

Eugene Proctor

Interviewee: Eugene Proctor

Interviewer: Courtney L. Tollison, Ph.D.

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Transcript

Dr. Tollison: Today is July 30th, 2004, and I'm sitting here with Dr. Eugene Proctor. You're a graduate of the class of 1942. Is that correct?

Dr. Proctor: I did not graduate.

Dr. Tollison: You did not graduate, okay. Well Furman has your information wrong. I would call them.

Dr. Proctor: I attended two years.

Dr. Tollison: Okay.

Dr. Proctor: I had a brother that was just behind me and he was wanting to go to Clemson and then a sister that was soon to go to Winthrop and it was just financially difficult for me to go all four years. So I finished my pre-dental at Furman with summer school at Clemson and then I went on to dental school and then graduated.

Dr. Tollison: Oh, terrific.

Dr. Proctor: My wife graduated and two of my children.

Dr. Tollison: Okay, so your wife graduated from, I guess it was at that point in time...

Dr. Proctor: She's in '43...

Dr. Tollison: The Greenville Woman's College of Furman University. Was that how her diploma reads? Does her diploma read "The Greenville Woman's College of Furman University" or does it simply read "Furman University?"

Dr. Proctor: I think it said "Furman University."

Dr. Tollison: Okay, and that was in 1943. And your two children went there. When did they graduate?

Dr. Proctor: Can't tell you.

Dr. Tollison: 70s, 80s, 90s? Or 60s even?

Dr. Proctor: I'm sorry. I'm bad on dates. I just can't remember.

Dr. Tollison: Oh that's okay, that's okay. So you have one boy and one girl?

Dr. Proctor: I have three boys and one girl.

Dr. Tollison: Oh, okay. So which two went to Furman?

Dr. Proctor: My second oldest son and my daughter who was just following him.

Dr. Tollison: Okay, and what are their names?

Dr. Proctor: The son is Douglas, Douglas Carlyle Proctor. Daughter is Carol Diane Skipper.

Dr. Tollison: Okay, Skipper is her married name.

Dr. Proctor: Married name.

Dr. Tollison: She's a Proctor obviously. Okay, terrific. So you, I guess, left Furman... you attended Furman in...

Dr. Proctor: I entered Furman in 1938 and went two years, so I guess it was '40 I went to dental school and graduated from dental school in 1943 in a speeded up program because it was during the war.

Dr. Tollison: And did you attend USC? Where did you go to dental school?

Dr. Proctor: It was Atlanta Southern Dental College at the time but it became Emory and I'm considered an Emory alumnus.

Dr. Tollison: Oh, terrific. My close friend went to Emory and I... Actually my apartment was just down the street from Emory. I did quite a bit of research at their library. It's a wonderful school, excellent school.

Dr. Proctor: There are a lot of privately operated dental schools at that time but the Council of Adult Education and the American Dental Association passed a requirement that, after a certain period of time, it was right after I graduated, schools had to be affiliated with a university so Emory took it over.

Dr. Tollison: Emory took it over. Gotcha.

Dr. Proctor: I think the very next year they graduated with Emory.

Dr. Tollison: But you're considered an alum of Emory.

Dr. Proctor: Right.

Dr. Tollison: Did you grow up here in Conway?

Dr. Proctor: Sure did.

Dr. Tollison: How did you end up at Furman?

Dr. Proctor: Don't really know. One of my friends said he was going to Furman and I thought, well we were roommates, and I said "Well I believe I'll go to Furman too."

Dr. Tollison: Where were you roommates?

Dr. Proctor: I was in Geer Hall. My first knowledge of Dr. Blackwell was him playing tennis, there was a tennis court which was across the street from our room in Geer Hall.

Dr. Tollison: Oh, okay. And was he a...

Dr. Proctor: He was a professor.

Dr. Tollison: A Sociology Professor at that time? He spent a few years I guess, right after he finished his PhD at Chapel Hill? Is that correct? Came back to Furman before he left, correct? So this was during this time when he was teaching alongside, do you remember Laura Ebaugh? Do you have any memories of her?

Dr. Proctor: I know the name. I did not know her, my wife knew her very well.

Dr. Tollison: Do you remember anything that your wife said about her?

Dr. Proctor: No, I don't. My wife was from Greenville. You said you're from Greenville.

Dr. Tollison: Yes, I am. Yes sir, I am and I'm really enjoying being back as well. Did you develop a friendship with Gordon Blackwell at the time?

Dr. Proctor: No. My friendship began as a trustee. I was a trustee when he came to Furman. And, for whatever reason, I was vice-chairman of the trustees. And when he was to be inaugurated and he was visiting, he had spoken at a meeting in Myrtle Beach, I think, and stopped to speak to my pastor. And my pastor called me and said "Gene are you sitting?" He was really quite an interesting fellow. He said "Are you sitting or standing?" I said "Well I'm standing." He said "Sit down." He said "Dr. Blackwell's here and he has some bad news." And so Dr. Blackwell got on the phone and said "Mr. Wilbur Wood (who was the chairman of the trustees) had just been killed in an automobile accident." And he said "On Friday, you know, the installation is being held and you're gonna have to preside."

Dr. Tollison: Wow.

Dr. Proctor: So I got acquainted with Dr. Blackwell very quickly. Of course I had become acquainted with him before he was installed because his official installation was some time after he came to Furman. But then we became very close and over several years following, I served as chairman for six years and so we became very close. And then he had a summer home up at Lake Lure and he had bought the adjacent property to his property when it came up for sale in order to secure his neighbor. They were [inaudible] some entrance into his property. At the time he had to walk down a steep hill to get to his house. But buying this property bulldozed into the property and made a driveway into his property and then paved it. For two summers we rented the house from him for a week at a time and on the second summer he offered us the property. Said he'd like for us to be his neighbor [inaudible]. So that became a continuing very close relationship with the whole entire Blackwell family and him and his wife particularly and so we became very close.

Dr. Tollison: I'd like to get back to that in a little while. Let's go back to your time at Furman. This was several years after the merger with the Greenville Woman's College. Do you remember? Did the girls at the time identify as Greenville Woman's College students or did they identify as students of Furman University?

Dr. Proctor: Well it was GWC, they were Furman students but we had a bus that ran back and forth between the two campuses. But to tell you the honest truth, to me they were just Furman students, I think they just became part of the Furman campus.

Dr. Tollison: Did any of the men seem to mind that there were...?

Dr. Proctor: No.

Dr. Tollison: Did you all have classes with the women?

Dr. Proctor: Yes.

Dr. Tollison: And did you eat your meals together or did that stay pretty separate?

Dr. Proctor: No, we didn't have meals together.

Dr. Tollison: So the women ate on the GWC campus and the men...

Dr. Proctor: Right.

Dr. Tollison: On the Furman campus. Okay, okay. This was a pretty tumultuous time in Furman's history during President Geer's administration. Do you remember as a student, were students really aware of all the controversies going on under Dr. Geer's leadership? Do you remember a man named Herbert Gezork a Religion professor?

Dr. Proctor: I know the story but students were not particularly involved in that.

Dr. Tollison: What do you remember about that from a student's perspective? Were students fond of Dr. Gezork?

Dr. Proctor: I didn't know him personally. I didn't have any contact with him. It's just been what others have said about him historically. I don't really know the story so much myself.

Dr. Tollison: Okay, gotcha. So do you remember how students, how some of your friends even, thought of Dr. Gezork?

Dr. Proctor: No. I really don't recall any resentment at all.

Dr. Tollison: Okay. What about Dr. Geer? How did you all think about President Geer?

Dr. Proctor: We liked him. (laughs) He was a nice president.

Dr. Tollison: What did you guys like about him?

Dr. Proctor: Well you know when you're a student you don't get, generally you don't get very close to the president. You don't even worry about it. He lived just off the campus really and we had very little...

Dr. Tollison: Contact with him?

Dr. Proctor: Contact with him.

Dr. Tollison: Were you all aware that some of his policies were not very popular? Or maybe his leadership style wasn't very popular with some of the trustees and alumni?

Dr. Proctor: I don't know anything about that.

