

Marguerite Hays

Interviewee: Marguerite Hays

Interviewer: Courtney Tollison

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Transcript

00:00

Mrs. Hays: I met with all kinds of advance people.

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm.

Mrs. Hays: At that meeting I went to... What are you looking for?

Dr. Tollison: My pen.

Mrs. Hays: You want to use this one?

Dr. Tollison: [Inaudible]. Thank you. I'm sure it'll come up.

Mrs. Hays: You know they wanted everything just to be absolutely perfect. At the meeting in downtown that I went to, one of the people who were going to be accompanying him said, "what does he need with another honorary degree, what is he going to do with another honorary degree?" He just said that to the council. And another one of the security people said, "he's going to sail it out the window of the airplane."

Dr. Tollison: Not very nice.

Mrs. Hays: But anyway, that's just to say that the advance people are pretty jaded, I think. Anyway, we went according to a very prescribed procedure, and the Bushes were to be brought in a motorcade across town, with all these signs, and all that. They stopped traffic in [inaudible], a street that came into the route of the, and there were Furman cars that were in the motorcade. And then they were to come, and they did, about the right time, and come in [inaudible] to the back of the music building and into the green room. We have a green room near Daniel Recital Hall, downstairs. And we were to meet them, and I was to be there, and the Johnses were invited, and we had to have certain kind of flower arrangements and...

Dr. Tollison: Did they specify what flowers?

Mrs. Hays: The advance people, they did in advance. They did discuss the flowers...,

We were planning to handle the flower arrangements but they..., the whole thing was going to be that they were going to have flower arrangements and they'd be from someone at the university with a card. I guess those were the main worries, a few other things...

Dr. Tollison: And who were the flowers from?

Mrs. Hays: They were, would be from the Johnses. They said they wanted somebody, they wanted..., well anyway, ended up they were from the Johnses. But when they got there, with a number of other people who came along with them, and we talked to them briefly, and then walked into the auditorium, or to the back of the auditorium.

Dr. Tollison: With [inaudible].

Mrs. Hays: Yes. [inaudible] Anyway it all went very smoothly until... Well, for one thing, Bush never had a chance to look at his speech. The speech was written by someone who was at Furman in advance, not a Furman person, but part of the advance team, I guess, because it was handed to him right in the green room while, and he never really looked at it. Anyway, after the processional, and he came in and got on the stage, and he started his speech, and then the sound in the auditorium went away, cut away, cut off. What had happened was that the Furman people had wanted to put, because the faculty was processing and sitting on the stage behind him, they wanted to put the sound wire under the stage and to come up out at the microphone. But the Bush security people didn't want anything under the stage, so they had them tape it across the stage, and someone from the faculty walking over there just kicked it loose.

05:21

Dr. Tollison: [laughs]

Mrs. Hays: So, it was, it was bad.

Dr. Tollison: So, what did they do?

Mrs. Hays: There wasn't anything to be done. Finally, sound was restored in the auditorium although we missed part of it. I mean he just kept on talking.

Dr. Tollison: He kept on talking.

Mrs. Hays: He kept on talking although you couldn't hear him. But it was also scheduled to be on statewide television, and it wasn't. They thought...

Dr. Tollison: Did they stop running it when they realized they couldn't hear it?

Mrs. Hays: I guess so. I don't know exactly what happened. I know that the Bush, Bush people were furious. They were quite mad at me, mad at everybody. And, you know, if the security people had not been so determined that they, I don't know why they couldn't run the wire underneath the floor. But anyway, the Bush people didn't really know that or appreciate that. So, it didn't turn out too well, but it was a big, you know, it was a big day anyway.

Dr. Tollison: What did the Bushes say?

Mrs. Hays: They did not stay the night. They didn't talk. They just flew in, and then flew right back out, without a talk.

Dr. Tollison: Why did Hubert Humphrey [inaudible] fly in?

Mrs. Hays: I've forgotten. They had been in a, I imagine, maybe Sapp Funderburk got him, or maybe...

Dr. Tollison: What's the connection there?

