

**Interviewee:** Spencer, Beverly  
**Interviewer:** Robin Sellers  
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**Sellers:** Beverly, start out, if you will, by telling me where you were born and grew up.

**Spencer:** I was born in Tampa in 1941. I went to early school there, Gorrie Elementary, before my family moved to Virginia Beach, Virginia, then came back to Florida to Lakeland in 1956. I finished Lakeland High School in 1959, and then enrolled in Florida State for the fall of 1959 and started my college education. My mother was determined that I was going to go to college for at least two years if she had to chain me to the place, and that was my sort of feeling about it – she probably was going to have to chain me. Then once I got here (FSU) and I pledged Delta Zeta and was involved with the university, you couldn't keep me away. Just like our students today, except I didn't take six years to get out [laughter]. We had block tuition then so you paid, so you kept going. Mother had attended FSCW and had dropped out after two years, but was determined. As I look back on it, at that time in 1959, and I look at all the people in my high school class – there were 370 of us. Very few of the women went to college. Some went to a business school, which nothing wrong with that, but few very went on to college and even fewer completed. I didn't think much of it at the time, but I guess we learn with age, and I've since reflected on that, that it was pretty unusual for the numbers of us, that I did finish.

**Sellers:** Why FSU?

**Spencer:** The influence of two professors, Juanita Gibson and Daisy Parker Flory. When I was at Girls' State the year before as a junior, I was so impressed with them for some reason. I was all set to go to Auburn and I really was impressed and came to Florida State and had the privilege of having both of them as instructors.

**Sellers:** What was your major here?

**Spencer:** I majored in history; I have a bachelor of arts in history, a minor in government.

**Sellers:** What, at the time you were going to school, did you have in mind to do with your college education?

**Spencer:** It was more or less a fallback. I wanted to teach, but I was not in the College of Education. I took everything but internship, which you could do back in those days. I had this bee in my bonnet that I wanted to teach school in Alaska for some reason. Whether this was just to see the world or fascinated by it. I think it was more that life was going to be a bowl of cherries and I'd never have to work, somebody would come along and you'd be swept off your feet. We just had this degree just in case we ever needed. It didn't quite work that way. I did

start teaching school as soon as I finished. I was considered too young; my certification was secondary and yet I was only 21 years old. So they stuck me in an elementary school in the middle of the year and I had to teach little ones. We were making the conversion to cursive writing, and I'm trying to learn, being left-handed (I don't turn my hand), but to write and make it slant and you could hear the pencils move over from right hand to left hand [laughter]. I had to learn to do all that right-handed. The second year I went into junior high, and then high school. I loved teaching, truly loved it. I would like to do it today if it weren't teaching to a test.

**Sellers:** Where did you live when you were up here for school?

**Spencer:** First year I lived in Gilchrist, and then moved into the Delta Zeta house. Things were a little different; you didn't have the freedom of apartments and off-campus. We had to sign out to be away from campus. You couldn't wear shorts or slacks anywhere on campus except on Saturdays, and not inside any building. We didn't have all the off campus opportunities of living, and sorority living was great.

**Sellers:** While you were in Gilchrist, where did you eat?

**Spencer:** Over at Suwannee Hall for the first little bit, but then the sorority – the dining service. But then as soon as I had pledged, you ate in the sorority house.

**Sellers:** And the DZ House was almost opposite Gilchrist there on Jefferson.

**Spencer:** It's still there, and of course the Sweet Shop was there. Not only with food but with postage stamps and laundry detergent, too. We all had raincoats that we wore over our half slips pulled up over our bras, since that was the uniform. No dorms were co-ed. The only men's dorms were way across campus, the new dorms – was called West Hall at that time.

**Sellers:** The dorms, you had a roommate?

**Spencer:** I did for the first semester. She was a friend of mine from Lakeland and had gone to FSU. She dropped out her second semester and died before the end of the semester with cancer and I did not have a roommate the rest of the year.

