

Mrs. Betty Owens

Interviewer: Dr. Courtney Tollison

Interviewee: Betty Durham Owens

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Minutes 0-5

Introduction: “Old men’s” campus, University Street; May court, old bell tower, Serene Stadium; living in the married-student housing on Furman’s old campus

Minutes 5-10

Mr. Owens serving in the Korean War and graduating from Furman at the Textile Hall in 1957; Clemson University; Cleo Roper; Main Street; Greenville High School

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Furman’s May Queen; Greenville Junior High School; World War II; discussion of her parents’ occupations and staying with her grandmother during the day; First Presbyterian Church; Clausen’s Bakery

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Discussions of Mrs. Owens playing sports during junior high and high school; Furman bell tower on the old campus; Greenville County Square; Serene Stadium; discussions of the professors and coaches Mr. and Mrs. Owens had when they were students at Furman

Minutes 20-25

Scott Towers; West Greenville Baptist Church; discussions on meeting her husband, him being drafted for the Korean War, and then them getting married while he finished up his education at Furman; North Greenville

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Discussions of Mr. Owens taking classes at Furman; living in married-student housing at Furman; discussions of the women in the married-student housing taking care of each other’s children; the Baptist Association Building; differences between North Greenville Junior College and Furman

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Transcript

TOLLISON: Today is July 7, Thursday, July 7, 2005. My name is Courtney Tollison, and I am conducting an oral history today with Betty Durham Owens. We are at Leatherwood, Todd, Walker & Mann, law offices in downtown Greenville, and it's about 4:30 in the afternoon. Miss Durham grew up here in Greenville, grew up off of Augusta Street, and her grandmother Durham lived on University Street. You mentioned that that is now University Ridge near the Furman campus, and you mentioned that you grew up playing on the old campus. I frequently tell people when I talk about the old campus, someone corrected me one time, I once referred to it as the old men's campus, and an older man stood up and said (laughs), "It's the men's old campus, it's not the old men's campus." So, anyways, grew up playing on the downtown men's campus, and your husband graduated from Furman, and so today we're just going to have a conversation about some of those, some of those special memories that you have. Why don't you start off by telling me about growing up here in Greenville, where you were born, your parents, what you remember about elementary school, that kind of thing.

OWENS: I just remember, I guess from my earliest childhood days, Furman because I grew up there. I was...my grandmother Durham and grandfather Durham lived on University Street when I was born, and we lived on Augusta, but my grandmother kept me, and I stayed at her house when I wasn't up on the Furman campus. When I got old enough to venture up there, I just remember the peaceful, serene feeling of being in the... around those old buildings and then able to stay in summertime and not having to worry about cars or traffic. Then I do remember the, I guess the amphitheater where they had the May court and the fish pond there and playing around that and then, of course, sneaking in the old bell tower. We always wanted to climb to the top, but we had a lookout, so we wouldn't get locked, somebody kept...well, I think my grandmother said for me not to go in there because they'd lock us in there, and that always terrified me. We never were locked...

TOLLISON: To be locked in?

OWENS: There was a door to the very main entrance on the bottom floor, but then the crickety up steps that went up to the top. I guess as a child of six I believed my grandmother when she said they'd lock us in there, and it was just that they'd close the door, and that put the fear of the Lord in me, so I didn't tally too much. I didn't go up there without someone being there to watch out. But I just remembered the Flowers boys, the Flowers' house was a big old white house up there behind I guess it was the dining hall. I wish I could remember all these old buildings, but the bell tower and then to my right of that would be the library, and then across in another were some more buildings. I don't remember, but Dr. Flowers lived what we would call now the top of the hill that goes down to Serene Stadium, and it's where the Health Department is now.