Mrs. Hays: Well, Sapp was a big Democrat, and Congressman Sapp Funderburk was going to come in with uh, Humphrey was, [inaudible] was a Democrat. So, I really don't remember, but that was a good while back.

07:41

Dr. Tollison: What do you remember about Sapp Funderburk?

Mrs. Hays: Well, he was very nice. I think, you know I met him when various things happened. I went to, at his insistence or suggestion, I went to Washington [DC] to write an article about an alumnus, a general, who was working at the Pentagon [inaudible]. And um, it was um, Sapp thought he should have an article written about him, so I did that. I lived over..., I lived over on Victory Avenue.

Dr. Tollison: [laughs] Y'all say hi to each other?

Mrs. Hays: Yeah. Sapp lived in a home off there. But, I mean, I wouldn't have known him really if it hadn't have been for Furman, but he was a very nice man.

08:57

Dr. Tollison: Who were some of the other people working at the administration building, do you remember? Do you remember Peggy Park? Peggy Park?

Mrs. Hays: She didn't work in the, yes, she did. She was Dr. [Frank] Bonner's secretary for many, many, many years. [Inaudible] was Dr. [Gordon] Blackwell's secretary and Johns' secretary following, for a good many years. There are probably lots of other people...

09:32

Dr. Tollison: How about, can you compare [John] Johns and [David] Shi in terms of their instructions to you about the magazine, the purpose of the magazine, this kind of stuff, the relationship with, you know, with leaving information gaps [inaudible] kind of thing. How do you compare those two?

Mrs. Hays: I'm not sure either of them ever, we had a discussion about that. I think they just knew. At least, certainly, that we never talked about, the magazine was never aimed at the Greenville community specifically.

Dr. Tollison: Right.

Mrs. Hays: It's audience was our alumni, and not just that of the Greenville community.

Dr. Tollison: I guess I'm thinking about them as being two separate entities. The Furman Magazine, um, for the large..., it was really the voice of the university for a lot of alumni that were spread out across the globe, across the country. And how things are depicted, how things are presented, was obviously very important. I still say that how things are presented to the Greenville community in terms of, especially to your, some of the interviews, or things like that, are also very important. So, did you ever get the feeling that there was a specific mindset, or strategy, or did they have any preferences to what [inaudible].

Mrs. Hays: Well, actually... Actually, if you do..., if we did our work professionally, um, you know, there's just certain things that you would do and you wouldn't. If you did

that then you're wrong. It will basically achieve the purposes, or should, if it is done well.

Dr. Tollison: Meaning that too much input from them would corrupt the journalistic integrity...

Mrs. Hays: I think so...

Dr. Tollison: Of what the purpose of the magazine is as an information news source.

Mrs. Hays: Right. Now, but as far as the articles in the, particular articles in the magazine. If there were something that were particularly sensitive, I'm sure I would run it by the faculty, now I'm trying to think..., but, for instance, when we did the last article about what happened, as far as the Convention was concerned, I don't think we ever ran it by [John] Johns. I don't think he ever expected us to. I think he felt like that we would do what we should do. If we're going to do it the way it should be. I think he knew well enough what our, what our attitude that we were trying to reflect [inaudible].

Dr. Tollison: [inaudible] it does have a bias, though. Wouldn't you say? Or would you?

Mrs. Hays: I'm not sure. Well, anything that's in a university magazine..., or many things would be told from the point of view of Furman. I think through the years we have tried not to just give positives, that all is perfect, but to give um, the facts [inaudible]. You can't go as far as, say, a Greenville news story. But still, I think to retain the leadership of, from alumni, they know that everything's not perfect. And, in fact, they would stop reading, I think, if that's what was being represented.

Dr. Tollison: If they felt it was false propaganda?

Mrs. Hays: I think so, and we tried very hard, I did.

Dr. Tollison: What are some of other things [inaudible]?

Mrs. Hays: Well, I can't remember. You probably know it more than I do.

Dr. Tollison: [inaudible] you remember feeling a bit uncomfortable or being very careful about how you wrote about something?

