

Interviewee: Floyd, Carlisle
Interviewer: Robin Sellers
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Sellers: Dr. Floyd, would you please tell me a little bit about where you were born and where you grew up.

Floyd: I was born in South Carolina and grew up in the low-country part of that state, the part from Columbia down into Charleston. My father was a Methodist minister, and as a consequence we moved to a number of small towns before the time that I went off to college. I first went off to college, the Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina, on a music scholarship for two years. And I transferred then to Syracuse University.

Sellers: Where did you get your first taste of music training?

Floyd: From a local music teacher in one of the small towns that I lived in, in South Carolina, a little town called Bethune. I started when I was ten years old.

Sellers: Did you have a particular interest in any instrument or voice?

Floyd: Just piano. My mother was a pianist and that's what interested me from the very beginning.

Sellers: You had a piano in the house then?

Floyd: Oh yes. Yes, that was standard equipment.

Sellers: Did your mother encourage you?

Floyd: Yes and no. I had started when I was three with her. I had decided I really wanted to learn how to play the piano when I was about three years old, and so she took me seriously and got instruction books for youngsters that age. But that died aborning very quickly, because I am sure that I realized that was going to require work and I just wanted to play. I didn't realize at that time what was involved. And so, then there was a hiatus of about seven years before I started back, and then I began piano lessons because my sister was getting piano lessons. I had already begun playing by ear, and my mother decided that if I were going to insist on playing by ear that I should at least learn the notes and be able to read music. So I started then seriously when I was ten.

Sellers: When you left Converse College, you attended Syracuse?

Floyd: Yes, mm-hmm, after my sophomore year.

Sellers: Tell me a little bit about your experiences at Syracuse.

Floyd: Well, I loved it. It was my first excursion into the North, and I was a southern boy, I think eighteen at the time, so this was all a new world to me, to go from a very fine, small liberal arts college in South Carolina to a very large university with a kind of international faculty and kind of international scope. I encountered a kind of serious attitude on the part of the students towards the profession of music that I had not encountered at Converse, which I think was very much what I needed at the time. So that my two years there were very, very – I think very important years in terms of my own development. In terms of the friends I made, the attitudes that were developed towards becoming serious as a musician, and aside from what one learned in the classrooms.

Sellers: Do you remember any of the people that you studied with at Syracuse?

Floyd: Well, my principal teacher was the director of School of Music, Ernst Bacon, and he was the man whom I followed to Syracuse. He had been Dean of the School of Music at Converse College, and when he was appointed as Director of Music at Syracuse University, he invited me and one other student to go with him. So this, of course, caused a lot of hand-wringing on the part of my mother, thinking that I was going off to Alaska or some place. But it was something I very much wanted to do, and so my mother and father, to their credit, made it happen. They took me and put me on the train for Syracuse, and that meant going through New York City, where I had never been to before. So when I think back on it now, I think there's nothing like the ignorant confidence of being eighteen years old. But I was put in charge of another young girl who was going up to study with Bacon who was only sixteen, so I had my work cut out for me. So I had to get the job done, when we changed train stations in New York and that kind of thing. But it was very much a part of my growing up and being comfortable outside of the South and in situations that I had never found myself in before.

Sellers: How about financially? Your father was a Methodist minister. I don't suppose the family income was exorbitant.

Floyd: Well, if you know anything about the ministry, you know that in advance. Yes, you don't go into the ministry to get wealthy, at least ministers in those days didn't. I better not say that nowadays, with the televangelists. I won a scholarship in music for free music tuition at Converse, and then I had grants and also the college, which was an expensive college (it still is as a matter of fact) for its time, but they allowed, I think, a ten percent tuition grant for ministers' children. So my sister who followed me and I both were given that. And then I had work grants; I moved pianos on and off stage as part of my work grant. I don't remember how much it was, but for the two years that I was there I did that, I turned lights on and off for

concerts and recitals, moved pianos on and off for visiting artists. I remember Arthur Rubinstein coming; I remember Jeanette MacDonald coming; Blanche Thebom. All these luminaries that I got to see backstage when I was making sure that the piano was settled right on the stage and working the lights. And then in addition to that, I worked as a secretary in the School of Music office and also did accompanying, so I did a good bit of work.

Sellers: You had a full plate, yes. You came from Syracuse to Florida State? How did that happen?