Dr. Tollison: He was considered, in terms of Furman history, or Dr. Reid, in the book I just showed you, presents him as a very progressive president that was very supportive of academic freedom and this wasn't always a very popular thing at Furman at the time in the late 30s and early 40s. I guess it was in the late 30s. But that Furman perhaps wasn't quite ready for a president like that at that point in time and that the next president that was to come in that was very similar to Dr. Geer in terms of being supportive of academic freedom...

Dr. Proctor: Was Dr. Plyler.

Dr. Tollison: Well, was Dr. Blackwell especially and that Dr. Plyler sort of situated in the middle as someone that was a peacemaker and kept things running smoothly whereas Dr. Geer shook things up a little bit.

Dr. Proctor: Well as a student those things didn't really involve us very much.

Dr. Tollison: Right. Do you remember... Did you get the sense that professors were happy, or professors were unhappy? There were a lot of professors that left during this time period, '38-'39, especially in reaction to what happened to Dr. Gezork. Do you remember a lot of turnover among faculty members?

Dr. Proctor: I don't.

Dr. Tollison: Okay. What do you think about when you think about your student days at Furman? What comes to mind? Surrine Stadium was pretty new right?

Dr. Proctor: What?

Dr. Tollison: Surrine Stadium, where you guys played football?

Dr. Proctor: Yeah, that was just down the street about three blocks.

Dr. Tollison: What do you remember about the campus?

Dr. Proctor: See, I was just a country boy. I really hadn't been away from home much at all. And it was rather imposing to me to come to college and adjust to college life. And then I got a girlfriend who became my wife later and that was what I was interested in more than anything else on campus. Now I was not a fraternity man. I was rushed by fraternities but I didn't. I thought I was not going to finish there so there was no point in joining a fraternity if I was gonna only be there a couple of years. But I went to the dances and social affairs and the parties and so forth and so on so campus life was good. But I was perfectly happy with the Furman campus.

Dr. Tollison: What were some of the fraternities there at the time? Do you remember the names?

Dr. Proctor: You know I might get confused between those fraternities and Furman fraternities but SAE, I think, was a prominent one.

Dr. Tollison: Kappa Alpha? KA? Does that sound familiar?

Dr. Proctor: Yeah, we had that.

Dr. Tollison: What were the parties like? Where would you all have parties?

Dr. Proctor: Well mostly off-campus. Certainly the dances were off-campus.

Dr. Tollison: Was that a result of the Baptist Convention that you all didn't have parties or dances on campus?

Dr. Proctor: Sure.

Dr. Tollison: Was there any type of resentment among students that there were limitations on their social venue here?

Dr. Proctor: There might have been some who resented it. I accepted it as just the way things were gonna be.

Dr. Tollison: The way it was. Right, okay.

Dr. Proctor: I have a different opinion at a later time about fraternities and all but that was when I became a trustee.

Dr. Tollison: Well let's talk about that a little bit. What was the relationship then?

Dr. Proctor: My first term as trustee I was put on the Social Affairs Committee. And Dr. Archie Ellis, who was pastor of the First Baptist Church in Columbia, was the chairman of the committee. And that was when they really got into controversy about fraternities and dancing and so forth. And our position sort of ran counter to the Baptists on the committee.

Dr. Tollison: Meaning that the Baptists were not supportive on on-campus fraternities and the board of trustees was.

Dr. Proctor: That's right. And we worked out a sort of compromise, and maybe you know that historically, where they, instead of calling them Greek letter fraternities, they were called something else. But anyway...

Dr. Tollison: Locals? Local clubs?

Dr. Proctor: Yeah. And eventually I think it did become nationally affiliated. But the trustees were looking to the interests of the students because of what we felt was, got restrictive and sort of hypocritical, we thought.

Dr. Tollison: In what sense hypocritical?

Dr. Proctor: Well, we condoned them going off campus and having their affairs but not on the campus and I think that was hypocritical.

Dr. Tollison: So is that when parties and dances became, began to be held on campus?

Dr. Proctor: Yes but it took a while.

Dr. Tollison: It took a while. Do you remember when the first...?

Dr. Proctor: No, I really don't.

Dr. Tollison: I think that was sometime in the late 60s maybe. I'll have to check on that. Let me see what else I have here. Do you remember Dean Daniel? Robert Norman Daniel?

Dr. Proctor: Oh yes.

Dr. Tollison: What are your memories of him?

Dr. Proctor: The most I remember of Dean Daniel was that he called me after I'd – this was my second year at Furman – he called me in and said "You know you're not doing well in Organic Chemistry." He said "As a matter of fact you're failing." And, well first of all, I was advised not to take Organic Chemistry my second year but I had to get Organic Chemistry to go to dental school and so I told him that I... Well he'd seen my transcript, he knew my background in chemistry was not too good and advised not to take it. I said "I've got to take Organic Chemistry." And I said "I've never failed anything in school yet and I think I can do it." So after six weeks I had a 40-some grade. Dean Daniel called me in and he said "Well, I told you so." So that's kind of the extent of my personal relationship with Dean Daniel but he was a good man. I enjoyed him.

Dr. Tollison: Were students close to him? Did you all have a lot of interaction with him? On a day-to-day basis did you all interact with him?

Dr. Proctor: I remember the day that we had a chapel – and you know Furman and Clemson were intense rivals at that time – and Dean Daniel got up before the chapel and implored that we bury the hatchet and one big old football player got up and said "Right in the head of the Clemson Tigers!"

Dr. Tollison: (laughs)

Dr. Proctor: But Dean Daniel, he was a kind gentleman. He really was. People liked him, students liked him

Dr. Tollison: Students liked him a lot.

Dr. Proctor: Yeah.

Dr. Tollison: Was he the main advisor to the students in terms of classes and their grades and things like this or did you all have faculty advisors?

Dr. Proctor: I don't know why particularly, he being Dean, why I had to confront him about my taking Organic Chemistry because Dr. John Sampey was head of Organic Chemistry.

Dr. Tollison: Right. Very well respected man, Dr. Sampey was as a chemist, very well respected.

Dr. Proctor: Oh yes.

Dr. Tollison: What do you remember about him?

Dr. Proctor: He was very strict, very...

Dr. Tollison: Tough?

Dr. Proctor: Tough, yeah, for me he was because I didn't have any background, didn't have any chemistry in high school, I just wasn't prepared for it. And Organic Chemistry was not a second-year course for Furman either. And he advised me not to take it but I said "Well I've got to have it." Actually I took Organic Chemistry at Clemson, I told you all, at the summer school at Clemson, that's where I took Organic Chemistry.

Dr. Tollison: Okay, gotcha. Do you remember Dr. Ives in Biology?

Dr. Proctor: Oh yes, in Biology.

Dr. Tollison: What do you remember about him?

Dr. Proctor: Well, you know memory fades but I liked Dr. Ives. He was a good professor and I did pretty well in Biology.

Dr. Tollison: Were those two men very well respected among the students? Were they sort of the stars of the faculty?

Dr. Proctor: Oh yes.

Dr. Tollison: Anyone else that you can remember that students particularly admired? What was it about them that students really liked?

Dr. Proctor: Well Dr. Ives had a sense of humor for one thing. He was strict but he was fair, treated students well. I don't know really what else to say about him.

Dr. Tollison: Okay. What about your wife's experiences at Greenville Woman's College? What did she major in?

Dr. Proctor: She majored in English and, I want to say French but I'm not sure that's right. She took Portuguese, took French, I think maybe she even took Spanish.

Dr. Tollison: Wow.

Dr. Proctor: I remember I was visiting her and she took me to Portuguese class with her and they talked Portuguese the whole time. Spoke it and look at me and laugh and I knew they were talking about me and I couldn't understand a word of it.

Dr. Tollison: Was it all women?

Dr. Proctor: No it wasn't all women.

Dr. Tollison: Was it on the Furman campus?

Dr. Proctor: Yeah.

Dr. Tollison: This was on the Furman campus, okay. So she'd taken the bus over. So how often would you all get to see each other if you were living on two different campuses? When did people date?

Dr. Proctor: Well she was a day student. My freshman year I went over to the Woman's College and dated over there but I didn't have any close relationships.

Dr. Tollison: What would you all do on dates?

Dr. Proctor: Beg pardon?