But, oh Greenville was just a small-town atmosphere that...and I've lived in Greenville all my life. I was born at home. We didn't go to the hospital then, and my aunt delivered me, and it's just a lot of memories. But Furman just stands out just growing up on the campus never knowing that from the time that I was too old, I thought, to play on campus and skate, the next thing I knew I was dating my future husband that we would end up living in the married-student housing at Furman. It was on Clausen Street, and it's now where the Greenville Baptist Association Building is, the offices are. But I remember a lot of the students...everybody was married, and then there were basketball players that lived in the married-student housing, and then there were some that weren't basketball players. One of those was a fishing buddy to my husband, and in the back of those, that housing, was poison ivy that we didn't know about, and we were all out there digging for fishing worms. I held the flashlight and this other guy held the flashlight, and so my husband and his wife were digging for the worms, and of course, they're the ones that ended up with the poison oak. But for the fun times that we had, and times were tight, we could have \$10 a week, and that's all we'd need for groceries. Now there is a flower shop I believe on the corner of Augusta and Harris Street that used to be Tom Bean's service station. We'd cut across there, and the highlight of the married students we'd walk over there and buy Pepsi and go back, and we'd entertain ourselves in the afternoon with what we thought was real good eating: having maybe vanilla wafers and Kool-Aid. I did work while my husband went to school, but he did get a, his father was a Baptist preacher, so he had a ministerial discount I guess is what you'd call it. But he was...his grades weren't too good when he first started. He was drafted into the Korean War in '53 and served two years and got out in '55, and resumed his education at Furman graduating in 1957 at the old Textile Hall. It was right before they moved to the new campus. And...

TOLLISON: The ceremony was held at old Textile Hall?

OWENS: Uh huh. And I was very pregnant. It was four days before my daughter was born. But all the married students, the wives of the boys, helped us move into our home. We built our home our first time, and they came. It's just lasting friendships that you have in college. One thing I do remember is Furman played Clemson back then in football, and those Clemson students would come over for the panty raids, and our husbands didn't know, but we always saved a special pair that we'd throw out to them, so they could show that their conquest was a pair of panties. But anyway, I know that's probably not that important.

TOLLISON: (laughs)

OWENS: That was a highlight. Then when my husband graduated, we stayed in touch with Furman cause his brother-in-law finished in 1934 with Bob King. He played football (he was a big football player, Cleo Roper), and he was inducted into the Hall of Fame I believe right before he died in the late 80s. We followed the team, and [I] remember when the horse was injured and had to be put down, and how that made us more aware of the importance of a mascot and not using tricks, vandalism, or things that would cause injury to another mascot. Just a lot of fun memories, and I wish that I had

tried to remember more, but the downtown campus we could walk to town. We could walk up to Main Street Pharmacy, and in those days, you know, that wasn't far. Now you get in a car and ride a block, but you just make do with what you have. My husband ended up graduating with my graduating class from Greenville High School because by him being delayed two years in graduating, he graduated with my class of '53 that went to Furman. Then and one of my classmates there, Neal Gordon, who was the football coach there, and it just... When we still get together once a month, it's about 14 girls from Greenville High, we get together, and we talk about fun times at Greenville High and at Furman.

TOLLISON: Who are some of those people that you get together with?

OWENS: Mary Jane McKewen, well she's a Ashmore now, she went to Furman; Margaret Wyatt, who was a, she was a pediatrician, child's pediatrician... I said that wrong, but she's a pediatrician; and Jackie Collins; Mary Alice Shand, she [is] now a Stolt; Betty Rainey, Echols now; Kitty Francis, Norman; Jackie Collins, she was Jacqueline James; Lib Lipskin, she was a May Queen at Furman, she married Billy Richardson; those are the ones that... Sometimes they alternate, they can't come, and we have the luncheons on Mondays, and sometimes I have to work down here on Mondays. Since I'm retired, I fix attorneys... everything they want done over the weekend, so Mondays I usually come down to take work home with me because I do contract work for Leatherwood.

TOLLISON: Where do you all meet for your luncheons?

OWENS: Well, we started out at The Ham House, and then we ended up at McAlister's out at McAlister Square, and more recently we've been going to the Olive Garden. One time Elizabeth Ellison was our gym teacher at Greenville Junior High School, and she donated all of the land of Camp [Inaudible] and she died recently, but before she died, she came down to, she was Judy Islan, and I can't remember her married name, Compton, she came down to her house for a luncheon, we had... we've had luncheons at several of the homes, but Miss Ellison came down to that luncheon.

TOLLISON: How nice. Let me back up a little bit and try to fill in some of these details. You were born in 1934?

OWENS: November of '34.

TOLLISON: November of 1934. And what are your parents' names?