**Sellers:** How did that affect you? Were you close to her? She was so young.

**Spencer:** Yes, she was young and it was such a surprise. I had just been through the death of my grandmother, so it was a double whammy.

**Sellers:** What kind of classes do you remember, what kind of a daily schedule?

**Spencer:** I liked to have – just like they do today, I didn't want to go too long on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. I'd go all day on Tuesday and Thursday. I did not mind, and I enjoyed the longer classes. I never had an eight o'clock class the entire time I was in college. And yet

I'm a very early person now, which I wasn't then. I never had an eight o'clock class. I carried always at least 15, sometimes 18, and one time 21 hours a semester, and was active on campus.

**Sellers:** In campus politics?

**Spencer:** I was in student government, not as intently as they seem to be now. My step-grandson is vice president of the student body now, and I mean this is an operation and organization that goes on; it wasn't quite that way. I was very active in the sorority and I ended up as president. I'd been rush chairman and all that. So you've got a Panhellenic role as well. Plus we had early on some required things, like those Wednesday teas, and we had to do Greek sing or campus sing going on. I don't think I had as many activities as the kids today have.

**Sellers:** The sororities at that time had a brother fraternity that they coordinated things with sometimes —

**Spencer:** Yes and no. The fraternities at that time would have little sisters, and they weren't all necessarily from the same sorority. There are some sororities and fraternities that nationally had some connection. DZ was founded at Miami University at Oxford, Ohio, in 1902. Dr. Guy Potter Benton was the new president of Miami University; he came in 1902, and was a Phi Delta Theta himself and was agreeable to the founding of a sorority on campus. When I was at FSU, the fraternities did have little sisters. I was at one point a little sister of the Maltese Cross, which was from ATO.

**Sellers:** ATO? That was Alpha Tau Omega?

**Spencer:** Yes, Alpha Tau Omega.

**Sellers:** What did that entail?

**Spencer:** It was more of an honor; if you were dating somebody at the house and they needed women to show up for rush parties or something like that [laughter]. I think they ended up getting into some sort of difficulty and they pretty much outlawed those kind of things. But it was rather innocuous at the time; it was just more of a neat thing to be.

**Sellers:** Was there any initiation ritual that resembled a mild form of hazing back then?

**Spencer:** There wasn't with DZ. Of course hazing – and I know more about this probably than I should because I ended up being an advisor for DZ chapters and a national officer, right up through vice president of membership nationally. Hazing was something I think the sororities got rid of a lot more rapidly than the guys. I can't speak to fact about the guys, but it sure appeared there were some things. Not nasty, ugly, and mean.

**Sellers:** The toothbrushes on the sidewalk —

**Spencer:** Right, some things went on. But the initiation was all — freshmen or pledges did have phone duty, but I don't consider that hazing.

**Sellers:** What was phone duty?

**Spencer:** Phone duty was like during study hall. Bear in mind, we had no cell phones. At the sorority house you had study hall every night for a certain number of hours. There were only two phones in the house. So if during study hall, somebody was assigned to sit in the phone room and take messages. That was phone duty. You didn't have it that often, but it was one of those things that the pledges had phone duty during study hall. We didn't have to do anything else that I recall at all. You sat with your big sister, you didn't stand when anybody came in the room or anything like that. The initiation was all very formal and very ritualistic.

**Sellers:** You graduated in '62, and went to teach?

**Spencer:** Yes, I started teaching in January, 1963. That was the year, I think I just mentioned, that we went on the trimester. Normally you wouldn't have gotten out until the middle of January or somewhere like that, but this ended early and Polk county had a vacancy, and that's where — my home, so I started teaching in January for the whopping salary of \$3,600 a year. We got a raise that year of \$100. Not a paycheck, but a year. Big increase [laughter].