Dr. Tollison: Is this on the weekends? You all would date on the weekends?

Dr. Proctor: Yeah.

Dr. Tollison: What would a typical date be like? Would you go to Greenville or would you stay on campus?

Dr. Proctor: Pretty dull really.

Dr. Tollison: (laughs)

Dr. Proctor: You know I can't really remember anything very exciting about the dates until I started with a girlfriend.

Dr. Tollison: What did you do with her?

Dr. Proctor: Well we went to all the ball games.

Dr. Tollison: In Sistine Stadium?

Dr. Proctor: (nods)

Dr. Tollison: Okay.

Dr. Proctor: She didn't have a car, her father never did have a car. She lived on Arlington Avenue and that's a pretty long walk from Furman to Arlington Avenue. But I don't really know. I don't recall taking her to movies and things like that, you know. I ate at her house a lot.

Dr. Tollison: (laughs) That's nice. Just spent some time together. Did you go out to dinner? Were there places to go out to dinner in Greenville?

Dr. Proctor: (shakes head)

Dr. Tollison: No? So she graduated 1943. And when were you all married?

Dr. Proctor: '43.

Dr. Tollison: In '43, right after she graduated. So did she move to Atlanta then?

Dr. Proctor: She moved to Atlanta and stayed with a cousin and she got a job at the Ration Board. She [inaudible] war time.

Dr. Tollison: World War II.

Dr. Proctor: She got a job at the Ration Board and we were married in September of that year. You know, you look back on it, by present day activities, dating and what not, things seemed pretty dull, you know. You didn't have a car. Transportation was... You had to take a bus to get around town to a movie or something like that and we just didn't do a lot of outside things. Kids nowadays, my grandchildren all have cars, have had cars since they were in their teens.

Dr. Tollison: Uh huh. So did you serve in World War II? What were your activities during World War II? Were you in dental school?

Dr. Proctor: When I finished dental school in 1943...1943. And on the date, I can't remember precisely the date, but we had the graduation exercise, I got my diploma, the school administration turned the program over to the military and then I was sworn in as 1st Lieutenant of the Dental Core.

Dr. Tollison: Oh, okay.

Dr. Proctor: And then those who were [inaudible] were oriented as Lieutenant Junior Grade, I guess it was, in the Navy.

Dr. Tollison: So did you go overseas?

Dr. Proctor: No. That was in November, the 17th of November I guess, when I graduated. And then I got a delay in order to take the state board. And then I went into active duty January the 2nd.

Dr. Tollison: Of '44.

Dr. Proctor: Yeah. And I was sent to Fort Douglas, Utah... No, excuse me, I was sent to Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, for Medical Field Service School training for overseas. Finished my tour there. Was assigned to Ninth Service Command, Fort

Douglas, Utah. And from there I was assigned to Camp Roberts, California to Infantry Replacement Training Center. So I stayed there until '46 and at that time I was put on orders overseas, in '46, yeah '46, and my time in the service was such that I would have been up for separation before I finished a tour overseas, so I was taken off orders and assigned to Madigan General Hospital in Fort Lewis, Washington. I finished my time there.

Dr. Tollison: And then you moved back to Atlanta?

Dr. Proctor: No, I came back to Conway and entered a dental practice.

Dr. Tollison: And so then you and your wife came back here.

Dr. Proctor: (nods)

Dr. Tollison: Did President Plyler ask you to serve on the board or did Dr. Blackwell?

Dr. Proctor: No. The president doesn't ask you to be on the board. There's a nominating committee and generally the procedure at that time, it's not that way now. You see the South Carolina Baptist Convention elected the trustees. Furman would give them seven names of their recommended people for trustees. They didn't follow it necessarily. Sometimes they did, sometimes they didn't. But the committee of the Convention had its nominating committee. They selected who they wanted and then they brought it to the floor of the Convention. I think, I can't say this exactly, but I think I was nominated by some friends that I had and why I was elected, I don't know. So that's the way it was.

Dr. Tollison: Okay. And this was during...

Dr. Proctor: Furman had no connection with getting me as a trustee.

Dr. Tollison: Okay. Was this during President Plyler's presidency? The tail end of it?

Dr. Proctor: Yes.

Dr. Tollison: Okay. So '63ish, '64ish maybe, if Blackwell was inaugurated in February 2nd, I think, of '65?

Dr. Proctor: Well then this would probably have been a couple of years before that.

Dr. Tollison: How long was the term?

Dr. Proctor: How long was the...?

Dr. Tollison: Was the term?

Dr. Proctor: Five years.

Dr. Tollison: Five years.

Dr. Proctor: You could not succeed yourself. You could go back after a year.

Dr. Tollison: And did you? How many terms did you serve as trustee?

Dr. Proctor: Five.

Dr. Tollison: Oh wow! (laughs) A long time! We've got a lot to talk about.

Dr. Proctor: The dates are on the back of this chair. I can't remember them.

Dr. Tollison: Aww. Well I'll have to take a picture of that if you wouldn't mind. I can get that on film too.

Dr. Proctor: This was, I don't know what you'd call it, a trustee chair. Anyway this was on my last official meeting where I presided they presented me this chair. It's an academic chair, a trustee chair, an academic chair.

Dr. Tollison: Sure. Nice gift.

Dr. Proctor: And so it's engraved in the back.

Dr. Tollison: So were you, let's see, if you had five terms with a year in between.

Dr. Proctor: Um hmm.

Dr. Tollison: Were you a trustee – that would put you at maybe '93, '94 – were you a trustee when Furman separated from the Baptist Convention?

Dr. Proctor: No.

Dr. Tollison: No. Okay.

Dr. Proctor: I just got off about a year, maybe two years, before.

Dr. Tollison: Okay.

Dr. Proctor: But I was, I won't say I was involved in it, I was aware of it, I was acquainted with it and I was in contact with some of the people who were actually involved with it.

Dr. Tollison: And was that your last term? Have you served a term since?

Dr. Proctor: No, I haven't served.

Dr. Tollison: That was your last, right before the split. So early 90s or so.

Dr. Proctor: (nods)

Dr. Tollison: Okay. So President Plyler was president when you began your first term as a trustee. What were some of the issues facing – we've talked about the fraternities, of course – what were some of the other issues that trustees were concerned with at that point in time, in the early to mid 1950s? Race relations, that was big? The civil rights movement?

Dr. Proctor: Honestly, I don't recall any particular issues because it seems like I was involved in the, from day one, with the fraternity issue. I'm sure there were other things that trustees were concerned about and the administration was concerned about but I don't recall any.

Dr. Tollison: What do you remember about Wilbert Wood? Was he the chair when you began to serve?

Dr. Proctor: Who?

Dr. Tollison: Wilbert Wood.

Dr. Proctor: No, he came after that. I would imagine Alester Furman probably was chair.

Dr. Tollison: Oh. What do you remember about him?

Dr. Proctor: I admire him very much. He supported Furman 1000%, I mean just everything. Furman was it for him and he presided very well. You felt like that whatever he said was right, you know.

Dr. Tollison: Very devoted?

Dr. Proctor: What?

Dr. Tollison: Very devoted to Furman?

Dr. Proctor: Yeah. I'd say so.

Dr. Tollison: Was he well-respected among trustees?

Dr. Proctor: Oh, yeah, very much so.

Dr. Tollison: Did you get the feeling that he had a presence on campus that students and faculty were aware of as well?

Dr. Proctor: He was just "Mr. Furman" really, you know. Now I'm talking about Alester Senior, not Alester Junior. Alester, Jr. came later.

Dr. Tollison: Do you remember him too?

Dr. Proctor: Oh yes, he was a trustee for many years too.

Dr. Tollison: Was he the same as his dad?

Dr. Proctor: No, no, there wasn't anybody like Mr. Furman. He was one of a kind.

Dr. Tollison: (laughs) What's his legacy – Alester Furman, Sr. – in terms of his contributions? What do you think were his most important contributions?

Dr. Proctor: Not only his financial contributions, which I don't know how much it was but I'm sure it was substantial, but in his contacts with the business people. He brought a lot of attention to Furman that way. And so far as academic is concerned he supported it. I didn't ever consider that he was necessarily in the same category as Dr. Blackwell, for instance, but you know he supported the academic program. But in his contact with the business people and his financial contribution, I think it was substantial.

