the dean of Medicine.

THOMPSON: And the reason I ask that was he came from Oklahoma City, and I thought you might have interacted with him before he actually—

SMITH: I don't remember. I could very well have, but I just—I don't remember.

ALEXANDER: They interviewed several candidates, apparently didn't have anyone they really liked. Dean Bird, who was the dean of the school then—

SMITH: Yes, Robert Bird.

ALEXANDER: Robert Bird. Very, very nice gentleman. Handpicked Dr. Fitzpatrick; they were friends; they were internists. Talked him into coming up and being the dean. I actually got here before Thurman; I mean before Fitzpatrick got here, but he was the dean, that was his title.

SMITH: Well, you were one of the first people we hired, weren't you Leeland?

ALEXANDER: I was, yeah.

SMITH: That was totally dedicated to the Tulsa campus.

ALEXANDER: And my biggest problem I had when we started was Harold Zalin.

SMITH: That's what I—I mention him because Gene Nordby was the vice president for administration and finance at the Norman Campus. And when all this came about and they established Tulsa and when they started having all these problems with the doctors, billing, and the hospitals, Gene Nordby said he was going to put somebody up here who was going to get these doctors in line, and so that's when he brought in Harold Zalin, who was working at Oklahoma State University on the faculty, but this guy was—he was a disaster. And some reason he got on Leeland's case, and I don't remember why but—.

ALEXANDER: When he—when we ordered, when we found office space up here, we leased space and we didn't have any furniture. So, we ordered all of our furniture, and I waited and waited and waited, and it was getting very close to when Fitzpatrick was going to be here, so I called the furniture store and said, you know, "How come you haven't delivered our furniture?"

And they said, “Well, there was never an order placed.” So, I drive down to Oklahoma City and sit [sic] down with Harold Zalin and he said, “I didn’t want to waste the University’s money. You’re not going to be there long enough.” That’s what he said to me.

SMITH: Yeah, I kind of remember that, Leeland.

ALEXANDER: I kind of remember that. And I had, I don’t know what made me do this, I got up and walked out of his office. He said, “Where you going?” I said, “I’m going to Norman. I’m going to go down and talk to the president, find out whether he’s going to have a medical school or not.” And about that time Nordby comes driving in and he said, “Where you going?” And I told him I was going down to—and he said, “Wait, wait, wait, wait. There’s been a terrible misunderstanding here. You go home, and by tomorrow morning I’ll call and tell you when your furniture is going to be delivered.” So, I drove back to Tulsa that night. Next morning he called and he said, “Look, Harold just kind of misstated a few things. I have ordered equipment and it will be there shortly.”

SMITH: Well, that’s easy to believe that that happened.

ALEXANDER: You know, security finally told Nordby that he had to leave campus; they couldn’t protect him.

SMITH: That may have been one of the reasons why he moved him out.

ALEXANDER: Yeah, he had death threats on him.

SMITH: I think he took Harold, moved Harold to Oklahoma City campus and gave him some meaningless job.

ALEXANDER: I think you mean Norman.

SMITH: Yeah.

ALEXANDER: Yeah, and that was a blessing for you and for us.

SMITH: But you know, I got along pretty well with him; I really did. But I think I may have been the only one that got along with him.

ALEXANDER: I think you were. If you got along with him, you were the only one.

SMITH: Because I remember his office was in one of those houses, and I remember several times when he would want to meet and we would meet over there and go clear into the evening, night.

ALEXANDER: His office was about three houses to the east of the faculty house.

SMITH: Yes, that's right.

ALEXANDER: And where he lived was across the street physically. He lived right in one of those houses.

SMITH: Well, we bought one of those houses and called it the Provost House and had it totally remodeled, and I think Rader did all the remodeling of that house. Yeah, and Zalin did live there for a while. Clayton lived there, too.

ALEXANDER: Clayton, that's right; I forgot about Clayton. But Nordby moved him back to Norman because, but Nordby just, I mean, he was very honest, he said, "Whatever you do, don't talk to the president."

SMITH: I don't really think Nordby cared if they were going to give the administration to Bill Thurman. I don't think they really cared at that point because he didn't have any interest in it.

ALEXANDER: He really didn't. He wanted to stay in Norman and that was it.