Floyd: I think I had one of the more interesting histories of anybody who ever joined the faculty here, because I finished Syracuse early — I was put ahead a year when I went from Converse to Syracuse because I was ahead in some required credits. I'd already had that. So I ended up finishing and getting my Bachelor's degree when I was nineteen, which meant that I was too young, really, to get a job anywhere. But I applied to Florida State University in the Music Department here because of a member of the chemistry faculty lived in that town that my mother and father lived in. She had relatives there, I should say, and she said, "You should apply to Florida State. They're adding a number of new faculty because it's becoming a state university."

Sellers: Who was she?

Floyd: Her name was Isobel McKinnell Lyons. Isobel Lyons was her name. McKinnell — Isobel McKinnell Lyons. And so, following that suggestion, I wrote a letter of application to the dean here, Dean Kuersteiner, and he knew and had a very high regard for my teacher at Syracuse. I've never seen the letter of recommendation but it did the trick, and then he asked to meet me in South Carolina, at Winthrop College where he was doing an on-site visit, for an interview. So I went up to Winthrop College and met him, and we had our interview. He seemed favorably disposed, and asked me, he said, "You're only twenty." He says, "We can't hire anybody your age. When are you twenty-one?" And I said, "June 11th." He said, "Excellent. Our summer school starts June 15th, but we can't hire anybody who's younger than the students." [chuckles] And so, I came in with a Bachelor's degree, just having turned twenty-one, and was hired for six weeks. They were very guarded, understandably. And then, after six weeks, I was hired for another six weeks, for the two summer terms. And then he offered me a position on the faculty, but they invented a faculty rank for me called "Assistant Instructor," which I frankly don't think exists. But it worked for him and for me and it meant that I was to be an instructor until I received a Master's degree. So then I was here one year when none of this beautiful building was even in existence. It was just beginning in the fall of 1947, so that all this music faculty — they hired something like six new faculty members because they had a huge influx of students. And we taught in an army barracks on what was then West Campus. Believe me, that was a trial by fire, because they made six individual piano studios out of this barracks with no visible soundproofing and only one potbellied stove at the end of one of the halls outside the studios. So we spent an entire year, during the wintertime at least, in overcoats and gloves, having students complain their hands were too cold to play the piano, and it was not a very

auspicious beginning for my academic career. And we also lived in an army barracks on West Campus and we took a bus back and forth into civilization, which was the Florida State University campus in those days. So it was a very interesting beginning and we were all encouraged to stick it out simply because this wonderful new Kuersteiner building was under construction.

But the following year, I went back to Syracuse to get a Master's degree, and so it was in that year that the building was completed, and when I came back in '49 I had a studio of my own here in Kuersteiner Building – 310 – which was all mine. And believe me, it was a long way from the army barracks on West Campus.

In those days, Tallahassee didn't have a hospital, because I remember having to go to the hospital and there again was a converted army barracks on West Campus that was pretty primitive. They did have – I had an attack of asthma, and they didn't – they were able to supply me with some morphine, so I came out ahead. [chuckling] It was a very different place.

Sellers: When you came back in '49, because you had been here earlier, were you considered a '49er?

Floyd: I didn't think so. I think I was considered a '47er, because I came here – and I think I made a mistake earlier when I said I knew it was FSU. I didn't. Isobel Lyons had told me that they were hiring faculty, and I don't think she said why. But the fact was that it had become co-educational. And so when I came down in June, I was immediately assigned to the registration, you know, to sit behind the desk and sign up students, and I thought it was still FSCW. And it was flooded with returning GIs. And, believe me, there were at great pains to tell me very quickly, "This is NOT a women's college any longer." I said, "Fine, fine. I'm with you." So as of June, 1947, I found out that it was indeed FSU.

Sellers: Well, that makes me wonder if you had ever heard of FSCW?

Floyd: Yes, it was a very, very well known women's college in the Southeast, because it was so large, I mean, for a women's college. Converse College had like 700 students, and I think FSCW probably had like 2,500. And it also had a very distinguished reputation as a liberal arts college. And it was the first Phi Beta Kappa chapter in the state, so it had a great deal going for it before it became FSU.

Sellers: And some would say that it went downhill from there. [chuckling]

Floyd: Well, I'm not going to make any comment on that, because I would say it certainly went uphill in terms of the School of Music very quickly, and its rise to national prominence in the '50s and '60s was really quite extraordinary.