OWENS: Fred and Harriett.

TOLLISON: And what is... you said that they both worked?

OWENS: My mother was a seamstress, and my father was in the Army and World War II. Before he went in the Army he drove [a] Clausen's Bakery bread truck. Then

when he went in the Army, he was injured (he broke his neck), but he was a mechanic. My grandfather Durham owned the Bluebird Bus Lines with John Theodore; they were partners. So my dad kept the business running, and his brother, Frank, owned a café across the street where it's now Bank of America. The street went all the way through. It was called Laurens Street, but then Coffee Street went all the way through. It stopped at Main Street like it does now, but exactly where Bank of America is across from First Presbyterian Church was a street. And so my uncle had a café known for his hot dogs and chili, and it was Frank's café.

TOLLISON: Where was Clausen's Bakery?

OWENS: Clausen's Bakery was right on Augusta Street right in front of Greenville High School. So you know where Scott Towers is. It's right across the street between Scott Towers and Clausen Street. It goes into the old Furman campus.

TOLLISON: Okay. So you stayed with your grandmother during the day while your parents worked?

OWENS: Yeah.

TOLLISON: And this is when you would go to the Furman campus to go play.

OWENS: Go play.

TOLLISON: And you said you received your first pair of skates at age four?

OWENS: At age four. My grandmother made a pair of velvet leggings with a big seat that I could put a pillow in, so when I fell down... She didn't think about the front. I had a lot of skinned knees, but I learned just to fall back. But then I guess I loved skating, and we went to the skating rink at the old, well it's Cleveland Park. They had a skating rink, and we'd just skate in there.

TOLLISON: Did you have friends that would join you, or did you do the skating by yourself when you were a child?

OWENS: No, I had friends that went with me. One of my friends lived at the bottom of the hill right where the creek is on the old Furman campus in the governor's school, and she, we would go on Saturdays. But you know, you kinda outgrow those things and just find...you know, it's kind of, kind of lose my memory a little bit. But we were always...I was very active in sports when I got to junior high school, and I was on the school softball team at Greenville High School and the basketball team.

TOLLISON: What are some of the...besides the bell tower, you talked about going into the bell tower and being afraid that you'd get locked in. What are some of the other buildings on the campus...

OWENS: Well you know, I have pictures of...every time we made pictures my grandmother and my aunt and some of her other children, we would go to the Furman campus to make the pictures. One is standing on the steps in front of the building back behind where the library was, and I don't know if it was the dining hall or what it was, but I wish had, could remember, but...it's been so long... There's a picture made of me and my grandmother and my aunt, and you can see a long pathway from the buildings that's just landscaped with oak trees. And then we would...there was a little road that went down to where the practice field was where they practice football. But we didn't, we didn't venture that far off. We were...you know, that was the age where you kind of minded what your grandmother told you to do, so as long as we stayed around the paved roads and skated in the areas...They had a lot of paved areas in front of the library, and that's about all I remember. I just remember the students when they'd study, and I guess it was their girlfriends, they'd go over with blankets in that big field where the married students would play football.

TOLLISON: Where was that? What was that close to?

OWENS: It's exactly where...it was in front of the library, and that whole area had no buildings, it was a big grassy around the area...Howe Street now goes up the backside of Greenville of County Square. It's just so different. When they put County Square in, they kind of changed the street that went up to Furman. It's kind of hard to remember, but I do remember it went all the way through to Serene Stadium. You didn't go around the curve like you do now. It just...I wish I could...I wish I had pictures of that, but I don't.

TOLLISON: What are some of the people, who are some of the people that you remember?

OWENS: I remember Steve, they called him Slight, and his wife, Dee [inaudible]. Steve graduated in '58 I believe from Furman. He played basketball. I remember my husband's, one of his teachers was with...they called him Coach Dobson, Red Dobson. And I don't remember...I remember one of my teachers, Mary Millette. She taught French at Greenville High, and she lived across the street. They rented her one of the housing developments there, and she'd help my husband with his French.

TOLLISON: Greenville High School rented a home for her?

OWENS: No, it belonged to Furman. What these apartments were...it looked like some of the Army barracks that they used to have, and they called them prefabs. They had some that were across the street that they didn't consider that as part of being on the campus. But it's kind of hard to...and I believe you've got those pictures because that would mean so much to me now because as a child you don't think of how important those years are.