SMITH: Yeah. Interesting times back then. But Jan and I were trying to figure out, it's been thirty years since I was actually had anything to do with this campus. Thirty years ago. So, I can't even remember what happened a week ago, let alone—

ALEXANDER: But you can remember the Baptists.

SMITH: I can remember the—never will forget the Baptists. Are we still doing this? All right, I want to mention, too, I left OU in 1988, and I'd worked for OU for twenty years, including my time at Oklahoma City. So, they were looking for a new chancellor for higher education, and so they hired Hans Brisch as the chancellor. So, we were going to get a new president at Norman, I can't remember who it was, I don't—it wasn't, it wasn't, oh, the guy who's president now.

ALEXANDER: President Boren.

SMITH: It wasn't Boren. But I just thought this is an opportunity maybe just to go talk to him. So, I talked to Hans and we got along real well; and ended up, he gave me the job for all the

business and financial affairs and operations of the campus. And that was in 1988, and I stayed there twelve years and then I retired. I was beat up and beat down by that time. I mean, when we talk about Oklahoma City becoming involved, it was like they had rotary dial systems and there were no computers, and the same, so we got all that done and we were fairly, had quite a bit of technology back then. But when I went out to the State Regents, they were leasing a piece of equipment for the telephones that they probably paid for about fifty times. So, one of the things we did is we ended up going out and buying a new server thing. And then we started buying computers. They had one computer out there, and you had to dial, to get out on the line, you had to dial zero twice just to get out. So, it was like again, I thought, “Oh my god, what have I got myself into?” I just went through this, all this stuff, you know, for that many years at Tulsa, I mean at Oklahoma City, and then come out here and have all that start all over, and had just as many issues with the State Regents as we did at OU. I was just burnt out. I’ll tell you what burnt me out at Oklahoma City was the development of the OneNet system. I was involved in helping to design that system and sell it to the legislature and got some grant money to get that thing going, but it’s probably one of the best investments that the state of Oklahoma made in putting that system in.

THOMPSON: Would you like to mention anything about the Health Sciences Center, those seventeen some plus years that you worked there that stand out to you as being memorable or?

SMITH: I think overall it’s developed into one of the best medical facilities around. So, no, I don’t have—I have really good memories about Tulsa campus. Some of it was fun. And some of it wasn’t. But that’s just the way it is with any job.

THOMPSON: Your impressions, because we’ve not talked about that with anyone else, your comments about Dr. Rich’s involvement with Tulsa and how he handled the operation of the Tulsa campus in his early years in the administration?

SMITH: I think, as I recall, Clayton didn’t have much to do with Tulsa. He just let it go and [that was] probably good. He was not, I know in my job, I reported to him and he just left me alone and, which was fine with me, because he didn’t have any interest in a lot of that stuff.

THOMPSON: More interested in the academic side of the house than the administration side of the house.

SMITH: Yeah.

THOMPSON: It also may have been lucky for the rest of us—

SMITH: But I don't remember him having a whole lot to do with the academic side. He sat in his office and read a lot.

THOMPSON: Were there any other people up here that you remember that stood out, any of the faculty? Anybody beside Leeland and Mike?

SMITH: Oh, yes. Mike and Dan Duf—

LAPOLLA: Was it Dan Duffy?

SMITH: Dan Duffy.

LAPOLLA: Chair of Internal Medicine.

SMITH: Yes. There were several faculty members that stood out, I just don't remember names.

LAPOLLA: Probably Dan Plunket, Pediatrics.

SMITH: Yep, I remember Dan.

THOMPSON: Because he was the—

LAPOLLA: Because I think, you know, I think he was—was he an army friend of Thurman? Or pediatric friend of Thurman?

SMITH: Probably so.

THOMPSON: Their paths actually crossed at Tulane.

LAPOLLA: And I think he recruited him to come up here. Yeah. How about librarians in Tulsa? Were any of them worth a damn?

SMITH: No. We had one guy, name of Marty, I think.

LAPOLLA: He left pretty quick though.

SMITH: He went on to greener pastures.

THOMPSON: Any comments about Dr. Tomsovic? Because you would have dealt with him a few years and he was probably, in those early days, the most consistent dean on this campus.

SMITH: He was a good man.

LAPOLLA: Those were tough times because you're always, no matter what, your foundation was always quicksand. And sometimes quicksand was firm and sometimes it wasn't, but you knew it was quicksand. And I think until they got ahold of admissions up here the last couple years, they've kind of cut the cord now from Oklahoma City, but that admissions thing was always a—.