Mrs. Hays: There probably was some, but I think it's not that much of an impression on me. I think the things that I've mentioned to you, the story about the Daniel gift was a very, pretty difficult one to write, not from the point of view of anything really controversial but just getting the facts right, and giving each institution it's part of the coverage. That was the hardest, probably, thing to do. Actually, I did, one of the things I did for Furman was, after I left, was a book about Mickey Daniel and all of the colleges that it...

15:40

Dr. Tollison: I've seen that.

Mrs. Hays: Mm-hmm.

Dr. Tollison: I'd forgotten that you did that. It's got a light cover.

Mrs. Hays: Mm-hmm. [inaudible]

Dr. Tollison: [laughs] [inaudible] Yes, I've looked at that book. It's a good um, is that the project you were talking about?

Mrs. Hays: Yes, that was my last project.

Dr. Tollison: And you were talking about with Charlie Register?

Mrs. Hays: Yeah, to some extent. Charlie took some photographs but a lot of the photographs had to um, were either gotten from other colleges, or the photographs of Mrs. Daniel were those that were taken for a long time. So, Charlie did that, did take some.

Dr. Tollison: And how, how did that project come up?

Mrs. Hays: That came about as the result of a meeting between the president of, the new president of Wofford, and the president, I believe, of Newberry College.

Dr. Tollison: [inaudible]

Mrs. Hays: [inaudible] The president of Newberry, and the president..., and David Shi. And they um... Somehow, I think was [inaudible] who really wanted to, thought that would be a good idea to do. And my understanding was that they would possibly give it to other possible big donors to inspire them to give equal [inaudible]. So, I just got called into a luncheon with those presidents one day. So, I think that's the way it happened.

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm.

Mrs. Hays: Now I didn't write, I wrote about, or rather edited all the stuff about all the colleges. But professor Lowry Ware, he was a retired Newberry professor [retired Erskine College professor], he did the article about... I guess Mrs. Daniel. Is that right?

Dr. Tollison: I'd have to look and see.

Mrs. Hays: Anyway, he wrote the main article.

Dr. Tollison: [inaudible]

Mrs. Hays: It did.

Dr. Tollison: And you think that you were put in charge of it because Furman was the largest benefactor, beneficiary?

Mrs. Hays: Well, I suppose. I think, probably that they didn't have, the other schools didn't have somebody available who could do it. That would be my guess.

Dr. Tollison: So, you retired, technically retired in 1997.

Mrs. Hays: Mm-hmm.

Dr. Tollison: And what did you do, you accepted this in '99?

Mrs. Hays: Yes. Well in ninety..., the next year, I thought that was in '98..., '97, '98. I went back out to Furman and sort of [inaudible] the picture I had of the department, nobody was there, I mean since they all were about to replace me. But I didn't do as much as I did before I retired, but the main things I did was to sign on the dedication of, the dedication of Timmons [Arena]. I think that there might have been one other dedication, then there was a ..., the last thing we did was to um..., a meeting of [inaudible] my goodness. [background noise] Where is that last book I had? Well, you want to walk in the other room?

20:31

Dr. Tollison: Sure. I'm gonna show some magazine covers [inaudible]. [background noise] Spring 1997 [inaudible] Summer 1992 [inaudible] [background noise] Fall of 1995. [background noise] Winter 2004. [inaudible] Riley Hall, 1994. [inaudible] I'm showing some covers here.

Mrs. Hays: What?

Dr. Tollison: I'm sharing some magazine covers.

Mrs. Hays: Oh, yeah, this is a pretty big deal for um..., I have ambassadors from a number of countries...

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm...

Mrs. Hays: On campus [inaudible], and that was held in, I think it was in [inaudible], but Shi's entertaining, and there was uh, there was various activities and that kind of thing, so it just took somebody to plan it, and...

Dr. Tollison: So, your job was not only editor of the Furman Magazine, but you also planned major events.

Mrs. Hays: Well, see I was after, after Blackwell made me Director of University Relations which changed to be Director of Communications I think, then changed back to Director of University Relations. That was to handle... that, I mean I was in charge of all the publications and of the news bureau, and the yearly publications, public relations events, and whatever went on. Now they have someone, uh, Gayle Warth, is their events planner, and they have a person in Marketing and Public Relations...