**Sellers:** You were teaching elementary?

**Spencer:** Elementary that first year or half year I taught. Then I went into junior high and then senior high.

**Sellers:** What were you teaching in junior and senior high?

**Spencer:** History. Mostly American history. Occasionally I taught a class of English, non-certified. I taught consumer economics, non-certified, which you could fit in social studies or that general area. I think I may have even had to teach a world history class at one point. Then I became dean of students at Lakeland High School. We had over 2,000 students, primarily women, but we had two deans of students that just happened to be a male and a female.

**Sellers:** How did that transition come about, from teaching to being a dean?

**Spencer:** This sounds boastful, but I was a good teacher. I didn't have a lot of discipline problems because the students knew what I expected and yet that I was fair. You start out harder and you can always let up, you can never tighten back down. I was active on the campus doing things because I felt if I was involved the students would be more involved and I would know more about them. So when an opening came about, the principal asked me if I would consider being one of the deans and I said "Sure."

**Sellers:** Was that because you got a \$200 a year raise? [laughter]

**Spencer:** No, there was no difference. We didn't go on annual contract or a year round salary. I had to work longer hours but it was the same pay. I guess a little of it was I wasn't as tied to – the responsibilities were different, but I didn't have to wait until the bell rang before I went to the bathroom. I had a little more freedom that way. I had always worked with bringing voting machines into the campus and trying to get the kids involved. The opportunity came up; I had never been involved in politics except for Girls' State, and I had at the time said "One of these days, I want to be there." Our session in Girls' State was in the old Capitol, and LeRoy Collins was governor. I said to myself, "One of these days I want to be here." An opportunity came up in 1974, actually, and I ran and I lost. I didn't know anything about running for office, had never been involved, didn't get in it until late, and had no money.

**Sellers:** As a state representative?

**Spencer:** Yes. But I ran again in '76, had all kinds of opposition and knew what I was doing and became the first female elected from that area. It was a multi-member legislative district at the time, meaning there were four of us from that district and it covered almost all of three counties: Polk, part of Highlands and part of Osceola. I had to leave the school. Some of the districts at that time would allow their teachers and/or administrators, if they were in government, to take leave. That was not the case then in Polk county so I had to leave my position. I was married at the time and became a full-time legislator.

**Sellers:** Did your husband come up here with you?

**Spencer:** He came just for the organizational part. I had a young daughter and he was working, so he stayed there. I would go home – you were allowed travel every weekend and I would go home most weekends.

**Sellers:** Where did you stay when you came up here?

**Spencer:** The first few years I would rent in different motels. They had rates and they would keep the same room for us, even though you didn't pay the weekend rate. You could leave your stuff in there. The first year, I guess, was at what used to be the old Holiday Inn on the Parkway. I forget what it was called then – it's across the street from what had been the old Holiday Inn, and the old Howard Johnson's. It's now like a Motel 6.

**Sellers:** Yeah, it's on the corner of Apalachee —

**Spencer:** Some of them stayed there, I never stayed at that one. That was called Jim Tillman's Roadway Inn back then. This one is further back and closer to the Capitol; it's now Motel 6. There were a bunch of us that stayed there.

**Sellers:** Okay, right at the overpass. Yes, it used to be a Howard Johnson's.

**Spencer:** That's on the other side; we stayed over there, but there was always a bunch of legislators and it would depend on who had a wing of rooms. Then eventually I started to rent an apartment up here. In the meantime, I also went through a divorce and all of that.

**Sellers:** So your daughter was with you then?

**Spencer:** No, my parents were in Lakeland and she stayed during the session in Lakeland. She was up in middle school, junior and senior high school at that time and I didn't want to disrupt her life. And again, I would be going home every weekend.

**Sellers:** For how many years?

**Spencer:** Twelve.

**Sellers:** Twelve. Before term limits.

**Spencer:** The natural term limits, before term limits was six years. That was the average expectancy of a House member.

**Sellers:** Okay, then you would be voted out or —

**Spencer:** Yes, some people only served one term, and others served much longer. I voluntarily retired, I was not defeated [laughter].