Dr. Tollison: Were you part of the search team that looked for a new president?

Dr. Proctor: No.

Dr. Tollison: Do you remember that process? Was it a trustee committee?

Dr. Proctor: Yes. I should know, in fact I know, but I can't recall the name of the chairman of the search committee for Dr. Blackwell. But I was not a part of it.

Dr. Tollison: What were they looking for?

Dr. Proctor: Pardon?

Dr. Tollison: What kind of president did they want to bring in? What kind of person were they looking for?

Dr. Proctor: Well, at that time Furman was considered a good liberal arts college but not nationally recognized. And it was the desire of the trustees to get somebody who was recognized as an educator to help bring Furman into national recognition and that became the overriding concern at that time. And so when they had the installation of Dr. Blackwell, they invited educators from Maine to Florida to California and they made a big, big effort to get those people who were very high in the academic world there. It was a very, very formal installation and there were representatives from major colleges all over the country. And, naturally, I was really out of my element. As a matter of fact, I started taking something the night before to settle my stomach. The next morning I got up and I still had butterflies and I took something else. We got in the academic procession and I was still nervous, took another one, and by the time I got up on the stage to preside I was sort of... If I hadn't... 'Cause I was still a little keyed up, I don't mean I went to sleep, but I would have been asleep if I

hadn't been so nervous. But it helped me to at least live through it. But I also saw Dr. Blackwell was taking Maalox too so I... (laughs)

Dr. Tollison: Did you think he was nervous too?

Dr. Proctor: Yeah.

Dr. Tollison: (laughs)

Dr. Proctor: I went in to use the bathroom and here was this big thing of Maalox.

Dr. Tollison: Could you tell that he was nervous?

Dr. Proctor: No, I couldn't tell he was nervous.

Dr. Tollison: (laughs) So he came from Florida State? Florida State University? Correct?

Dr. Proctor: (nods)

Dr. Tollison: So the trustees wanted someone that was nationally recognized but that also had similar ambitions for Furman – to make Furman a nationally recognized institution.

Dr. Proctor: Right.

Dr. Tollison: You hear the phrase “[inaudible] by national standards” a lot in connection with Dr. Blackwell. That was a phrase used as sort of a campaign slogan for a financial drive? For a financial campaign? Is that correct?

Dr. Proctor: Partially, but not solely.

Dr. Tollison: That was more a theme of his presidency.

Dr. Proctor: (nods)

Dr. Tollison: And he instituted this financial drive soon after he became president?

Dr. Proctor: Yes.

Dr. Tollison: Was that used primarily for construction on campus or endowment purposes?

Dr. Proctor: Well it was necessary to get endowment built up. And student aid, we needed support for student aid. We applied for a Ford Foundation grant, which you perhaps know, and I accompanied Dr. Blackwell and Dean Bonner and Mr....

Dr. Tollison: It wasn't Crain was it?

Dr. Proctor: No.

Dr. Tollison: Funderburk? Sapp Funderburk?

Dr. Proctor: No. It was...

Dr. Tollison: Was he a trustee?

Dr. Proctor: He wasn't a trustee. Gosh, I can't think of it. I'm embarrassed that these things are on tape.

Dr. Tollison: Oh no. Oh you're doing great.

Dr. Proctor: Who was it, Liberty Life Insurance?

Dr. Tollison: Oh, Hipp. Herman Hipp?

Dr. Proctor: Not Herman but...

Dr. Tollison: Neil Hipp? No, I think Neil Hipp is...

Dr. Proctor: I know Herman later became a trustee. But anyway Mr. Hipp arranged our housing, our accommodations in New York City. We went with the Ford Foundation and they rented a limousine to take us back and forth. It was a big deal, you know. But I thought it was very interesting to go through that process of getting ten million dollars from the Ford Foundation. That was the first really big grant after Dr. Blackwell got there.

Dr. Tollison: What was the connection between the stipulations of the Ford Foundation grant and desegregation? Were there stipulations there?

Dr. Proctor: I don't recall there was any.

Dr. Tollison: Let's talk a little bit about desegregation. Do you remember Furman's first African-American students – three graduate students and one undergraduate student to be in classes, I believe it was, the first day of classes was that February 2nd, 1965, when Gordon Blackwell was installed. Do you remember going through the controversy when, I guess Dean Bonner was interim president after Plyler put in his resignation, and wasn't Dean Bonner interim president for about a year?

Dr. Proctor: Yes, I think that's right.

Dr. Tollison: Do you remember that issue in terms of how it phased the trustees and how you all handled it? Bringing in African-American students?

Dr. Proctor: I don't recall any controversy at all with the trustees.

Dr. Tollison: Do you remember Dr. Bonner talking to the trustees and getting you all to vote on whether Furman should admit black students?

Dr. Proctor: I don't remember that. Maybe that was the year I was off or something.

Dr. Tollison: Okay. Does it make sense to you that Dr. Blackwell would have been very supportive of that?

Dr. Proctor: Oh yes, absolutely.

Dr. Tollison: How did he feel about such matters?

Dr. Proctor: How did I?

Dr. Tollison: How did he feel about such matters?

Dr. Proctor: I think he felt that they deserved an education as well as anyone else, no distinction between.

Dr. Tollison: He supposedly accepted the presidency of Furman...

Dr. Proctor: Yes, if we would accept black students.

Dr. Tollison: Right. How did the trustees react to that?

Dr. Proctor: Favorably.

Dr. Tollison: Favorably. Really? Was anyone a little nervous?

Dr. Proctor: I would say there were probably, I can think of one person that probably was opposed to that but I don't recall there being any controversy in the trustees about it.

Dr. Tollison: Was that one person the, at one point in time, the President of the American Bar Association? Was he an attorney? The one person who was opposed or a bit nervous? Do you remember?

Dr. Proctor: I don't remember that.

Dr. Tollison: I think that person may have been on the advisory council. Do you remember the relationship of the advisory council to the board of trustees?

Dr. Proctor: Yes. While I was chairman I had a lot of contact with the advisory council particularly Mr. Herman Lay was chairman of the advisory council during the financial campaign and so we had to meet together on those matters. They were very supportive, you know, their great contribution they made to Furman.

Dr. Tollison: Did he give you guys potato chips?

Dr. Proctor: No, he didn't give us potato chips. (laughs)

Dr. Tollison: Or Pepsi even? Maybe that was later. (laughs)

Dr. Proctor: After getting to know him and his wife too, I remember, it was kind of one of those, I shouldn't do it, frivolous things but...

Dr. Tollison: Oh no, go ahead.

Dr. Proctor: His wife came to one of the meetings and she had some very distinctive hose. It was sort of dark hose that had design on it. That was the frivolous thing I was thinking about. But they were very nice I liked them very much.

Dr. Tollison: He did not go to Furman, correct?

Dr. Proctor: I think he went one term maybe.

Dr. Tollison: Okay. Just a supporter.

Dr. Proctor: A very good supporter.

Dr. Tollison: I go to the PAC [Physical Activities Center] quite a bit that's named after Mr. Lay.

Dr. Proctor: I remember – I don't know which campaign it was, it seemed like there were several that I was involved in – and Mr. Hartness, I think perhaps he might have been chairman at the time, and they went to see Mr. Lay in Dallas. And after some chit chat, getting things familiar Mr. Lay – this is my understanding of what happened – Mr. Lay said "Well I know what you're here for. How much are you expecting out of me?" And Tom Hartness said, just like that, "Two million dollars." And then he said "I'll turn it over to my attorney and my people and we'll see what we can do." And that's it.

Dr. Tollison: Wow.

Dr. Proctor: Two million dollars.

Dr. Tollison: So is that how we got our workout center?

Dr. Proctor: That's right.

Dr. Tollison: (laughs) Well that's an interesting story. Tell me a little bit more about Dr. Blackwell's presidency: the nature of it, what his priorities were, things like that. What was important to him?