Sellers: Who were some of the fellows that you worked with when you were first here? Who was on the faculty that you recall?

Floyd: Well, there was some of the old guard who were still here, like Mary Winslow, who was a wonderful colleague for many years. Etta Robertson, who was an older woman who taught voice. They were part of the old guard. They were already entrenched. Lucille Wagner was another such person. But then they hired – the Dean hired several new faculty because in ‘47 and ‘49, as you said, the ‘49ers, there was a big influx of new faculty. And when I came back in ‘49, I think that was the biggest I would say “invasion” of new faculty at that time. People like Tommy Wright came on at that time. A piano professor named Raymond Lawrence, Robert Sedore, who was the conductor of the University Symphony. Robert Braunagle, who was a professor of trumpet and director of the band. Some who came and then left after two years. Sidney Foster, who was a very distinguished pianist who then subsequently became – founded, really — I won’t say founded, but really created the Piano Department at the University of Indiana, after two years here; and of course the most notable of all is Dohnányi, and Edward Kilenyi, the pianist who – they came in ‘49 as well. So you can say that the School of Music was transformed really very quickly in terms of having all this faculty and people of considerable renown.

Sellers: What were some of your teaching duties?

Floyd: Fairly ignominious. I was hired initially to teach beginning piano to returning GIs. This is something I had never done before. They would come into the studio, and I had an enormous stack of these beginner’s books that I would assign each one of them. The first summer I was here, I taught in the little frame church, which was the School of Music. And when I look back on it now, I don’t know how we survived it, because there was no air conditioning at all, and my studio, such as it was, faced on the west. So from twelve to five, we would sit absolutely drenched in perspiration while I taught thirty-year-old men to try to play the piano. In addition, I taught a course in form and analysis. But I think the Dean was simply trying to find a place for me on the faculty, something that he thought I was suited for, and I don’t know that it was that. But it became kind of a challenge, because I would say to these men: “Why do you want to play the piano?” And they’d say, “It’s just something I always wanted to be able to do.” And it never went very far, but the thing about people who begin the piano – any progress is so marked, and it’s pretty thrilling on the part of the instructor and the piano teacher. So it sounds very irksome in a way, but it really had its own kind of excitement, especially when people made some progress. And then I gradually and fairly soon picked up regular piano students. And I also taught (I don’t know what it’s called now) it was called Music 110 then, the Introduction to Music course, which is a general ed university course in background of music. But that was when I came back from Syracuse. The teaching of the beginning students lasted only for that summer and that first year.

Sellers: And then did someone else take it over or did the course go away?

Floyd: No, I think it was a sort of spread around, perhaps, and also I think the original enthusiasm for beginning piano maybe fell off somewhat, too. They had their chance and they had their taste of it.

Sellers: On a day-to-day basis after you came back in '49, what was your schedule like and your duties, and who did you interact with?

Floyd: When I came back in '49, I think I was given an assistant-professorship, as a matter of fact, because I had acquired my Master's degree and had a year experience behind me already. But we all – the junior faculty (and certainly I was junior, I was just, I think, twenty-two at the time) – but we had very heavy schedules in terms of teaching. I think I taught twenty-five hours or more a week, and it was almost entirely in terms of individual piano instruction, except for the Music 110 course.

Sellers: Did you have any outstanding students?

Floyd: Very quickly I did. I had several. We had some very brilliant talents here in the '50s, one of which I suppose is the most brilliant talent I ever had, who was a young man, eleven years old, who lived in Quincy. The Dean assigned him to me. I don't know why now, except for the fact that I was so young, I suppose. And he was a prodigy, and had been working over here at the university in the School of Music already, and already had had a piano teacher on the faculty, Lucille Wagner. He began studying piano and composition with me, and analysis, when he was eleven years old. Then he stayed with me through his high school years, and then he elected to come here for his collegiate degree. He finished high school at either fifteen or sixteen, and then when he came into college and took his entrance exams here, he exempted the first two years of college. To his credit, he wanted to be like any other student, so he started out as a freshmen. So he got his bachelor's and master's degree here, in piano, and then was so advanced, really, that he was one of the two coaches on my opera *Susannah* when it was first done here, and Phyllis Curtin, who sang the role, was so impressed with him that she invited him to Aspen that summer in the accompanying program, and then she took him on as her professional accompanist when he was, what, twenty-one, twenty-two? And so he's accompanied some of the world's great singers in his twenties.