**Sellers:** What were your major concerns and focal points as a legislator?

**Spencer:** I first thought that you shouldn't go in with an agenda, which I did not, that you needed to sit, learn, look, and listen. I was fortunate; it was Don Tucker's second term as Speaker, so rather than uproot everything like a Speaker does, he plugged holes with new members coming in. I was a freshman put on the Appropriations Committee, which at that time was very, very unusual. He did it with two people; it had not been done before. So I was very fortunate to get that on the ground floor with the Appropriations. We actually had budget hearings in those days and learned the budget and all of the terminology, unlike what goes on a lot today. So second term I was selected by the Speaker to chair a new committee called "Higher Education." It was the first time they had it. Hyatt Brown was the Speaker then and wanted some changes made in the system. More money into scientific and technical, increase faculty raises, and some changes in the organizational structure of the Board and so forth. I'm pleased to say that the Imminent Scholar chairs, all of that happened during my two year term as chairman of that first committee.

**Sellers:** When you say changes in the structure of the Board, the Board of Control?

**Spencer:** The Board of Regents. My staff director was a wonderful person, still is – Bill

Law, who is now president of TCC. Marjorie Turnbull was the Speaker's administrative assistant at that time. She was very interested in higher ed., of course, from her own personal standpoint with her father and her husband. We had a great team of people. Sam Bell, who is now married to Betty Castor, was one of those also very interested. We made some great, great strides during that time, those two years, for higher ed. Steve Edwards can still tell you the number of the bill that was passed. I frankly can't remember the number of it, but Steve can, and talks about it. At that time, I was on the campus a couple of times speaking to different groups about the legislation that we were considering. I had a real thrill of being able to speak somewhere on campus – I honestly do not remember where – and in the audience was Governor Collins and Juanita Gibson and I believe Daisy were both there. I had never been a nervous speaker. When I did teaching, you know, you have to be somewhat of an actress. Then when I was with the sorority speaking before three, four, five hundred people, it did not faze me. And again with politics I was not fazed. I was in this room mostly with educators or people from Florida State and I had on a bunch of bracelets. It was a rather precise topic, and I could hear my bracelets shaking [laughter]. I thought, "Okay, timeout." I was so nervous with Governor Collins – Governor Collins had written me a personal check for my campaigns. That was such a thing, and this nice wonderful note. I said, "Y'all are just going to have to excuse me, I got to take off my jewelry." I've got to relax because with Governor Collins, this is more almost than I can bear. It was one of the few times that I was ever really taken by something. Once I got through that, I did fine for the rest of it. It was such a distinct honor. Also, I was a chairman five times out of six terms. I chaired HRS, Health and Rehabilitative Services, for four years. Transportation – I was the first female to every chair Transportation.

**Sellers:** What did that involve?

**Spencer:** The highway budget for the state.

**Sellers:** We certainly don't have mass transportation.

**Spencer:** It was the roads and all that. And then Commerce. I was also, again, the first woman to chair Commerce, which was big – it was banking, insurance – we used to refer to it as powerful Commerce committee. All of these committees have now been divided and subdivided. I did an awful lot of work in mental health and some reforms to the Baker Act. Personally, I was able to get some money for foster children. It was \$100 for each foster child, which seems so minuscule, it even did at that time, but so they could have something, maybe if they were a senior and wanted a school picture or to buy a yearbook. That, and then also to see to it that everybody got at least something new in the clothing line. It really bothered me, and as we worked with appropriations between the health and human services needs and the prisons, which was corrections, which was what we did to balance those budgets – when I found out that the budget – we spent more per plate of food for an inmate than we did for a severe or profoundly retarded person. That for some reason just really got me in the gut. These people that are retarded, mentally disabled, they didn't choose this. And to think that we can't spend any more than that and what we're spending over here on an inmate. So those were very emotional things. But I was not one for a lot of high powered brimstone stuff; there were more

subtle ways in trying to make a difference. I'll never be written up for what I did for foster children but it makes me feel good. There are other things like that. I've thrown away all of my plaques and all of that, I just figured it was part of being a good citizen; we all owe the government something other than taxes.