Dr. Proctor: That's a hard one to answer, you know. I was so high on Dr. Blackwell I just

approved of everything he did. I knew his motivations behind the actions he took. A lot of things we discussed, things that were not really public information. I guess it was something that was just natural: if you were president of an institution or if you're pastor of a church or whatever, you're chairman, you have to have some relationship, you know, discuss things that can't get out in public. And so I knew what was going on, I knew things that couldn't be made public about fund raising or whatever, you know. But everything that I ever knew about Dr. Blackwell was motivated by just the very highest ideal. He was very much interested in students. They had a student dialog – I'm sure you probably know about that – and they had students at their house just regularly. They're just so much interested in students. Another frivolous thing: when he came to Furman they had a dog, came from Florida State, and the dog was named... anyway it was a drink, I can't recall the name, but they changed the dog name to Shadow because it was Furman.

Dr. Tollison: (laughs) Was it something like martini?

Dr. Proctor: Yeah, it was just some... I don't know what it was...

Dr. Tollison: Something. An alcoholic drink?

Dr. Proctor: Yeah.

Dr. Tollison: And the changed the dog's name?

Dr. Proctor: It was interesting. But anyway, he was always thinking of Furman, he was always thinking of how to make Furman better, tried to create a spirit of good will with the constituency, tried not to antagonize the Baptists. And he also was a good money-raiser – although Dr. Johns, I guess his big thing was raising money – but Dr. Blackwell was so well respected that he could speak to foundations and people who could help Furman. To summarize his presidency would be very difficult. He just...

Dr. Tollison: What were some of the highlights? He spent about eleven years, nine years?

Dr. Proctor: Eleven I guess.

Dr. Tollison: I think eleven, I think he was from '65 to '76. What were some of the highlights during that time? Obviously Furman desegregated, first black student started coming to school. Phi Beta Kapa? Do you remember when Furman got a Phi Beta Kapa?

Dr. Proctor: Oh yes. That was an accomplishment, yeah. He was almost solely responsible for Phi Beta Kapa being established at Furman.

Dr. Tollison: They went after that pretty hard? Campaigned for that one pretty hard? Was that a big deal on campus?

Dr. Proctor: Yeah, it was a prestigious thing.

Dr. Tollison: Did you all have a big ceremony?

Dr. Proctor: No, I don't remember a ceremony. I'm sure there was but I don't remember.

Dr. Tollison: Something to be proud of certainly. So when did you and Dr. Blackwell get to be... You all developed a friendship while you were chairman, is that correct? And he was president?

Dr. Proctor: It started that way. And then we spent summers at Lake Lure. I bought the property from him.

Dr. Tollison: When was that? When did you all start vacationing there?

Dr. Proctor: I bought the property in 1971.

Dr. Tollison: What were some of the things – you mentioned that there was very close dialog between the president and the chair and that there were things that you all talked about that weren't necessarily public knowledge – what were some of those things that he expressed concern to you?

Dr. Proctor: Some of the things it'd be best not to repeat, really.

Dr. Tollison: Okay.

Dr. Proctor: But they're not anything controversial. It was just personal things that would come up that we'd have to discuss.

Dr. Tollison: Concerns that he had and he used you as a sounding board so you all, sort of, were in this together kind of jointly.

Dr. Proctor: Right. But I don't recall any major controversies that went on.

Dr. Tollison: I would imagine that he would have had to have been very careful about how he dealt with the Baptist Convention. That, I'm sure, was a big concern of his. Because he was coming off... The Baptists were very opposed to desegregation at Furman, to black students attending Furman.

Dr. Proctor: The biggest controversy occurred over the science building.

Dr. Tollison: Really?

Dr. Proctor: It was over the science building. Furman was granted a two million dollar grant for the science building. The Baptists opposed it because the restrictions in the science building for the money that you could not teach religion in it. You couldn't have religious icons and things of that nature. And the Baptists said

that was... It went against the separation of church and state. Well, we never intended to teach religion in the science building, it really was not an issue with us. And I was chairman at the time and I received – and I still have them here at my house, don't read them very often but every now and then I'll go back to see what those tumultuous days were like. But I got letters from all over the state from Baptists criticizing Furman and the trustees for accepting the grant. So we had a meeting in Columbia, a special meeting where Furman would present its position. It was televised, had it at the Baptist Church on Park Street, the Baptist Church, I think. And I had to present the Furman position to the Baptists. The Furman people received it very well. The Baptists didn't receive it well at all. The final climax to it came at the State Baptist Convention in Columbia. And we had a committee of the trustees to meet with some of the Baptist leaders and we worked out a compromise. The compromise was that – and, personally, it went against the grain to make this compromise I must say, I had to present it to the Convention – the compromise was that we would relinquish the two million dollar grant if the Baptist Convention would make it up.

Dr. Tollison: Did they agree to that?

Dr. Proctor: They agreed to that.

Dr. Tollison: They provided the two million dollars.

Dr. Proctor: And so at the State Convention I had to speak for the trustees, accept the compromise. You see, what we were concerned about was that if you allow outside forces or elements or agencies or whatever to dictate policy you lose your accreditation, or your accreditation is in question. And if we were letting the Baptist Convention dictate policy to the trustees, to the institution, we were in jeopardy of the accreditation. So we had to tip toe around to work that out, so we did.

Dr. Tollison: Did things settle down a little bit for a little while after that?

Dr. Proctor: Yeah.

Dr. Tollison: And you built Plyler Hall?

Dr. Proctor: In addition to that, Furman came out really well. We got the money, but we also were able to get a loan at 3%. If we'd kept the grant we wouldn't have gotten the loan, you see. It was a different thing, it was just an outright grant. But then we were able to borrow two million dollars at 3% interest and still got the money.

Dr. Tollison: So why did Gordon Blackwell decide to retire in 1976?

Dr. Proctor: Well I think he'd just always intended to retire when he got to retirement age.

Dr. Tollison: So it was what his plans had always been? So no specific incident or turn of events created it?

Dr. Proctor: No.

Dr. Tollison: And what did he do in his retirement?

Dr. Proctor: He was a consultant. I think he became a trustee of Eckerd College in Florida and he did consulting with various schools. I think mostly consulting was what he did.

Dr. Tollison: Did you all continue to see each other a lot?

Dr. Proctor: Oh yes

Dr. Tollison: At the lake and...?

Dr. Proctor: Even more after he retired because we had more time together. And I retired too and so we spent a lot more time together at Lake Lure. And then, of course, his wife developed Alzheimer's and it was very difficult for him.

Dr. Tollison: I've heard stories about him playing records for her and telling her stories about when they were dating and things like that.

Dr. Proctor: They were a wonderful couple. They had a sense of humor that was just superb. And being next door to them we would hear [inaudible] and we would hear laughter, just riotous laughter. I said "Liz's telling some more of her stories." And sometimes they'd have stories that one would say part of the story and the other would tell the other part. But she had a great sense of humor. An illustration of her sense of humor was that she had a house guest, this was a cousin, and she had told everybody. I mean one of her stories was this mountain lady named Mrs. Ruff and how she had on mountain clothes and several petticoats and bonnet and all that sort of thing. So this particular afternoon her cousin was visiting and Liv excused herself for the afternoon, she was gonna take a nap. She went out the porch and inside the house to her bedroom and she put on clothes that would simulate Mrs. Ruff. She also had a wig and a bonnet. There's a stairway just outside her bedroom door that went downstairs and then from downstairs you could go out the back. And she did that and she went around to the front door and knocked on the door and became Mrs. Ruff for her cousin. She pulled that off so well and she asked for "Lady Blackwell." "Well she's resting." "Resting at this time of day? I've got to see her." "Well you'll just have to come back later 'cause she's resting." And she just went on about that resting business and she said "Well I'll just... I can't wait any longer, I've got to go. I can't believe anybody is resting in the middle of the day." So she left and she went out, went back down the stairs and came and changed her clothes and came out yawning, you know, to her cousin and her cousin was just fit to be tied. She just couldn't wait to tell her about that "Mrs. Ruff." She really

did. I mean that's the true story. Absolutely, she pulled it off.

Dr. Tollison: (laughs) That's great.

Dr. Proctor: She was a delightful person. I put this out here, I was thinking about it this morning.

WALKS OVER AND PICKS UP PHOTO ALBUM

Dr. Tollison: Can I take a peek?

Dr. Proctor: That's up at the lake.

Dr. Tollison: Aww. These are great photos.