TOLLISON: So the prefabs that were built during the war stayed, and Furman rented them out to other people in the Greenville community?

OWENS: The students. Well, now see, I think Miss Millette was an exception. Some of the teachers from Greenville High, but it was mostly just all married students from Furman that those were reserved for.

TOLLISON: Okay.

OWENS: And of course, they're not there now. They were torn down. And the house that I lived in on Augusta was torn down, and Scott Towers is there now.

TOLLISON: Oh. Tell me about being in high school and meeting your husband.

OWENS: I met my husband...I was at church with my friends.

TOLLISON: Whose church?

OWENS: West Greenville Baptist Church, and his dad was preacher. His brother who was closer, he was my age cause Louis was three years older than I was... I saw him walk in, and you know, I...he didn't make an impression on me at all. But after church, because I was 15 in the 9th grade and so he...after church we were going to walk home cause I lived, we had moved to Thorssen Street next door to the parsonage. He started walking with us, and this little boy that I kind of liked...we got to the corner of where he lived, and so Louis said, "Well, I'll just walk her on home." So that was the first he ever came into my sight was...then when I was in the 10th grade...and so I was in high school I just dated boys at Greenville High, and you didn't date that early back then. I played softball. I was a pitcher for the softball team at Greenville High. We practiced. And then I was a majorette, and we'd practice after school a long time, and he was at North Greenville, and I remember riding to North Greenville. He lived where all of the football players lived in the old...they called it the barn.

TOLLISON: But he did not play football?

OWENS: Yes, he was captain of the football team.

TOLLISON: At North Greenville...

OWENS: At North Greenville.

TOLLISON: He did not play at Furman?

OWENS: No, he did not. We were married, and he worked part-time, and I worked full-time. I worked for Preston Lackey who was a certified public accountant in the old insurance building downtown. I walked to work, and then his brother started, Leonard Owens, started coming to Furman. We just all three shared a car if we needed a car and get a ride if we needed a ride. But we walked; we walked so much back then. When Louis finished, when he started Furman, he would come by Greenville High and pick me

up. And then he was drafted, and I was still in school, and he wanted to get married, and his dad didn't think that was fair to me. So we just dated the whole time he was in the Army during '53 and '55 and got married when he got out in March '55.

TOLLISON: And you said he was in Virginia.

OWENS: Fort Lee in Virginia.

TOLLISON: He actually never went to Korea. He was in Virginia.

OWENS: No, he stayed there the whole time.

TOLLISON: And but you said he wanted to go...

OWENS: Yeah, he wanted to, he wanted to go...he felt like, you know, you wanted to be in use there. It's like some of the boys today... that people think this war is terrible, but they want to serve their country. My son-in-law was in Iraq, and he had four buddies that were killed, but that didn't change his mind. He said he'd go back again.

TOLLISON: Your husband was working, he was a lieutenant, and he was working under a superior, and he was one of the superior's favorites, and that's why he wanted to keep him around?

OWENS: Yeah.

TOLLISON: Okay, gotcha. So he comes back in '55, and that's when he starts Furman, is that correct?

OWENS: He re-enters Furman.

TOLLISON: Re-enters Furman.

OWENS: Uh huh.

TOLLISON: Did he...had he begun...

OWENS: He began...he graduated from North Greenville in '52 and entered Furman summer school.

TOLLISON: Okay.

OWENS: Then he stayed in Furman until March of '53 when he was drafted, and then he got out in March of '55 and started back to the summer classes.

TOLLISON: And you all are married in March of '55?

OWENS: No, we were married July of '55.

TOLLISON: July of 1955. And that's when you all moved into married-student housing?

OWENS: Mm hmm.

TOLLISON: Tell me about that.