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm.

Mrs. Hays: In Marketing and Public Relations who does nothing but events. But I did that. So that was quite a lot.

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm.

Mrs. Hays: The dedication of Riley [Hall], the dedication of ..., all the various things that have been dedicated.

Dr. Tollison: When did the magazine..., now its published three times a year?

Mrs. Hays: I think Jim's doing it four times a year. That is Jim's only job.

Dr. Tollison: Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall?

Mrs. Hays: Mm-hmm.

Dr. Tollison: Okay. When did it become more of a regularly scheduled publication?

Mrs. Hays: Since my retirement, or since after they named a person to be editor. You see Jim was assistant editor before.

Dr. Tollison: How long did he, did he work under you?

Mrs. Hays: Mm-hmm.

Dr. Tollison: How long did he work under you?

Mrs. Hays: A good while, I don't remember exactly.

Dr. Tollison: Did you know his father?

Mrs. Hays: Oh yes, mm-hmm. Did you have him?

Dr. Tollison: No, unfortunately not. What do you remember about his father?

Mrs. Hays: Um, he was just a joker (laughs), but a very nice man. He was um, very, very nice, and quite unique. But I've worked with Jim [Stewart]. I hired Jim to be News Director back several, several News Directors ago, and then he decided to go to work for a newspaper, and he went back to, he went to North Carolina. Then he wanted to come back to Furman, and there was a position open, and so I hired him again.

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm.

Mrs. Hays: And that time was to um, was not as News Director, but was to work on the publication.

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm. And now he's taken it over.

Mrs. Hays: Yeah, he does a good job.

25:45

Dr. Tollison: What uh ..., really, you've been an observer, a very intimate observer at the university, really throughout your entire lifetime. What kind of direction do you see the university going in now?

Mrs. Hays: Well, I think the meaning of it is uh, growing in uh, stature, and um, probably in um, you know, in every way, as far as the facilities are concerned, as far as the reputation. So that's, that is my, you know, I'm not being [inaudible], but yeah, I think, I think that would be the case when I think of Furman. Well respected.

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. What's your involvement with Furman now?

Mrs. Hays: Not a lot, but I go there occasionally, [inaudible]. I also am taking some courses at the FULIR [Furman University Learning in Retirement].

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm. What are you taking?

Mrs. Hays: I'm mostly taking reading courses. [inaudible] reading. There's a course that we read, each term, five books, novels.

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm.

Mrs. Hays: Then there's an alternate reading course that we read short stories, and there's an extracurricular group where we read four or five novels [inaudible].

Dr. Tollison: Who's teaching that course?

Mrs. Hays: Uh, none of us teaches it.

Dr. Tollison: Oh. So, it's a reading group.

Mrs. Hays: It's a reading group but there are people who have the background on the... One is Dave Gilmore. He, he's very bright. He used to teach in uh...

Dr. Tollison: At Furman? Or...

Mrs. Hays: No, some college up in North Carolina. He probably knows more than anybody about, you know, the literature.

Dr. Tollison: Do you take classes at Furman?

Mrs. Hays: Well yeah, these are...

Dr. Tollison: These are [inaudible] classes.

Mrs. Hays: These are classes in that they are very serious discussions about the meaning, the implications. They're some serious groups.

Dr. Tollison: Uh huh (laughs)

Mrs. Hays: I've taken, I've taken computer courses and geography, and drama, but I seem to take more reading courses because I love to read, and it's nice to uh, even though some of these books I've read before.

Dr. Tollison: But [inaudible]

Mrs. Hays: That's the perspective I take, after a while, after you've been away from them a while.

Dr. Tollison: Uh huh. Uh huh. Who were some of your professors in FULIR?

Mrs. Hays: Ahh, let me think. Well, [inaudible] teaches drama. Do you know him? He uh, he didn't teach at Furman. Geography was someone who, I've forgotten his name, but he was a FULIR member, and computer science, computer guy was a FULIR member.

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm.

Mrs. Hays: So, I had him. Oh yeah, Crabtree, I've had him for a number of classes. He's really good.

Dr. Tollison: Who else was involved in that? In terms of any other former friends, faculty, or staff members that you think?