Dr. Proctor: They're such a wonderful couple. And that one was given to me just a couple weeks ago. See this purple coat?

Dr. Tollison: Mmm hmm.

Dr. Proctor: The occasion of that was that we were visiting my brother and his wife over at Keowee Key and Dr. and Mrs. Blackwell went with us to a Furman/Clemson football game and they were at a Clemson alumni house or something. And that's my wife and I. I thought it was interesting.

Dr. Tollison: Looks like you have on purple too.

Dr. Proctor: Yeah.

Dr. Tollison: And he's got on his purple coat. And this is you all at the lake. Aww, how nice.

Dr. Proctor: Just to give you a little insight of how close we were.

Dr. Tollison: Sure. I might try to get that on camera a little bit later if you don't mind. Well, were you able to attend Dr. Blackwell's funeral recently?

Dr. Proctor: Yes, I did.

Dr. Tollison: I was there as well this past spring.

Dr. Proctor: I went to the private funeral and then went to the house, went with the family to the chapel for the service.

Dr. Tollison: I was able to meet with him back in 1999. I sat down with him for several hours, and he and my father were actually quite close for a time. I guess Dr. Blackwell's grandson grew up with my little brother so there's a family connection there as well. And we used to stop by every Christmas and see Dr. and Mrs. Blackwell

and leave them a fruit basket. Anything else that you want to add about Dr. Blackwell, about his presidency or his accomplishments or him as a person? I know you all were quite close.

Dr. Proctor: No. Other than my brother, I'd say I was closer to him than anybody else, any other man.

Dr. Tollison: What is his historic impact on Furman? What's his long-term legacy or contribution to Furman? Do you think he always had it in the back of his mind that he wanted to return to Furman after having been a professor there?

Dr. Proctor: Probably. I never heard him express that but I suspect he was very pleased to be asked to come back. Well, I think his legacy is that he brought Furman to national recognition. And academically he brought it from a small provincial liberal arts college to a university and recognized. I'm sure that the endowment increased, it was important. The physical plant certainly changed and improved and improved. But I guess his biggest legacy would be that he brought it to an academic position that was recognized throughout the country.

Dr. Tollison: Was the student center very important to him? Building the student center?

Dr. Proctor: Yes. I was there for the groundbreaking for the student center.

Dr. Tollison: Named after the Watkins? Do you remember the Watkins?

Dr. Proctor: I don't know the Watkins. I don't know how the name came about to tell the truth. My former minister told me the other day the reason that there was – Furman Magazine had a picture on the front cover of the groundbreaking?

Dr. Tollison: Yes.

Dr. Proctor: My minister said that he found his picture in that. He was one of the Furman Singers and he was in that picture.

Dr. Tollison: Oh really! What's his name?

Dr. Proctor: It's Andy Bass.

Dr. Tollison: I might have to talk with him too. He must have been a student there.

Dr. Proctor: Yeah.

Dr. Tollison: That was in 19, I guess, 53 during the groundbreaking.

Dr. Proctor: He and his wife graduated Furman as well.

Dr. Tollison: Let's talk a little bit about Dr. Johns. How did Dr. Johns' leadership style differ

from Dr. Blackwell? What were the trustees looking for?

Dr. Proctor: Well Dr. Johns was more of a business man and I guess his legacy would be from that standpoint, that he promoted to where we got bequests and were able to build the school up. At first I think there was a concern that he couldn't fill Dr. Blackwell's shoes because he was not academically that recognized. And, you know you have to have, faculty has to recognize and respect the president. And there was some concern – now I don't mean some concern, I guess, with trustees maybe. But the faculty quickly accepted him and respected him. He was an entirely different type of person than Dr. Blackwell.

Dr. Tollison: How was he different?

Dr. Proctor: Well he wasn't reserved and formal like Dr. Blackwell was. If he came to speak at a church, why he'd tell jokes from... Like he came out of church and then told about the time he was driving to this church to speak and that he was running behind and a patrolman stopped him. Just as the patrolman started to pull up he remembered his seatbelt. So he fastened his seatbelt as quick as he could so when the patrolman came and said he'd been driving too fast and wanted to see his registration and he didn't have his registration card. And he said "Well, this is Furman's car." And that didn't sit so well with the patrolman either. Finally he convinced him that he was who he was supposed to be. He said "By the way, do you always run your seatbelt through the steering wheel?"

Dr. Tollison: Oh no!

Dr. Proctor: Things like that, you know. Dr. Blackwell would never approach it that way but Dr. Johns did. And he went over real well with the Baptists in that familiar – now I wouldn't say that Dr. Blackwell was pompous but I mean some people might have thought he was pompous, you know, a little formal – but Dr. Johns was just a plain regular guy and that went over well with the Baptists.

Dr. Tollison: What do you remember about having gotten along so well with the Baptists for all the events that led up to when it split during the Baptist Convention? Could you see that coming decades earlier?

Dr. Proctor: Beg pardon?

Dr. Tollison: Could you see the split coming decades earlier or was it a genuine surprise?

Dr. Proctor: I saw the problem and I thought it had to come really. We'd have people, ministers or other people, want to speak to the trustees at meetings, at our official meetings, make protests. I don't mean it was frequent but I can think of one instance. And trustees saw more and more evidence of the Convention trying to control Furman and affect the decisions the trustee made. And that just couldn't go on, you know, that way. If Furman was to reach its goal of being a recognized, first rate university then we couldn't have constant effort of the

Baptist Convention to dictate what was going to be done. I thought it was inevitable and I was in complete support of it. As I said, I knew some of the people that were working on the committee to bring it about and discussed those things with them, you know. Not that I had any part in it but they asked me how trustees had done so and so, how things had developed with the trustees, sort of give some insight as to what the trustee opinion had been for these years. It was a concern also and I still have that concern – I'm a Baptist and Furman has always been a Baptist school from its inception – we're getting away, Furman's getting away from that now. And although it can be said that Furman still has an influence, a Christian influence and even a Baptist influence, it's getting less and less and less. It's getting more secular and getting away from some of the principles that made Furman what it was supposed to be.

Dr. Tollison: Like which ones? Which principles do you think...?

Dr. Proctor: I'm an outsider now. I'm not involved. I don't know anything about the administration or what's going on or anything on this front but, from what I see, it's catering to money, people with money and I guess it's necessary. Furman has done some great things and they've built a lot of buildings. And this bequest from Mr. Hollingsworth, for example, that was something that I knew about long ago.

Dr. Tollison: Really.

Dr. Proctor: But it wasn't something... you're asking things you can't tell, you know? I knew about the Hollingsworth bequest. I was in the meeting with Dr. Johns and Mr.... the man that sort of worked out the details, what's his name, he's dead now.

Dr. Tollison: Was he a trustee?

Dr. Proctor: That was before this all happened. That had nothing to do with the separation from the Baptists. That had nothing to do with that. That's just an aside.

Dr. Tollison: What year was that when you all were meeting with the Hollingsworth people?

Dr. Proctor: I don't know. It's been probably my next to last term as trustee, as chairman of it.

Dr. Tollison: In the early 80s?

Dr. Proctor: It's been a long time ago and Dr. Blackwell had made the initial contact and Dr. Johns pursued it. But it was... We didn't know when it was gonna happen and he didn't want anything said about it 'til he died and it was not public.

Dr. Tollison: Did you meet him, John Hollingsworth?

Dr. Proctor: Pardon?

Dr. Tollison: Did you meet him? Mr. Hollingsworth? Did you meet him ever?

Dr. Proctor: No. He was a very private man.

Dr. Tollison: So you all met with his attorneys maybe?

Dr. Proctor: (nods) I've forgotten what we were talking about.

Dr. Tollison: We were talking about Furman sort of abandoning some of its, what people see as its core values, the Baptists?

Dr. Proctor: As I say, I'm not privy to what's going on at Furman but just as an observer it seems to me – well I've got a few contacts I must say, a few contacts inside that tell me things – I'm not dissatisfied with the way Furman's going but I just feel that we've lost something.

Dr. Tollison: Do you think that's inevitable when there's a split like that?