SMITH: This is looked on as a health sciences center at Tulsa, I mean, it has, I don't think there's very much, you all have very much to do with the Oklahoma City Health Sciences Center now. I don't know what relationships you have, so it's totally a free-standing health sciences center. Beautiful campus. I mean, this is really beautiful. This is the first time I've been here.

LAPOLLA: It's your first time here?

SMITH: Yeah.

LAPOLLA: What was your impressions when you drove on campus?

SMITH: I thought it was beautiful. And this library is just unbelievable.

LAPOLLA: Did you think back to the Ranch Acres Medical Building when Gabrielle had an office over there?

SMITH: I forgot about that. Gabrielle was really involved in the—in the Health Science Center at Tulsa.

THOMPSON: Yes, we interviewed her while we were in Washington as well because she took us back about as far back as we could go with the Tulsa Medical Education Foundation.

LAPOLLA: Gary, when you were with the State Regents, did you kind of keep track of Tulsa out of the corner of the eye—

SMITH: No.

LAPOLLA: —or was it just not part of your deal?

SMITH: I think I remember, too, that when we—one of my jobs was to determine—to figure out how much, how we were going to split up the money. The legislature had to give us the money; they couldn't tell us what to do with it. So, we had to develop, you know, what all we were going



to do. As I recall, for a long time, the money went to Norman and they then decided how much was going to come up here. And that got fixed. I don't know if that got fixed before I left or not, it may have, where then the appropriation came directly to your—I forget what we call them, some kind of agency.

LAPOLLA: Line item.

SMITH: Yeah.

LAPOLLA: Line item appropriation.

SMITH: Yeah.

LAPOLLA: God, when did that happen? Leeland would know.

THOMPSON: Yeah.

LAPOLLA: Maybe the eighties.

SMITH: There was a lot of friction when the decisions were made in Oklahoma City about how the money was going to be allocated up here.

LAPOLLA: I think the line item happened fairly soon. The Oklahoma City campus always had this deal where they charged back stuff to you, you know, payroll this and this and that and before you know it you're being nickel and dimed to oblivion.

THOMPSON: Well, and it was always interesting because when I did governance—

LAPOLLA: You couldn't keep tuition, that's what it was.

THOMPSON: Couldn't keep tuition.

LAPOLLA: Campus couldn't keep tuition.

THOMPSON: When I did governance work with the faculty at the Health Sciences Center, it was funny to go to Norman and be involved in discussions because, much as I think Tulsa always thought Health Sciences Center pointed at them, if you were at the Health Sciences Center and you went to the Norman campus, there was always a finger pointing at you down there, and I can remember being in a meeting one time and [the] finger being pointed at the Health Sciences Center about money, line items and those kind of things, and my comment was,

“Oh, like the law school.” And people around the table looked up and went, “Oh, somebody who knows a little more about how the money is assigned after all because that was another one.”

SMITH: We call those constituent agencies and there was [sic] twenty-some universities, but I don't know how many constituent agencies there was, which, you know, got money directly as well, but they were always connected to one of the universities; they had a line item.

THOMPSON: Since we're going to interview Mark this afternoon, when did Mark show up in the picture for you at the Health Sciences Center?

SMITH: When they moved, when I, when they moved me over to being director of financial services, I don't remember if there was an auditor there at that time or not, but Mark came in before I—he was there when I was there for a while, too. He'll tell you he doesn't know anything about it, and he really, Mark didn't have much of a—he didn't have much of a connection with Tulsa.

THOMPSON: I always remember him because I dealt with him and you at the Health Sciences Center, and so, you know, to me that, the two of you were the Health Sciences Center as far as—

SMITH: Well, he became head of internal auditing.

THOMPSON: That's also I think very interesting that many of the people in administration and finance at the Health Sciences Center started out in the auditing and worked their way. You know, I think that's an interesting, you know, that not a lot of people I don't think would see that, but that seemed to be a natural trail for many years, especially in the first, you know, from about 1976 into maybe the early nineties, that was a pretty steady trail of administrative folk coming out of that auditing trail, either at Norman or at the Health Sciences Center even.

LAPOLLA: Who took over auditing after Mark? I can see his face.

SMITH: Gosh, I don't remember.

THOMPSON: Was that the pilot?

SMITH: No.

THOMPSON: Was he later?