OWENS: Man that was something. It was for each building...there was one entrance and two downstairs and little narrow steps and two upstairs. It was like...just like being in a dorm because I've been to my own children's dorms, and it's just campus life there, but a little more freedom. There was one friend of my husband's who would come to our apartment to study. He had real thick glasses, and they were studying at the kitchen table, and I had this waxed fruit, and I never will forget he kept trying to get one of those grapes, trying to get one, and finally got it off, and then I saw him take it out. He didn't realize they were waxed grapes. But the girls that were...let's see, Steve Dinger's wife, Delores, Dee we called her, she had...we all had our children within three weeks of each other. Corinne...Tommy, let's see, Tommy Wilson went to Furman. He graduated in '57 too, and his wife, she had, it was all girls. She had a little girl, and Delores had a little girl, and then I had a little girl. I had...those steps were kind of tricky, and I fell down the steps, and so Louis was in class. I waited for him to get back, and we went to the doctor, and he put me in the hospital and just induced labor, so Dell came early. She was a little bitty baby, but with all the friends there we just helped one another. We'd watch each other's children, and our strollers just strolled them around the campus. That was something. I'm glad I was born when I was because you can't do that today. Now this new Furman campus you probably could. But I don't know if they have married-student housing or not.

TOLLISON: Do not.

OWENS: Do not.

TOLLISON: No, ma'am. Married students live off campus. Yeah, they live off campus.

OWENS: And see I guess we were off campus, but we were actually right there at the campus. In fact, when they, when they were moving Furman, they had a lot of the student desks that they had at the old Furman, you know the chairs with the one little arm around that you put your book on, and they stored those desks at the Baptist Association Building. Well my friend works there, and when they were cleaning out, she said, "You want one of these desks?" And so I did, and I do have it. I had it refinished, and I love that desk.

TOLLISON: Oh, wonderful.

OWENS: Anything about Furman I just love. It's just I guess when you grow up around a campus you just, you hate it or you love it, and I loved it.

TOLLISON: Tell me about how your...you probably spent more time at Furman than you would have at North Greenville since you were dating your future husband at that point in time, but tell me your impressions of the differences between North Greenville Junior College, and Furman at that point in time, or anything that you remember your husband saying about those differences.

OWENS: I think that when you're involved in sports and you're part of a team, it makes you closer to a campus because when my husband died, all of the guys that played football with him at North Greenville came. And you miss the closeness, but it wasn't the difference in the campus because he had a lot of friends at Furman too even though they were married. But I don't think it would be that much difference in the campus life.

TOLLISON: What about academics?

OWENS: Well, I really, I really can't say that there was that much difference because Louis studied at North Greenville, I mean unless he was telling me he couldn't date because he had to study. But at Furman, you know, I knew that I would...and I was really interested in accounting, and I ended up going to [Greenville] Tech, but I knew he had lab, what they call lab classes, and he would bring his assignments home, and I would work on them. But I really don't remember that much difference.

TOLLISON: Tell me about the football games, you mentioned that...

OWENS: Oh man. They were something else. Vince Perone, we followed him, and I guess there were some more greats. But that name just stood out I guess because he had the restaurant. But Furman had a lot...they had a real good football team back in the late 50s and early 60s after he graduated. We would...his sister's husband, Chester Holmes, also went to Furman, and his brother, younger brother, Leonard, went to Furman. So his other brother, there was four couples, we'd go to all the football games. Travel out of town and just...it was just a good feeling, pride I guess.

TOLLISON: What about the basketball team?

OWENS: We didn't go to many basketball games, but I do remember going to one that Frank Selvy scored the 100 points in the old Textile Hall. I do remember that, but Furman...and I guess that basketball...I remember Neal Gordon being the coach after we graduated also. I don't remember that much about the basketball. [Editor's Note: Frank Selvy scored over 100 points in the Furman basketball game against Newberry College in 1954, making him the first Division I player to do so.]

TOLLISON: What do you remember about that game where Frank Selvy scored the 100 points?

OWENS: It was hot. It was in the old Textile Hall, and it was just, it seemed like you never thought at the beginning that he would score 100 points. It was just electrifying when he did, just...it just made you proud. Proud for him. No jealousy, no...you know all the basketball players, they wanted him to do it.

TOLLISON: So a lot of pride afterwards?

OWENS: Oh, yeah.

TOLLISON: What was the feeling on campus afterwards?

OWENS: Oh, you're just proud to be a Paladin, you know. Proud to be part of Furman and a team that did so well and to have such good players, Frank, and then he and Barbara stayed in Greenville after he finished, and you know, she started a dance studio.