Mrs. Hays: Uh, I don't ..., there probably are, um, Shirley McKnight, [she] is Edgar McKnight's wife...

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm.

Mrs. Hays: She is not well now, so I'm not sure about her now, but she was a very, very faithful member. Another professor who seems to be very helpful to FULIR, Willard Pate, is going to teach us [inaudible] going to take a Latin course.

Dr. Tollison: Ah, that'll be fantastic.

30:53

Mrs. Hays: It will. Have you had her?

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm.

Mrs. Hays: What did you have her for?

Dr. Tollison: Literature of the South.

Mrs. Hays: Literature of the South?

Dr. Tollison: Yeah, mm-hmm. I think a lot of people think she's awesome.

Mrs. Hays: Yeah. Awesome.

Dr. Tollison: I do. (laughs)

Mrs. Hays: [Inaudible] we're looking for courses, and Willard Pate is, love the discussion, so yeah, I'm looking forward to that.

Dr. Tollison: Sure, sure. How often do your classes meet?

Mrs. Hays: The, um [inaudible] reading course meets every other week and then [inaudible] with the short stories, poetry class meets at the same time.

Dr. Tollison: Okay.

Mrs. Hays: [inaudible]

31:43

Dr. Tollison: Dr. Crabtree told me yesterday..., might just be because of [inaudible], but Dr. Crabtree told me yesterday that..., we were talking about putting in [John E.] Johns' accomplishments, and he mentioned that one of Johns' accomplishments was, that retired faculty and staff are grateful for, is the fact that Dr. Johns improved the retirement program for Furman employees. Can you talk to me about that?

Mrs. Hays: Well, I don't, I didn't know that. Well, uh, I don't know. I don't know what he's referring to. But I'm definitely glad that he did it. (laughing)

Dr. Tollison: [laughs] What are some of the benefits for Furman's retirement plan? How does it work?

Mrs. Hays: I guess one of the benefits is that you can – and I don't know what Johns was talking about – you can continue to get health insurance, you know, for those who are already at Furman, you can get health insurance through Furman, and uh, Furman pays a big portion of it. After you retire, you can continue to get health insurance which Furman won't pay, I mean, you don't, Furman doesn't pay, but at least you can continue to be part of a large group which [inaudible] just by yourself [inaudible]. So that certainly is a benefit. I do not know what he's talking about, it could be, when people retire then they receive some monetary um, gift, I think. I know there will be various things like clocks, and that kind of thing, but it could be it has to do with how... another thing he was trying to get paid for was vacation days or sick days, or something like that, that you didn't use. So, it could be a more um, generous approach to that. I can't think what else I would get actually. [laughs] Not sure I get anything right now. You know they have [inaudible] retiring [inaudible] and not [inaudible] retirees are invited to the dinners [background noise] Let me put this other [inaudible] [background noise] Anyway, I know [inaudible]. There could be things that I have forgotten.

36:00

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Mrs. Hays: But if he said that I'm sure it's true.

Dr. Tollison: Uh huh. What kind of impact..., looking back [inaudible] what kind of impact has Furman had on your life?

Mrs. Hays: Well, I'm sure it had a huge impact. I've spent a lot of my time thinking about Furman. [laughs]

Dr. Tollison: [laughs]

Mrs. Hays: But I have, uh..., I know when I was thinking about going to work for Mrs., for Furman, I told Mrs. Gilpatrick [inaudible] and she of course had worked there, and her husband taught there for many years. And she didn't say that it would be a good place to work, or you'll..., what she said was that you will make a lot of good friends, and she was right. I have um, made..., my life is certainly a lot richer for having known all the faculty and staff, and students, and, you know...

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm.

Mrs. Hays: It's just uh..., while I've been, it still is, I'm sure. It's a good place to work, at uh, at a college.

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm.

Mrs. Hays: Or at Furman.

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm. Was Marguerite Chiles at the [Greenville] Women's College when you were there?

Mrs. Hays: Not as a student, but she was there.

Dr. Tollison: Right.

Mrs. Hays: In whatever position she was in. She was certainly, I mean, I worked for her for many years at Furman, after I went to work there.