LAPOLLA: I can't remember. What I remember was—this is my story—the University would let you waste ten million dollars, but by god you better account for every penny in the petty cash

account. I mean, petty cash was a mortal sin. They came up and interviewed—I had a little petty cash account, \$250 a month—and they came up just to audit the petty cash account. And they called me in and they thought they were going to send me to prison. They started down the list. “Why are you buying hairspray?” They figured I had a girlfriend or something, you know. I said, “Well, you know, we use hairspray to fix pap smears on slides. It’s just easier to buy some hairspray for the nurses.” “Why are you buying orange juice?” “Well, you know we have diabetics out there, you know, sometimes they go into, so we load them up, we always want to have a quart of orange juice available.” They just go right down the list. They thought I was Billy James Hargis. Then they finally left me alone.

THOMPSON: I figured I was going to end up in his office when they did the first internal audit at the Health Sciences Center, because I was still pretty spunky, you know, had been up here and had lived a life of \_\_\_\_\_ (??) and wasn’t used to having people with their thumb on top of me like they were in Oklahoma City. And the auditors came in and I admit there were some issues and problems. I mean, the library was still collecting their overdue money in a cigarette box. I mean, there were things that needed to be changed. I didn’t mind the advice and them coming in, but they got onto me about my photocopy charges, and I mean, and then they were making insinuations about what the staff were doing, and you know, that kind of led and got down to the end, and that Tulsa influence just came out at the end of it, and I said, “Guys,” I said, “if I wanted to be driving a Cadillac and living in Nichols Hills, I’d own photocopy Xerox shops, I would not be running a photocopy center in a library, in an academic institution.” I knew I was going to end up in his office, because they were less than happy with me as they left my office that day. They were not happy, but I thought come on guys.

SMITH: Are you going to interview Mark at 11:30?

THOMPSON: No, after we come back from lunch.

SMITH: Oh, okay.

LAPOLLA: But you know Gary, you say the people up here were kind of left alone? Well, yeah, to a point, but people up here needed to know that there was somebody in Oklahoma City that had their back when it got real bad. And knowing that you were there and Thurman was there, well, we had more than one general meeting up here where Leeland and I were just figuring out where to go for the unemployment check. You know, and you guys came in and calmed it down and told them to get off our back and we moved on down the road. That was important, you know, you just, leaving somebody alone is one thing, but convincing them that you’re supportive is more valuable.

SMITH: Well, this Tulsa Medical College was Bill Thurman's baby. I mean, he put so much time and effort into it.

LAPOLLA: It was just high voltage every damn day because you didn't know who the hell you were talking to. You know, somebody's screaming at you on the phone, you've never heard their name in your life, and you don't know what to do. Because we were, I told people we were building the airplane as we were taxiing down the runway, you know, we were trying to figure out how to do this, because no one knew how to do it.

THOMPSON: Well, and I think in the interviews that we've had—that's the reason I asked you that question a while ago—and there was a different atmosphere from here and on the Health Sciences Center Campus when I moved down there, but it's been very obvious, and then when you interview these people that were involved in those early days, the places that they went or the level of expertise or level of respect that they gained in their profession was an interesting collection of individuals here. You know, you look at Duffy who goes to the Academy of Medicine for many years, well respected in the United States. You know, Bob Block—

SMITH: Yeah, Bob Block, I remember him.

THOMPSON: —who is one of probably the grandfathers of child abuse and working between the medical profession and the justice system on those issues, you know, built some of the original models that are now used all over the United States, you know, there were some really interesting people who came out of here. And no telling what may have happened if Dr. Tomsovic hadn't died so abruptly at that point in time, so.

LAPOLLA: You know, Gary, you were one of, you're probably one of the few people that worked very closely with a person who eventually became governor of the state.

SMITH: David?

LAPOLLA: David Walters.

SMITH: Yeah.

LAPOLLA: And David was very instrumental in the negotiations—

SMITH: Oh, that's one thing I forgot to talk about because we were trying to figure out how we were going to pay for some of this stuff, and David had negotiated a deal with—I may be getting mixed up about whether it was the Health Science Center here or whether it was something in

Oklahoma City, but the bottom line was David had the financing lined up with First National Bank.

THOMPSON: Yes, that was the campus here.

SMITH: Was that here?

THOMPSON: Yes.

SMITH: Okay.