Dr. Proctor: It's inevitable. I knew it was going to happen. My successor as trustee was Mike Barnett, he's from Conway, an attorney. And he tried to put into, and I don't know, the motions or something, when they were going through this process of separating from the Baptists, he made an effort to put into the minutes things that would keep Furman Baptist but it didn't go over, it wasn't accepted.

Dr. Tollison: In terms of not necessarily having a formal relationship with the Baptist Convention but maintaining a Baptist identity? Is that what he wanted to preserve?

Dr. Proctor: Yeah.

Dr. Tollison: And that wasn't a very popular idea. Why do you think that wasn't a popular...?

Dr. Proctor: I don't know.

Dr. Tollison: Was there a belief among outsiders that Furman's connection to the Baptists was restrictive and therefore there was sort of a feeling over Furman's potential growth especially on academic growth?

Dr. Proctor: I think so.

Dr. Tollison: And that [inaudible]?

Dr. Proctor: I agree with that description of it. Then of course you had different governance. During my days as trustee there were, I said seven, I believe there were five, five trustees each year, and it was customary to have at least two of those trustees to be ministers.

Dr. Tollison: Was that written in the...?

Dr. Proctor: No. But I think that Baptists were insistent that you have at least two ministers there and all the trustees had to be Baptists, you see, South Carolina Baptists, not out of state Baptists either. Had to be South Carolina Baptists. So when you lose that... I don't know if there are any ministers on the board at all anymore.

Dr. Tollison: Dr. Batson I believe is still on the board. I know he's trustee emeritus.

Dr. Proctor: Is he? Well he's a good one to have. And he was a very great supporter during those days of controversy. But it was getting where the fundamentalists, or conservatives or whatever you want term you want to put, they were beginning to get the positions and ignoring the ones that Furman was recommending. They were putting their people in and it seemed that that's what was gonna happen, that we were gonna have a trustee board be largely fundamentalists or conservatives that would run counter to what Furman was all about.

CHANGE AUDIO TAPE – PART 7 FROM FUSE VERSION 01:30:03

Dr. Tollison: ...concerned about the direction Furman is going in?

Dr. Proctor: Well it's not that I'm concerned, I just...

Dr. Tollison: Not dissatisfied but...

Dr. Proctor: From what little I know I don't see a lot of emphasis on... Well it's hard to explain how I feel about it because I don't really know what's going on but from what little I learn from other sources is that everything is geared to moneyed people and to students who are from more affluent families. I guess that's what concerns me a little bit. Furman I felt was a school for Baptists – not that it's just for Baptists – but made it possible for our students, our margin income people to get a quality education in a Christian setting. Now it's very expensive. It puts Furman out of the realm of possibility for so many deserving South Carolina Baptist students. It seems to me that that gets away from what Furman was intended to be. I guess there's no way it can be otherwise but it just a little bit bothers me because I grew up that way and I came to Furman when it was different and I was a trustee when it was different and now if you're a trustee you almost have to be very wealthy and be able to give a lot of money to Furman, you know. In fact when I was trustee there's always a feeling that you – nobody would push you to give – but the trustees were supposed to lead. And a lot of trustees didn't have the money to lead even when I was on it.

Dr. Tollison: Were you a trustee under Minor Mickel when she was chair of the board?

Dr. Proctor: Yes, I believe I was maybe... I was thinking about that the other day after you had written me the letter. I'm not sure.

Dr. Tollison: I think she took over in '89 but I'm not positive about that.

Dr. Proctor: She was a trustee. I knew her quite well and served with her. I'll have to look back there and see the dates of my term. But anyway, yeah, I knew Minor very well.

Dr. Tollison: What's she like?

Dr. Proctor: She was particular. She had a good business sense. I didn't really know her that well personally. I just knew as, at meetings and so forth. Her husband, Buck, I knew him but not socially or anything like that. They were very big Furman supporters. Sometimes I'd be invited to sit in the President's box for football games, I'd see her that way.

Dr. Tollison: Was she well respected among the trustees?

Dr. Proctor: Oh yes.

Dr. Tollison: Do trustees elect a chair? Is that how that happens?

Dr. Proctor: There's a nominating committee of the trustees, usually three people on the nominating committee, and they nominate a chairman and vice chairman. The way I came to be vice chairman, I think, now this only my viewpoint. See, most of the trustees are from the upper part of the state and I was one of the few from the lower part of the state. And I think it was an effort to give recognition to trustees from the lower part of the state. I was not qualified. Nothing about by ability or my background or all was sufficient to say "Well he needs to be... he'll make a good chairman." And well vice chairman doesn't have anything to do anyway unless the chair retires like he did with me.

Dr. Tollison: You served how many terms as chairman?

Dr. Proctor: Six.

Dr. Tollison: As chairman?

Dr. Proctor: (nods)

Dr. Tollison: Six terms total as a trustee.

Dr. Proctor: Six years out of the twenty-five I served as trustee.

Dr. Tollison: Oh, six years. Okay. So five terms as a trustee and then six years as chair. And then how many years were you vice chair?

Dr. Proctor: I was only vice chair that one year.

Dr. Tollison: And that's when Wilbert Wood was in an automobile accident?

Dr. Proctor: Hmm?

Dr. Tollison: That's when Wilbert Wood was in the automobile accident and you stepped up.

Dr. Proctor: Yes.

Dr. Tollison: Who was your vice chair?

Dr. Proctor: You know, I don't remember. But, of course, I finished out the year as vice chair. And then, whatever, I must have not embarrassed them too much and so they elected me chairman for the next year. And I don't remember when it occurred, but over time I was elected chairman three more times, I guess.

Dr. Tollison: How do you think, other than some of the things that we've already talked about, how else do you think that Furman has changed since you were a student there and your observations as a trustee? Obviously there's a new campus. Was that controversial?

Dr. Proctor: No. Well I don't know that I have anything further to comment about that, other than I've said about Furman is going in a different direction in its emphasizing academics – which is good, I have nothing to say against that – but if it makes it very difficult for deserving, less affluent students to get admitted, that to me is a disappointment.

Dr. Tollison: Did Dr. Blackwell have a strong faith?

Dr. Proctor: Pardon?

Dr. Tollison: Did Dr. Blackwell have a strong faith? What was his religion, where did he go to church?

Dr. Proctor: Oh yes. He was Baptist. His father was a Baptist minister. His wife was Episcopalian so he, over time, attended the Episcopal Church and the Baptist Church, too.

Dr. Tollison: Very different.

Dr. Proctor: When they were out there at Lake Lure they went to the Episcopal Church. But... I almost remembered the dog's name. (laughs) But yes, he had a very strong faith. He was a strong Christian.

Dr. Tollison: What about mandatory chapel? Do you remember that? Was there a big controversy over mandatory chapel?

Dr. Proctor: Mandatory chapel?

Dr. Tollison: Students having to go to chapel services?

Dr. Proctor: I don't recall that there was. There might have been but it didn't affect me, it didn't touch me.

Dr. Tollison: Uh huh. How often did you all have to go to chapel when you were a student?

Dr. Proctor: I don't really remember. I suppose once a week. I don't recall.

Dr. Tollison: During the week and then did most students go to church on Sundays?

Dr. Proctor: Didn't have anything outside the church, we didn't have any school-sponsored service.

Dr. Tollison: Right. So did most people go to, say First Baptist Church?

Dr. Proctor: That's where I went.

Dr. Tollison: In Greenville.

Dr. Proctor: And then later I went down the street because that's where my girlfriend went to church.

Dr. Tollison: Do you remember how Dr. Blackwell handled... in terms of all the student protests of the late 1960s and the Vietnam era. There were a few student protests at Furman during Dr. Blackwell's presidency. Do you remember how he handled those? Or do you remember the trustees hearing about there was a ban on, the administration had to have the final say on which speakers the students invited to campus, the speaker ban, and students were very upset about this. Do you remember how Dr. Blackwell handled these types of incidents with students?

Dr. Proctor: No I really don't. I recall there was some controversy about denying – whether it was Stokely Carmichael – or somebody that was very controversial. The students thought should be allowed to speak and I think Furman denied them.

Dr. Tollison: George Ware maybe?