Sellers: Who is he?

Floyd: Ryan Edwards is his name, and he died just a few years ago. But he was one of a kind; he's the most brilliantly gifted single student – I've been very fortunate to have many brilliant students, but I would say everything considered, he would probably take the cake, and he was an extraordinary talent. And other faculty members would come to me, just shake their heads, because I remember the professor of theory here, he was a very brilliant man himself, came up to me once and he said, "I assigned a fugue for the next session," (which is a very complicated kind of work to write). Ryan finished the assignment in class and handed it to him at the end of the class. He reported this to me. What do you do? He had that kind of just incredible facility. He would go to a movie and come in the next day and play me the music score, you know, on the piano. He was a joy to teach.

Sellers: You were very young when you came. Did you have a problem being accepted

by some of the, as you call them, “old guard”?

Floyd: You know, if I did, I wasn’t aware of it, which means that I didn’t, you know. When I look back on it, I think everybody was marvelous to me. I think it was a kind of a head-patting situation. You know, I was the kid, and the baby on the faculty, and fearfully ambitious and just wanting to do well. And if there was any — you mean professional jealousy, that kind of thing? Waiting for your turn?

Sellers: “You’re just too young to be here” or —

Floyd: No. You know, I never had that feeling, and it’s to their credited they didn’t make me feel that way. But they were very interested in me. I remember one of the older members of the faculty said after my first recital — I remembered this after all these years; this was in June of 1947 — and she said, “It was very enlivening!” And I thought, “What a wonderful thing to say!” So that’s at least a response from one of the faculty members, and I kind of had that response from the others, too. But I think it was because I was so young and so inexperienced and, obviously, at the same time, so ambitious. And I had no idea how my coming here was prepared by the Dean. I didn’t know what he told the faculty about my coming, or why, because I certainly was an anomaly, coming in with a Bachelor’s degree and just barely twenty-one.

Sellers: What was the ratio of female to male faculty members when you came – in the Music School?

Floyd: Well, of course, I think in FSCW days it was more – leaned more towards the female. I would say that when I came here, it was about 50-50.

Sellers: I would think that a music school would be one that there wouldn’t necessarily need to be a preponderance of females over males.

Floyd: No, no, no. I don’t remember that they ever had to sort of equalize things because of that, because there were so many female faculty members already here.

Sellers: Did you ever feel that the males were given more opportunity than the female faculty members during those early years?

Floyd: No, not in the School of Music. The only thing that I think rankled with me, and I’m certain with the female faculty members, was the inequality of pay. I think there was that problem which as far as I know doesn’t exist now, but the Dean then had a very sort-of anti-feminist attitude that the men had families to support so therefore they should be paid more, which I don’t think Gloria Steinem would have accepted for a moment. But I think that’s the only thing that we were aware of, and I didn’t think that was fair, you know, basically. You could argue his point of view, I think, but you could also argue it much more convincingly from

the other side. Equal pay for equal work, equal qualifications. Of course, the Music School is not a typical department in the university. And because all the women – well, I won't say all of them – but there were so many women performers already, so that there were — the opportunities are here for anybody who wanted to take advantage of them.

Sellers: What changes did you see through the '50s and into the '60s that stand out in your mind?

Floyd: Very dramatic changes in the '50s. First of all, as I said, the enlargement of the faculty to include a very large proportion of artist faculty, more so than I think probably exist now, in terms of people of very large international reputation or national reputation. Also, an influx of very, very brilliant students. There may have been some in the past, before FSU days, but we just had a large coterie of students who would have been a pleasure to have at any school in the country, or that any school in the country would have vied for. I had one or two. Kilenyi had some brilliant students who had been in national competitions. I took two of my students up to the Naumburg competition up in New York; one of them went to the semi-finals. You don't do that unless you have a certain measure of professional excellence, and you have to have students, of course, who are that advanced that they can compete at that level. So I would say, then, there was a real burgeoning at the School of Music, so that when the doctorate in music (which was very controversial and very much contested around the university), but when it was finally awarded, I think three universities were authorized to award it: Florida State, University of Southern California, Indiana – and I'm going to miss somebody, I'm sure – perhaps Eastman. So I think that gives you some idea already of the reputation of the school nationally, that it would be authorized to grant the doctorate degree. That was still in the '50s. I would say that was in the early '50s, going by other things that I can remember. So I think that obviously meant an influx, again, of students who were very highly accomplished, who simply didn't want to fight the rigors of the professional world but who wanted to work in the academic world with the doctorate degree. So all that happened in the '50s, and I think it was obviously a very – what can I say – a very supportive atmosphere for people who wanted the opportunities. After all, we did my opera *Susannah* here in 1955. I think that's certainly testimony to an administration that supported its faculty's ambitions. We were all encouraged to do recitals, constantly, and to perform, and to perform outside the university, so it was a very fertile atmosphere.