THOMPSON: That was the Sheridan Campus.

SMITH: Yes, and Don Halverstadt was the provost, acting provost. And David had it all lined out to where they were going to provide us the financing. Well, we, I think what happened was Lloyd Rader called the president of First National Bank—remember his name? Anyway, he called him and said no, he does not want that to be funded over in Tulsa; he doesn't want that. And so, we just about had given up. And he, David, took out on his own and put together a consortium of banks to do some of the financing and he got it done. So.

LAPOLLA: I think that was through the Tulsa Industrial Authority.

SMITH: Yeah.

LAPOLLA: That was kind of a dormant vehicle up here, and he figured out how to do that. Now that would have been, that would have been in the early eighties, and David was elected governor 1990.

THOMPSON: Yeah. There were only a few years between his tenure at the Health Sciences Center and his governorship.

LAPOLLA: And I forgot what he did in between. I don't know if he was doing that real estate, or?

THOMPSON: He was.

LAPOLLA: Real estate.

THOMPSON: He and his wife were doing the real estate business, which they still do.

SMITH: I saw him on, David, on television. They were interviewing him about, there was a big deal about this, I can't remember the name of the lake here in Oklahoma that Texas wants to buy water and they would pay a billion dollars a year for. And—

LAPOLLA: Sardis?

SMITH: It may be that. Because they get, I think, a lot of the run-off ends up in Texas anyway, but the legislature wouldn't hear to it, and David was pro letting them sell water to Texas for a billion dollars a year, that's what he said it would amount to, but I don't think that's going to happen. I don't know what they're going to do this year. They still haven't got a budget, they don't have consensus on anything and they're about to the end of—I mean, they're supposed to have all their bills filed in about a week I think. Or two weeks.

THOMPSON: I can't remember whether it's this Friday or next Friday. Next Friday. It has to be next Friday because it's the last Friday of the month.

SMITH: And the governor said if they don't have a budget plan by then she's going to call a special session, which they reported on the news would cost thirty thousand dollars a year—thirty thousand dollars not a year, thirty thousand dollars a day to bring all the legislators back in to work on this. But they've been getting off track as they always do on some little thing that doesn't have any worth to speak of and leaving this thing. I don't think you guys have much state money up here anymore.

LAPOLLA: I don't know what they have.

SMITH: They might still give you some, but—.

LAPOLLA: I remember when I was with Public Health, and that was six, seven, eight years ago, I think 11 percent of our budget came from—.

SMITH: Yeah. I think that's the way it is at Oklahoma City.

THOMPSON: Actually, what surprises me nowadays is that the University of Oklahoma in Norman is down to less than, I think, 20 percent of their money coming from the state.

LAPOLLA: They don't need it. They have so much money sloshing around.

THOMPSON: Well, but, I mean, you know, it always was the impression for health sciences centers to think their percentage was lower than any other academic institution, and now you see academic institutions getting into below the twenties, which to me is an unheard of.

SMITH: Well, they're not going, they're not going to consolidate any of the higher [education] institutions. That's not going to happen. The rural counties, they [will] kill that deal. And I can see why, you know, in some of those little towns, that college is the biggest thing they've got, brings in a lot of money. But I don't know what they're going to do.

LAPOLLA: You know, it's interesting you say that because that's precisely, in my opinion, why the Tulsa Medical College was created was to bring state money into Tulsa. They saw the medical care money going up and up and up, and they had all these poor people up here they couldn't pay for at the hospitals and they said, hell, let's get a medical school up here, get a whole bunch of state money. The whole purpose of a medical student was to be a pin number, you know, for the money. They didn't care about the medical students. They cared about the residents, but not the students. So, yeah, it all comes full circle.

SMITH: We've got two health sciences centers now, one at OSU and then the one here. They call it a health science center, I don't know what they do.

LAPOLLA: They call it a Center for Health Sciences.

SMITH: Oh, okay.

LAPOLLA: Gary, I was at the meeting. There was about four of us. That old guy, Tom Allen, god bless his soul, he said, "By god," he said, "you know, if they can have a health science center in Oklahoma City, we can have one here at OSU." I said, "Tom, you know, to be a health sciences center, you have to have at least one more college than medicine." So, they invented a master's program in forensic laboratory analysis or some ridiculous damn thing. And then he proposed it to be a health sciences center. And Boren had multiple strokes, you know, and so they negotiated just flipping the words so they'd be a Center for Health Sciences. I ought to write this down because I was—everybody is going to forget that. A Center for Health Sciences.