TOLLISON: I do. I grew up dancing there.

OWENS: Oh, okay. But I think it burned down, I don't know if she reopened it or not, but...

TOLLISON: They did.

OWENS: She did?

TOLLISON: Mm hmm.

OWENS: But everybody thought Frank had a pretty wife, you know just...

TOLLISON: Special lady.

OWENS: Yeah, she was.

TOLLISON: Tell me about playing with the Plyler children when you were on the campus.

OWENS: John and Jim. We didn't play with them that much. They had kind of kept them close to home, and he...I guess if I was president of the university, I'd want my children where I could see what they were doing.

TOLLISON: (laughs)

OWENS: But we just, you know, games back in that day were catching lightening bugs. I remember having fruit jars and catching lightening bugs with them and but we'd all have to...we had a time to be at home, and my grandpa had a special whistle. I mean, he could whistle real loud, and if we heard that, we knew it was time to go home, or he'd let out a lone ranger whoop cause we'd listen to him on the radio. I'd know, you know, this

was before computers and TV, and we just entertained ourselves. The Plyler boys were handsome boys and had no trouble getting friends, making friends.

TOLLISON: Tell me about any church activities growing up or especially when you all were married and at Furman. Did most of the students attend church? Where did most of the students go to church? Those kinds of things.

OWENS: Some of them didn't go, and some of them were Catholic like Steve and Dee. They were Catholic, and they went to mass on Saturday night, and the other students that we were close to, the other couples, Tommy and Corinne, they were Baptist, and of course, we were Baptists. We went to his father's church. And I worked in the youth department and later became the youth director there because we both loved young people. Louis started out majoring in physical education and teaching. He wanted to be a coach, but he changed it to business because his brother-in-law owned a business, and he went in business with him.

TOLLISON: What kind of business was that?

OWENS: It was real estate, insurance, and well, they built real estate. They built houses, and Louis kept the books, and he sold cars and financed the cars. So Louis was the bookkeeper.

TOLLISON: Where was this in Greenville?

OWENS: It's Pendleton Street. It's the whole block between Pendleton and Terry Avenue and it's almost to the...well, it's kind of hard to explain. It's before you get to the 124, Pendleton Street, West Greenville. It's Brandon where Shoeless Joe Jackson... they've got the new stadium out there and his name painted on some of the buildings out there, and probably, I guess, they call it the historic, but West Greenville back then it was a residential area. Now it's not. And he was pastor there from '43 to '62, so almost 20 years. He retired.

TOLLISON: You mentioned that your husband had a minister's scholarship. Is that...

OWENS: No, they called it ministerial discount. When your father was a preacher and Furman was connected with the Baptists, you had the discount. Also at North Greenville, but he had a...he was at North Greenville on a football scholarship.

TOLLISON: [Was this] regarding courses in religion or were there any stipulations for that discount?

OWENS: I don't think so. No there must not have been because he didn't take anything.

TOLLISON: Were married students required to attend chapel and participate in all the other, the activities that residential students were?

OWENS: Some of them, they were. I don't know if it was chapel or what. That was so long ago in the 50s. It's been almost 50 years...almost 50 years ago. But they, it was not like you were free reign that you could just run around. It was, you know, like they had curfew hours, and we, I guess, I don't know if they set their own for the married students or not, but we were usually in by 10.

TOLLISON: What was your husband's relationship with Furman after he graduated?

OWENS: Other than just being interested in being in the... He would contribute, you know, to the alumni, and we would go visit the new campus, and he thought it was wonderful. I mean just going to sports and just supporting the alumni and being in the Paladin Club.

TOLLISON: Do you ever remember...did you ever go visit the Bell Tower Shopping Center that they created on the old campus after...

OWENS: Oh, yes, when it was Sky City, and there were two stores there I can't remember, but I do remember that.

TOLLISON: Was it open-air or was it a closed-in mall?

OWENS: A closed-in mall. It was really two stores and one on each end, two big stores, and then in between like there was a music store, BJ's Music, which is now on Augusta Street across from Pete's. Randall Coleman owned that, and so he moved when they sold it to the County, opened the store on Augusta. And it was an Eckerd's there. My mother went to Eckerd's a lot for prescriptions and things like that.