Sellers: Tell me a little bit about the circumstances of creating *Susannah* and putting on the production here.

Floyd: Well, it was suggested to me by a graduate student here in English whom I knew, who was just a personal friend. He suggested doing an updated version of *Susannah* and the *Elders* and turning it into an opera. I had written two earlier operas. One was *Slow Dusk* which was done in '49, and then another opera (that shall always be nameless and will never be seen) was done in '51, I think, here, right in this very hall. *Opperman*. It had a very brief run and was salted away. The original manuscript is now in the Library of Congress and I hope nobody will ever see it. But I learned a tremendous amount from it, so that in two years later, I undertook the

writing of *Susannah* on the basis of this suggestion from this friend. And he had some interest at the time in doing the libretto for me. He was a would-be writer, and as I said, an English graduate student, but he also had a kind of (as I recall, and I'm not sure about this) but a kind of a writer's block. And of course, the idea excited me and I wanted to get on with it. I had done the librettos for my first two operas. I had had creative writing at Syracuse University; I felt very comfortable doing my own librettos. So after a certain point I just decided to do it myself. I don't remember that it ruptured our friendship; I don't remember it that well at the time. But I went ahead with it because I had a lot of confidence in the story, in the setting. And then I told the Dean that I had this opera and that I would like to see it done here, but if not, I would be happy to shop it to other venues. A little brash for an unperformed twenty-seven-year-old or whatever I was at the time, but that's what I said.

Sellers: Who was the Dean at the time?

Floyd: Kuersteiner. And he immediately demonstrated enthusiasm for the idea, said he would like to do it here and he would like to include it as part of the Florida State Symphony series, which was then supported by the local Junior League. He could go various ways to underwrite it, which was a very minimal budget, you can imagine. But the only thing that I insisted on (in looking back on it, I don't know how I had the nerve, but I did) was that the two leads be imported, have professional singers come in for that. But he agreed to that and then he subsequently authorized me to go to Aspen the following summer and see if I could engage two singers to come here and do the performance the following winter, which *mirabile dictu*, I was able to do. And so we began *Susannah* here under the most auspicious of conditions, with two very distinguished professional singers in the leads. That's a very quick resume. There's a lot of work in between that.

Sellers: Yes, they just don't appear. Logistically, what was your schedule like while the rehearsals were going on and things like that?

Floyd: Unless I'm mistaken, I kept up my teaching schedule.

Sellers: You did?

Floyd: Pretty much. I may have postponed some lessons and things like that, but I was not given any released time for it, no. After it was done in New York and was successful there, I was on a Guggenheim Fellowship, and when I came back in 1957 from New York, after its performance there, I was given a raise in rank to Associate Professor and also given a slightly reduced schedule, teaching schedule. But not during the original performance.

Sellers: So after you had gone to the big city and proven yourself [chuckles], they gave you a little bit off on the teaching routine.

Floyd: That's right. Yes.

Sellers: You were here until what year?

Floyd: 1976.

Sellers: So you were here through the turbulent '60s?

Floyd: Oh yes.

Sellers: What do you remember about that?

Floyd: I remember it being a very disturbing time, because none of us had ever been through it. Perhaps we should also talk about the early '50s, which were during the McCarthy years, which was more disturbing in a way. But we'll stick with the '60s for the moment. I remember being over at a general faculty meeting the president called over in Westcott that we were all urged to attend with students, and hearing protests and vocal demonstrations, thing like that, that none of us had ever encountered or even dreamed of having. I think the thing that was the most disturbing and unsettling was the fact that it was something totally new for us, and as a consequence we had no idea where it was going or what it would result in. Certainly there was a lot of sympathy for the basic underlying discontent that was being manifested, but I don't think any of us particularly cared for the – I can't say violent demonstrations, because I don't think it ever came to that.

Sellers: But they were disruptive.