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm.

Mrs. Hays: She was um, Dean of Students, or Vice President of Students, at one time, and before that she worked with students all the time

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm.

Mrs. Hays: And I think she's one of the best loved people that have ever worked at Furman, people who knew her, particularly young women who knew her in the

dormitories and the [inaudible]. You know, she just had a huge impact on Furman. And probably you can't see her, can't you, or can you?

Dr. Tollison: I'm going to go talk with her.

Mrs. Hays: Well, good.

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm.

Mrs. Hays: Good.

Dr. Tollison: Whether or not a lot of [inaudible] comes out.

Mrs. Hays: Well, it might.

Dr. Tollison: It very well may.

Mrs. Hays: It might.

Dr. Tollison: Mm-hmm. I will enjoy talking with her because regardless.

Mrs. Hays: Yes. Did you know her?

Dr. Tollison: Mm-mmm.

Mrs. Hays: She wasn't part of Furman when you were a ...

Dr. Tollison: No, I think she retired in 1980.

Mrs. Hays: Yes. She was, she is the most [inaudible], unpretentious person I've ever known, I think.

Dr. Tollison: I will enjoy meeting with her. Who were some of the other big names, big Furman people that you respect and admire for their, well for any reason, really, starting with, when you were growing up.

Mrs. Hays: Well, the um, Ernie Harrill. Have you?

Dr. Tollison: Yesterday I called him.

Mrs. Hays: I think he's great. He is really, really fine. And he could tell you a lot about student life, I'm sure.

Dr. Tollison: He did. [laughs]

Mrs. Hays: He did? Anyway, yeah. I'm sure there are a lot of people. Dr. Blackwell [President Gordon Blackwell] was really a fine person, and I enjoyed very much

knowing him and working with him for so many years. And his values were just incredibly uh, right.

40:16

Dr. Tollison: His personal integrity, or his [inaudible] vision?

Mrs. Hays: Personal, in every respect. He just had the highest integrity in everything.

Dr. Tollison: Can you think of any an example for, I hear a lot of people are saying that. Can you think of any personal example, or specific example that illustrates those qualities?

Mrs. Hays: I'm sure if I thought about it I could but what comes to my mind [inaudible] [background noise] just his genuine [background noise]. It was his uh, genuine concern for students and for their..., you know, for them to understand, and for him to understand what they're talking about. And he's just very unusual in that regard.

Dr. Tollison: Unusual among college presidents?

Mrs. Hays: Oh, just among people.

Dr. Tollison: That he felt genuinely concerned about...

Mrs. Hays: Genuinely concerned and honest in every way.

Dr. Tollison: Do you have anything else you'd like to add that you think would be, any topic that we haven't talked about, that you think are important, specifically from your experience as editor of the magazine for several decades that we haven't talked about, or anything else you think you'd just like to add?

Mrs. Hays: I really, I think we've covered everything possible. [laughs]

Dr. Tollison: Well, if you think of anything...

Mrs. Hays: I can't think of anything...

Dr. Tollison: You are welcome to add it to the transcripts.

Mrs. Hays: Okay

Dr. Tollison: And if you think of a lot more things, let me know and I can come back and we can sit down for another half hour, forty-five minutes...

Mrs. Hays: Well, now that I know kind of what you're interested in, and you may have brought up some ideas that I'll think about.

Dr. Tollison: Okay. It'll also probably be good to maybe photocopy, and I can do this, the text from articles from the Furman magazine for some of the topics that we've covered.

Mrs. Hays: Okay.

Dr. Tollison: Just to kind of beef up.

Mrs. Hays: Alright, would you like to borrow my copies?

Dr. Tollison: Um, I can get all of these from Jim Stewart.

Mrs. Hays: Okay.

Dr. Tollison: He's got multiple copies of these magazines.

Mrs. Hays: Good.

Dr. Tollison: And I know you probably want to keep yours.

Mrs. Hays: Well, I have more copies. Sometimes I have several copies but I'll just keep these if you can get them from Jim, but if you need them...

Dr. Tollison: Well, thank you for offering. I really appreciate that.