TOLLISON: Did you all attend football games after he graduated?

OWENS: Oh, yeah. We attended them up until he died.

TOLLISON: What is your relationship with Furman now?

OWENS: Well, I guess my relationship really is just being in touch with the professors. I do tax returns for about five now. Linda Julian died a couple years ago. And staying in touch with Dr. Huff each year cause I do his returns. And just listening...and reading the history books he's written. And...

TOLLISON: And how did you get to know him?

OWENS: Well, it started with John Block. I've done John Block's tax returns since I was a staff accountant at a CPA firm before I came to Leatherwood. And so he told...I guess he told the different professors there, I probably shouldn't tell their names. Then when Dr. Shi came, he told Dr. Shi that I could help him, so Susan came to Leatherwood

and met with me, and that's where we would always meet. He would always...Susan would always bring the information to me here at Leatherwood and...

TOLLISON: How did you get to know John Block?

OWENS: I did his tax returns back in the 60s when he came to Furman...I guess he was a student, but when...oh, he was voice of the Paladins, that's right, he was the announcer for the basketball team, and he was good. [Editor's Note: John M. Block was a 1963 graduate of Furman University, who became part of the Furman history faculty in 1968. Since then he has twice served as the chair of the history department. He has also served as Furman's NCAA representative, and in 2008, he was elected to the new position of vice president for intercollegiate athletics at Furman.]

TOLLISON: When he came back to be a professor?

OWENS: Uh huh.

TOLLISON: Uh huh.

OWENS: And he married a Greenville girl. Her dad was one of the Stone Brothers, a men's clothing store on Main Street, cause that's where all the stores were: Main Street. And he married one of those girls, Barbara.

TOLLISON: Well, do you have anything else you'd like to add?

OWENS: I believe that's all.

TOLLISON: I've enjoyed talking with you.

OWENS: Well, I've enjoyed talking with you. I know I must sound like a real Southerner.

TOLLISON: (laughs) No, Ma'am. No, Ma'am, not at all. You're fine. This has been fun. I'm sure it's fun for you to think back on.

OWENS: Well, you know, it's like I said, I wish, like we tell our children now, you'll regret not remembering this cause one day it'll be important to you. And it is. And so because I couldn't remember everything I just remember happiness. When you think of Furman, you just remember happy times.

TOLLISON: What do you think of when you think of the old campus? If you were to try to explain the old campus to someone who'd never seen it, how would you describe it?

OWENS: Just a little village of its own with friendly people, not worrying about crime, leaving your doors unlocked. Children could go out and play and not worry about

anything, and just the beautiful scenery and picking violets down by Reedy River Falls. It was a...there was a little dirt road that we went down by where the old, where the Furman football players stayed, Jervey Hall I believe, Jervey...I can't remember. But there was a dirt road that went down there. But we didn't venture that far. We'd go to the Falls and pick violets and play there.

TOLLISON: Well, thank you very much. I don't think I have anything else, but if you happen to remember some things, please let me know, and I can come back over.

OWENS: Well, I will. I'm going go to Barnes & Noble and get that book. Now the name of it is...

TOLLISON: It's *Furman University*.

OWENS: *Furman University*. Because this...my schoolmate, I went all the way from 1st grade to, I don't remember him going to Greenville High, but he wrote the book *Remembering Greenville* that was just now out. Bill Cox took a lot of the old pictures, and so he was in Greenville last year. He teaches at Converse in Spartanburg. He's a professor, Jeff Willis, and he signed my book. He said, "Now, Betty, how do you want me to sign this?" He said, "I'm just going to sign it Betty Lou." I said, "Okay."

TOLLISON: I believe I met Jeffrey Willis. I believe we did a book signing together cause he's a Furman graduate.

OWENS: Oh is...did he go to Furman? I didn't know that.

TOLLISON: I believe so. I believe so.

OWENS: He was...but in the first grade, he was the most handsome boy at...but anyway, I just have a lot of fond memories. I wish I could remember all the buildings and what they were. That's why I wanna get that book.

TOLLISON: I hope you'll enjoy it. All right, I better go ahead and turn off the tape. Thank you again for being with me today.

OWENS: Oh believe me, it was my pleasure.

TOLLISON: Thank you.