Floyd: Very disruptive. And there were sit-ins at the president's office and things like that. And as I said, you know, your whole way of life was suddenly disrupted and turned upside-down – not turned upside-down, but you felt much less stable in your situation, inevitably, because it was something totally new. And as I said, more than that, we didn't know where it was headed and where it would end up.

Sellers: Did you feel any discomfort or did you have any problems as integration came onto the campus?

Floyd: I don't remember any.

Sellers: So integration just kind of filtered into your classes?

Floyd: Yes. You know, there were local problems which we were very aware of as a faculty, but I think the university was, you know, a world apart, in retrospect. It's curious, because I don't remember protests about anything or anything in the faculty.

Sellers: Well, then there probably wasn't anything that affected your particular area.

Floyd: It certainly didn't affect any of our teaching schedules or any of our activities. You'd think I would remember anything that momentous, that I would remember more details, but I think that there was so much lead up to it that when it happened, it seemed to be far less momentous than I think people had predicted it might be. It was the same thing with my opera *Susannah*. Not the same thing, obviously, because the consequences were not the same, by any stretch of imagination. But there was considerable concern about the reaction of the public to that in Tallahassee at the time. So much so that the then president of the university, Dr. Campbell, was very fearful of a public reaction and he didn't want to support the opera initially, eventually came around to supporting it, at least allowing it to be supported, and then finally came to the opening night performance, but only because the Governor of the state was giving the after-opera party. He happened to be a very good friend of mine socially, LeRoy Collins. But I can understand his concern at the time. There was a great deal going on, and many, many undercurrents.

Sellers: But then it's an Old Testament story, too, and Campbell was very much New Testament religious outlook, so I think personally it disturbed him.

Floyd: I think he was just very concerned about some sort of public reaction, because it was being sponsored, after all, by the Junior League. But to our astonishment, there was never a ripple. And the one person in the School of Music who we all loved, Francis Pemberton, who was a rather conservative – she ran the School of Music office and she was a rather conservative Methodist, and I was expecting Mrs. Pemberton, who was very saucy to begin with, to give me a good wrist slapping. I remember going into the office down here the Monday after it opened, that was on a Friday), and she said, "Well, I'll just say, anybody who's offended by it, they don't understand the opera." Well, great! Marvelous! That's what we hoped for, without expecting it.

Sellers: You made reference to the '50s and the McCarthy era. Did that have some impact here on the campus?

Floyd: I don't think so consciously. I think it had an impact subliminally, because this is the question I get all over this country, from the press and from journalists in Europe, especially in Germany. They see it as an indictment of the McCarthy era, the opera, simply because of its time, its date, and that it came at the end of the McCarthy era. But I think subliminally I was very much affected by it, as I think all of us were who lived through it, because in Florida at that time there was the John's Committee, which we knew was a very repressive committee, and their witch hunts were for Communists and homosexuals. Those were the two categories that you didn't want to be caught in, obviously. And of course, the homosexual thing was a different matter, but we all had to sign oaths – loyalty oaths – that we'd never been Communists. Now, that was never difficult to do because none of us had any idea of becoming Communists, but it was still very annoying to say that your financial and economic future depends upon your signing of this document. And we all did it, grudgingly, but we did it. But what was more important to me, and I think which informed *Susannah*, was the fact that for the first time in my life I lived in an atmosphere of fright, because people were being accused. It was Salem witch

hunt, because it's very easy to point one's finger. And also, I saw first hand, guilt by association. There was a graduate student who happened to be homosexual in the School of Music, a very nice guy, getting his Master's degree here, very personable, and there was a group of people he played bridge with and one of them was a young student of mine who was part of his bridge – you know how cliques form – a total innocent. And she was brought over to the Dean of Women's office to be queried about the fact that her roommate and she had been accused of being lesbians or something like that. She had no idea what this woman was even talking about. But the distress on that girl's face, I'll never forget, because she was one of my brightest students. But just living in that kind of atmosphere of who's going to be accused and how do you defend yourself when accusation is tantamount to guilt almost. So it was that plus the political, you know, looking over your shoulder because you don't know whom among your colleagues has any even Socialist sympathies. It was so extreme, and you didn't know how anything was going to be taken. I didn't suffer from it personally so much, but I did see it affect students and also colleagues, because for instance, the graduate student who had the bridge club together, he was immediately shipped from the university. And that kind of thing happened again and again.

Sellers: Do you feel that the administration was not supportive of the faculty in those instances?