SMITH: A Center for Health Sciences.

LAPOLLA: OSU. A medical school and they had a forensic master's program.

THOMPSON: And what I love is the forensic medical program is a faculty member at the dentistry school in the Health Sciences Center, which just brings it around full circle, you know.

SMITH: Well, you don't have, you need a dental college up here.

THOMPSON: They got enough problems in Oklahoma City. Pulled the Pharmacy out.

PETERSON: Yeah.

THOMPSON: Pharmacy's pulled back, but that I think is probably more result of Texas expanding their pharmacy programs along the border. I think where there used to be none, there are now four, I think, if I remember correctly from talking to my pharmacy friends, now right along the Texas border, Oklahoma border, which has changed that population.

LAPOLLA: Gary, what did you remember about—Bill Thurman was at the Health Sciences Center probably for eight or nine years, and if you listen to everybody you would think it was forty-nine years because he did so many things. Do you remember the environment when he decided to go to OMRF? Because my sense was he was at OMRF but he still liked being provost and keeping track of things.

SMITH: I think that Bill had set a lot of things in motion here and then he went over to OMRF, and I think that he thought that he would still be involved in overseeing some of these projects that he put together and made some decisions. And then when Don Halverstadt became interim provost, as I recall, he kind of reversed almost all those decisions and became established as by god, he is the provost and he's going to run the thing, or acting provost.

LAPOLLA: Reversed the decisions in Oklahoma City, or Tulsa, or both?

SMITH: Huh?

LAPOLLA: He reversed the decisions in Oklahoma City, or Tulsa, or both?

SMITH: Both. That's when we were spending, he and David and I spent a lot of time flying back and forth to Tulsa. I don't remember all the details about that.

THOMPSON: A question on the Health Science Center side of the house, since I said I'd come back and ask you some questions about that—Dean Brown, your remembrances of him? Because he was the acting provost before—.

SMITH: Oh, Dentistry?

THOMPSON: Yes.

SMITH: Bill Brown?

THOMPSON: Yes.



SMITH: Yeah.

THOMPSON: Comments about him?

SMITH: He and I got along real well. I mean, when I first got moved up to the Health Sciences Center, he had some trip in San Francisco, some big convention deal, and he took me with him, but we had a good relationship and I really respected him.

THOMPSON: Another one from the Health Sciences Center side of the house that goes back years, Dean Phillip Smith.

SMITH: Phillip? He gave us our golden retriever.

THOMPSON: Oh, really?

JAN: They had a litter and we got one. She lived to be fourteen.

SMITH: Yeah.

THOMPSON: Because he had worked his way up through the College of Medicine and then moved over when they developed the College of Allied Health to be dean there.

SMITH: He was a good guy.

THOMPSON: Any comments on Dr. Gloria Smith?

SMITH: Well, I'm telling you, if she said jump, I jumped. I mean, nobody took her on, I'll tell you that.

THOMPSON: Now, that's funny to hear you say that.

SMITH: She was scary.

THOMPSON: She took control of a room, did she not?

SMITH: You'd better believe it.

THOMPSON: She was very interesting. I always wondered what would have happened to the College of Nursing if she had hung around for a while longer, because she was—she was one of

the most commanding people that I ever interacted with at the University that the minute they walked into a room, it was their room.

SMITH: Yeah.

LAPOLLA: You know, Gary, the Tulsa school and the osteopathic college were in the same piece of originating legislation.

SMITH: Really?

LAPOLLA: Yeah. So, you know, from '72, as this school was developing, they were developing in a parallel way. Do you remember any discussions about that?

SMITH: No, I don't.

LAPOLLA: How about after you got to the State Regents?

SMITH: You mean about interaction with the osteopathic? Yeah, there were some things that I remember going up there and meeting on, but I don't remember what they were. Were you there when I came up there?

LAPOLLA: I remember one interaction that you've forgotten, but I just, I'm going to put it on tape. Remember Robert White?

SMITH: Oh, yeah.

THOMPSON: Oh, god.