Dr. Proctor: I don't remember. It might not have been Stokely Carmichael but it was a very controversial person to come on the Furman campus, particularly with our relationship with the State Baptists and so forth, you know, [inaudible]. But Dr. Blackwell believed in academic freedom and so – I don't recall frankly that touching trustees in my time.

Dr. Tollison: He told me that when he was a student there he used to write, this was during the depression, [inaudible] presidency, and he'd write editorials for I guess it was The Hornet?

Dr. Proctor: Yes.

Dr. Tollison: Was that the student paper when you were there, The Hornet?

Dr. Proctor: Well yeah The Hornet was always writing stuff, you know, that would rankle the trustees and other people. Sometimes I got a little disturbed at what they wrote but Dr. Blackwell, you know, has freedom of expression. He stands for that.

Dr. Tollison: He said the president used to bring him into his office when he was a student there and get on him about what he had written in support of President Roosevelt. (laughs)

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Dr. Tollison: Well, anything else that you have to add? Anything else that you think is historically important? I know when you were a student the football team was the Hornets, right? And then the basketball team was something else.

Dr. Proctor: The Purple Hurricane.

Dr. Tollison: The Purple Hurricane. And what was the baseball team?

Dr. Proctor: I don't remember. Now the Hornets, that doesn't sound right for football. I'm trying to think of what was before the Paladins but that came much later. I don't know. My memory's not very good anymore anyway.

Dr. Tollison: Oh, it's great. Do you want to show me your chair and then maybe I can get those pictures on camera as well? Also you mentioned something that was very interesting to me, that you still have some letters about some of the Baptist Convention?

Dr. Proctor: Yeah, somewhere I have them. Every time I start to clean up and throw away stuff I'll say "I just have to keep this to really bring back the memory of that time." Those were very difficult days for me as chairman. I was under so much stress and I had developed a digestive problem that I think lasted for several years because of that. It just really was very stressful and I'm glad we lived through it. And it was mostly about that science building.

Dr. Tollison: When you look back at your term as chairman do you remember it as a controversial time? You were having to deal with a lot of conflict?

Dr. Proctor: No, not really except for that particular year. Things went along pretty well. Trustees are not supposed to involve themselves in day-to-day operations. They set policy. And the administration takes care of these problems that occur and usually don't get the trustees. And unless something comes up that for some reason was brought to our attention, these things just, we don't know anything about them. And I guess the most disturbing thing to trustees is reading The

Paladin, seeing some of the articles in there, you know. We want everything to be sweetness and light, you know, just everybody happy and nothing controversial. And then the student activists write something ugly. (laughs) You know that's the way it ought to be, they have the right to do that.

Dr. Tollison: Would you identify the controversy over the science building as the most difficult point of your tenure?

Dr. Proctor: That was difficult.

Dr. Tollison: Any other difficult times?

Dr. Proctor: Not as chairman I think. I just thought we'd never get rid of the problem of the fraternities and dancing. And that went on for my entire five years when I was first trustee. And I thought that was never gonna to end, but it did.

Dr. Tollison: When did you feel like it finally resolved itself?

Dr. Proctor: I don't really know. I guess it's when we changed the Greek letter fraternities to... I've forgotten what we called them actually.

Dr. Tollison: SAE became Centaur.

Dr. Proctor: That's right.

Dr. Tollison: And the "Teaks" [TKE] were the Knights Eternal.

Dr. Proctor: That's right, they were using different names and I thought that was hypocritical too, you know.

Dr. Tollison: Just calling it something else.

Dr. Proctor: Yeah. It was really hypocritical. I preferred to leave like it was. I didn't think there was anything wrong with that.

Dr. Tollison: What was the concern of the Baptists?

Dr. Proctor: In fact, I was in a fraternity all my dental school years, I was fraternity.

Dr. Tollison: What was the concern of the Baptists? Why were they so anti-fraternity?

Dr. Proctor: Baptists would say that fraternities lead to an elitist relationship. If you're not a fraternity man or girl from another fraternity you're sort of second class, you know. And if you don't get...

Dr. Tollison: Accepted, rushed...

Dr. Proctor: Rush week [inaudible] then you get tapped, is that how it is, then, you know, you're just nothing. And that's one of the things. Plus the fact fraternities were considered to be, by the general Baptist population, at least, places where sinful things go on. Drinking and other things. Now if they knew what went on in some of the dental fraternities they would really have something to think about. But I thought the fraternities at Furman were well-ordered. I didn't see anything scandalous that went on in the fraternities.

Dr. Tollison: Was there drinking in those fraternities?

Dr. Proctor: I'm sure there was, yeah.

Dr. Tollison: Dancing too? Off campus?

Dr. Proctor: Off campus, certainly. They had dances and all, and sure there was drinking.

Dr. Tollison: Anything else you'd like to add?

Dr. Proctor: No. I'd just ask if you could go through this tape and edit it and get out those things that... 'Cause I sort of adlibbed on things that were not pertinent to the subject.

Dr. Tollison: That's okay. That's perfectly fine. We can let people who have to watch that later deal with that. They can fast forward.

Dr. Proctor: But I've enjoyed talking to you about Furman.

Dr. Tollison: Well I enjoyed listening to your stories

Dr. Proctor: I'm not sure it's been something really worthwhile to have in the archives.

Dr. Tollison: It will be. I assure you. Thank you very much for your time. Do you have those letters that were sent to you? Are they easily accessible?

Dr. Proctor: I'll have to search to find them. They aren't readily accessible. They're somewhere in my conglomeration of things.

Dr. Tollison: Right. Furman has files of letters that the Baptist Convention, members of the Baptist Convention, Baptist churches, ministers, have sent to Furman at various times. And, I'm sure you would like to keep them for now, but if you would ever consider, or please consider, I guess, donating some of the letters to the Furman Archives that, of course, the Archives would take care of them and you can have access to them whenever you like. It would be historically important for Furman to maybe have something like this down the road. It's just something to think about.

Dr. Proctor: Well my only concern about it is that these were letters from individuals to me

and to have their names get into archives, you know, of things that they said about Furman and about the...

Dr. Tollison: Well we've got hundreds of other ones. I can assure you of that

Dr. Proctor: Some of them were sort of ugly, you know, you wonder how they could consider themselves Christians.

Dr. Tollison: I'm sure if that was a concern of yours, you could stipulate in a document sort of similar to what we have, to what you signed. You could stipulate a certain period of time that they could be closed or that the person who wrote the letter, if some of those people are still living, you could stipulate a certain time that that not be available to anyone. It's just something for you to consider because it might be historically important for Furman but only if you're comfortable.

TAPING PLAQUE ON CHAIR

Dr. Tollison: Okay, let's see if I can get that. "In appreciation to Eugene C. Proctor for twenty years of service as Trustee of Furman University. 1956 to '60, 1963 to '67, 1969 to '73, and 1975 to 1979." Great.

TAPING DR. PROCTOR WALKING INTO A DIFFERENT ROOM

Dr. Tollison: So this is what you got after...

Dr. Proctor: You can't come in here, now.

Dr. Tollison: Okay. I'll stay in here.

Dr. Proctor: It's alright. You'll see my dog.

Dr. Tollison: Aww. What's its name?

Dr. Proctor: That's my live-in companion.

Dr. Tollison: (laughs)

Dr. Proctor: Let's see, where is this thing?

Dr. Tollison: What's your dog's name?

TAPING PHOTOS

Dr. Tollison: Dr. Proctor and his wife, Dr. and Mrs. Blackwell at Lake Lure, where they were neighbors side by side, and then the two couples together. For the Clemson/Furman football game.

TAPING STATUE

Dr. Tollison: This is what they gave you after your last term

Dr. Proctor: After the last term, yeah.

Dr. Tollison: Well, look at that!

Dr. Proctor: They said I already had gotten two chairs. I had another chair given, but it doesn't have a plaque on the other chair.

Dr. Tollison: And what does that say? "Presented by Furman University with appreciation to Eugene C. Proctor." This one has all your terms: '56 to '60, '63 to '67, '69 to '73, '75 to '79, and 1985 to 1989. Well that is very nice. I like that an awful lot

Dr. Proctor: Yeah, it's really nice.

Dr. Tollison: You should be very proud of that

Dr. Proctor: Oh yes.

Dr. Tollison: Well thank you very much for showing me that.