Floyd: Not if there was that accusation, no. It was not able to be, I suppose.

Sellers: Right at that time it was probably Dr. Campbell and then Dr. Strozier?

Floyd: Strozier was a whole different story. That would have never have happened with Strozier.

Sellers: You were here while he was here. He was here for such a short period of time. What effect did he have in that short period of time?

Floyd: First of all, he was a real cosmopolite. He came from Chicago, I think the University of Chicago. But in any case, I think he was a transplanted Southerner who had grown up – I don't know remember now what his credentials were exactly, but they were quite brilliant, quite distinguished. But he was such a pleasure and such a breath of fresh air, because Campbell was of another school. He was an old school – he was kind of what you had hoped a university president would look like and perhaps be like. He was very authoritarian, very stiff. He took his job with great seriousness and did it extremely well. Strozier was much more relaxed in his position, and I think it was as if the university community could breathe a sigh of relief, almost. Also, he was a brilliant enough man and personable enough to be able to, I think, to probably fend off the Legislature to some extent, because there was always that element after the John's Committee that was very suspicious of the liberals on campus. It's on-going, yes. But he was a pleasure. When my opera *Susannah* was done at the Chicago Lyric, he insisted that I go up and the university pay my way. So my wife and I went up on the train from Thomasville and back.

And he gave us friends of his that he wanted us to see in Chicago. So he was an absolute pleasure, a real man of the world in the best sense.

Sellers: How about the presidents or the administrators that followed him? Anyone in particular that you feel did more for your part of the university or that you wished had never gotten where they were?

Floyd: They each had very decided personalities. I can't remember now the man's name. Blackwell.

Sellers: Gordon Blackwell.

Floyd: Blackwell, who came right after him, and whom I like very, very much. And he was on the order of Strozier, but not as much of a *bon vivant* as Strozier was.

Sellers: Blackwell was not very dynamic.

Floyd: No, he was not. Very solid. I forget after him.

Sellers: Champion.

Floyd: Champion was very much in the mold of Blackwell, I would say. A very, very nice man. Perhaps Blackwell may have had more academic credentials than Champion, but both of them did the job, I think, quite well.

Sellers: And then Stanley Marshall.

Floyd: And Stanley Marshall was a controversial president when he came on board.

Sellers: Did he have any particular effect on the Music School or what you were working with?

Floyd: No, not that I remember, not at all. I knew him, you know, as a colleague, primarily, because he was, I think, Dean of Education, and I had known him – you know, it was a small enough campus that we knew each other. But he took over the office at a very difficult time. I don't think he ever did anything but support the arts, as far as I know; virtually certain of that.

Sellers: After Dean Kuersteiner, was it Wiley Housewright?

Floyd: Mm-hmm.

Sellers: Tell me a little bit about how things changed under Wiley Housewright.

Floyd: I was on a search committee for his replacement – for Kuersteiner’s replacement. I think I may have even been chairman of it, some onerous task just like that. I remember we looked around and looked around, and then I remember being told on a long distance phone call with some dean somewhere, “Why are you looking outside FSU? Why don’t you just simply elevate Wiley Housewright to that position?” So there became a kind of movement, and I don’t think there was any effort —

End of Side A

Floyd: I think it is always difficult for a person to rise up out of faculty to a position of authority and leadership. I think it’s more difficult than a person coming in from the outside. I have to say that I never had any difficulty particularly, but there was a good bit of faculty discontent. But I left in ‘76, before it became very noticeable, and I think there was some sort of legal action against Housewright. I remember getting a call when I had already moved to Houston, from the *St. Petersburg Times*, said that there was some sort of – some faculty had sued Housewright for – I’m not clear about this because I wasn’t here. They felt that they had been penalized in terms of salary or something like that. But I got the impression just from being in Houston and from my friends still on the faculty here that there was a good bit of dissent from the faculty, so that I can’t really speak for Housewright’s administration after I left. But certainly that university continued to support the School of Music and the School of Music continued to grow.

I do know that at the time Housewright – he was a very good friend of mine – was replaced, I think there was a great deal of faculty opposition. Based on exactly what, I don’t know, except he tended to be authoritarian. That’s probably not good for any faculty and certainly not a music faculty. And as I said, I think perhaps somebody coming in would be permitted more authoritarianism than somebody who had risen from the ranks, so to speak. Of course, he was certainly a highly capable man, very bright man, very accomplished, and brilliantly recognized in his own field.