LAPOLLA: Robert was the government affairs guy for OSU in the late eighties. And Tom Allen decided that—he was the provost at OSU—he decided that the school wasn't getting enough money because it wasn't a quote research enterprise. So, he calls Robert in and he said, "Robert, we're going down there and convince them that we're a research enterprise." And I was at this meeting. And I said, "Tom, how are you going to do that when you don't do any research?" "Oh, we got all this; we're going to do this and we're going to do that." And I remember, I begged him, I said, "Robert, don't do this," because they were going to go down there and meet with you and your staff and the State Regents, and they were going to lay out this—I said, "Don't do it. It's a suicide mission." And anyhow they went down there, it was me and Robert and Tom, and Tom started telling you about how we do research and we have all these clock hours all this and publications of that. And you sat there and you listened for about twenty minutes. And who was your right arm down there? What was her name? What was her name?

JAN: Cathy?

LAPOLLA: No, it wasn't Cathy.

JAN: Blonde?

LAPOLLA: No, it wasn't Cathy. Darker haired lady, nice gal.

THOMPSON: Womack. No, not Womack.

LAPOLLA: Doesn't make any difference. We'll just say she's Mary. About twenty minutes Gary said, "Mary, go get the green book." Whatever the hell the color of the book was. And that book comes out like this. And you look, you said, "You know, Tom, if you're doing all this research, it's in this book somewhere. Could you help me find it?" That was the end of the meeting. They knew they'd been had, you know, in terms of that gambit. I thought Robert would have been a little more suspect, you know, of that, but you do what you have to do.

SMITH: I wonder what he's doing.

LAPOLLA: Haven't heard. Haven't heard. I know that, god, it must have been early nineties, his wife died.

JAN: Yes.

SMITH: Yeah

LAPOLLA: And that was a shock. I mean, I think, I don't know this, but I think it might have been a life changing event for him, you know. He was always a high flyer and all that and I think he just maybe rethought things, but I don't know.

SMITH: Do you remember Larry Brauner? Robert took his place, I think.

LAPOLLA: Yeah.

SMITH: Yeah. Larry was a—well Larry, David Walters was associate provost, and then David left and Larry Brauner came in and took the job, and then Larry Brauner left and Robert White came in and took the job. They, those three were all very political.

THOMPSON: If I remember correctly, if the story goes correctly, they were all involved with politics at Norman as students, and the other one was the one that went to Tinker.

SMITH: Went where?

THOMPSON: Went to Tinker to work at Tinker, was a PR man. In fact, I think he was the PR man for Walters' run for governor. Was a little heavysset fellow. He was another—.

SMITH: Yes, um.

THOMPSON: I cannot think of his name, Gary.

SMITH: You would know who he was, too. It'll come to me on the way home.

THOMPSON: Unfortunately, I may get it tonight in the middle of the night when I wake up. But I think the four of them were all involved in student government at Norman together and they all stayed very close to each other and if he, if Governor Walters had not probably gotten into some of the trouble he got into toward the end, I think they probably all would have still been very involved in politics.

LAPOLLA: Gary, do you remember—back to Tulsa here—do you remember interacting with or hearing Dr. Thurman talk about Burr Lewis?

SMITH: Yeah. I don't know exactly. I don't remember what he was, what he said or what interaction they had, but.

LAPOLLA: Because Burr was one of the two or three movers and shakers to make this thing happen up here. But I don't think you would have any operational contact with him.

SMITH: No.

LAPOLLA: Then there was Bill Bell. Remember Bill Bell?

SMITH: Yeah. Oh, he and Thurman were just like two peas in a pod.

LAPOLLA: Course, you know, Bill Bell was on the OMRF—OMRF was a recipient of Chapman money that Bill Bell ran and there's a good reason to be that way.

THOMPSON: I think he also considered him to be one of the people, stable people, in Tulsa when he started coming up here to deal with the Tulsa environment.

LAPOLLA: Well, actually the Chapman money and OMRF was much later. I mean, Bill Bell and Bill Thurman were very friendly from day one, I think.

THOMPSON: I think they were good friends from listening to him talk, not only just professional friends, but I think they also were very good friends.

LAPOLLA: And I remember when Bill Bell died, that was '87, '88. Dr. Thurman was visibly moved by that.

SMITH: Yeah. Well, are we done?

THOMPSON: We're done. I appreciate it. Thank you for coming. You've added some things that we—.

SMITH: I don't know about that.

THOMPSON: No. And that was the reason that everybody was extremely important to this project because everybody added a little difference.

*End of interview.*