Sellers: Speaking of which, in the years that you were here, aside from putting on the opera, how were your accomplishments recognized by the university? Were you given promotions, were you given raises?

Floyd: For the most part, yeah.

Sellers: Do you think fairly?

Floyd: I would have said fairly. You want me to be honest about it; I have to tell you, because this is history. I mean, they’re facts. My raise to the level of full professor was done by the Dean of Faculties, not the Dean of the School of Music, which (I don’t remember who was dean at that time, whether it was Kuersteiner or Housewright), but obviously that was not a happy situation.

Sellers: Which one of the Deans of the Faculties? Was it Flory or Edwards?

Floyd: No, the one before that.

Sellers: Daisy Parker Flory?

Floyd: Before Daisy.

Sellers: Oh, I thought Daisy was the first one.

Floyd: Well, no, I am speaking of the Vice-president for Academic Affairs. Paul Dittmer, would it have been?

Sellers: It could have been.

Floyd: Or Larry Chalmers, I'm not sure. It may have been Larry.

Sellers: Will you talk about the circumstances of that?

Floyd: I don't know how it happened. All I know is that I think I was called into the vice-president's office and told that they were recommending me for promotion over the head of the dean.

Sellers: Were you aware that you were up for the promotion and the dean had not passed on it?

Floyd: No, I didn't know anything about that. I don't even know that I've been recommended for promotion to full professor, although obviously the senior members felt that my credentials warranted that. I felt uncomfortable about it, understandably, but it was not up to me.

Sellers: And you were willing to take the promotion.

Floyd: Yes. It never occurred to me not to. Not that I thought I was particularly meritorious, but the fact that it came down from the top of administration and I frankly, never – I was never given the choice of saying, first of all, "Do you want this? Shall we proceed with this?" It was *fait accompli* when I went in. So I said, "Thank you very much and I hope there is not any dissension as a result of this." And I can't tell you the year that was, but probably '63, '64, because I was made Distinguished Professor in '64 and I think I was already full professor then. But I don't think anybody felt shortchanged at the time. I hope not.

Sellers: Talk to me a little bit about what you feel are the highlights of your time at FSU.

Floyd: I think one of the highlights of my time was their doing my operas here, obviously, because subsequently *Susannah*, of course, then my opera *Wuthering Heights* was done here, and then after its world premier they brought the world premier cast here to do *Of Mice and Men*, and also the original sets from the Seattle Opera. Those are very exciting times, and I think it was energizing for the School of Music simply to be in the presence of professionals. I was always very happy to see the reputation of the School of Music expand and become nationally as recognized and applauded by its colleagues in the NASM. That was happy to see because when I first came here in 1947, that certainly was not the case. It was a School of Music, but it was much smaller and it didn't begin to have the kind of distinguished faculty that it had ten years later. And I would say other than that, when you asked me the question, I think the first thing that came into my mind was having the participation of artists on the faculty, like Elena Nikolaidi who worked with me. She and I did a number of concerts together and she was a marvelous colleague. What she brought in terms of artistry, experience and know-how, personality; she's one of many. I won't say many because there's never many. But that gave a luster to the faculty, to the campus, plus certainly elevating the reputation of the school around the country. She wasn't the only one, certainly, and that has continued. But that's what came to my mind, just collegiality.

Sellers: What about the nadir? Is there any particular low point?

Floyd: Oh, nadir, yes. That's what I thought you said. I don't think so. I think if there were nadir, I think it would probably – I would have to say it was in the McCarthy era, because one did not enjoy working as much with that kind of external pressure and unease that that fomented.

Sellers: What have I not asked you to talk about that you would like to talk about?

Floyd: I think the only thing that occurred to me is, that I would say stands out in my memory before I left in '76, and I think it came partly as a result (I know it did) of the burgeoning of the School of Music, was seeing the Department of Theater become a School of Theater and also vie for national recognition, and also the Department of Dance which became so much recognized nationally. So the arts became, I felt, the stellar part of the campus. The arts and the sciences, literally. That was not there at all when I first arrived at FSU, but by the time I left it was very much, I think, in place. So that the School of Theater was established and had a very strong professional connection. Same thing with the School of Dance. And that continues. But I think that was really part and parcel of seeing what an arts institution like a school of music could do for a campus. The School of Music had already established, had demonstrated.

Sellers: Thank you.

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