**Sellers:** Who were some of the people (and you mentioned some) that you worked with that you felt were really making a contribution?

**Spencer:** Some I really liked, but I won't say they made great contributions [laughs]. Bob Crawford and I were both from the same delegation and Bob Crawford was elected then later to the Senate and served as President of the Florida Senate. Tony Jennings and I were elected at the same time, and were accused at the time and even since of looking like each other. We were both about the same size and we wore our hair very similar. We were freshmen together, and we even did a little number where, somebody else had a dress like one of ours and wore the same dress if we had to do something together. We had some fun with that. Tony went on to become president of the Florida Senate. Sam Bell, Herb Morgan; I'm trying to think of good FSU people. Ron Richmond. Ron just finished up his term as the national chair of the FSU Alumni Association. We were at FSU together and would go out and drink that 3.2 beer together, which was all you could get here before the county went wet. We served together in the legislature. Of course, Ron has now been our national alumni chair. You never know who's going to follow you all the way through life. There's so many.

**Sellers:** You said 12 years. What came after that?

**Spencer:** I became Jim Smith's Assistant Secretary of State. My daughter had finished her master's degree at FSU and I figured it was time — I didn't believe in the legislature for life, and I needed to decide what I wanted to do. After the legislative experience I did not want to go back to Lakeland — I was still single — and go back in the classroom per se. Lakeland wasn't as acceptable at that time of single divorced women as Tallahassee was.

**Sellers:** Really?

**Spencer:** Lakeland is smaller —

**Sellers:** A very southern —

**Spencer:** From the professional standpoint, a group of women can go out in Tallahassee, and can even go with a couple of men, and it's not thought of as something. Lakeland was not as sophisticated at that time. I thought, "I can do something. I don't owe anybody." So I bought a little house up here, and thought "If I need to, I can go to McDonald's and have enough to pay my electric bill" kind of thing. Jim and I had known each other at FSU, he was in ATO, and we had joked — when somebody asked me what I wanted to do, I said, "One of these days I may run for governor." And I jokingly said, "I would want Jim Smith to be my running mate because I had the time and he had the money." [laughter] Of course, Jim is now the chairman of our Board of Trustees at FSU. I never pursued running for governor. Jim and I talked, and Betty Easley,

who was his Assistant Secretary of State, was appointed to the Public Service Commission, and Jim asked me if I'd like the job. I loved every minute of it. Did the Historical Resources and the Cultural Affairs, and corporations. Jim did the cabinet stuff and I did the administrative, operational and for corporations. Great group of people, wonderful division of the department of government. Elections as well. I did the lobbying. Jim was the main lobbyist of course, but tracking the legislation and trying to file and make sure it got through. Then somebody came to me and said there was a vacancy at FSU. I had been critical of some of the lobbying ways that I had seen at FSU.

**Sellers:** Did they lobby in front of the Board of Regents or did they lobby in front of the legislature?

**Spencer:** What I was talking about was in front of the legislature. I had found out that FSU had done some reorganization and was advertising for a Vice President of University Relations. I thought, "Okay, you said you think you can do a good job at something like that, you'll never know unless you try."

**Sellers:** What year was this?

**Spencer:** This would have been in 1992. So I filled out the application. I had no idea what applying for a university job was like. They have it easy now. A search is nothing compared to what it was in 1992 [laughter]. Leo Sandon was the chair of the search committee. My goodness, once you get weeded down through the masses — I think the first set of interviews was a one or two day affair just for me. You had to go before all these different groups, and I kept saying "I have no higher ed. experience." Because you would meet with the professors group, you would meet with a student group, you would meet with a boosters group, the faculty senate group and the vice president's group. "Well, what are you going to do about securing money for graduate assistants?" "Huh?" I didn't even know graduate assistants needed money. They expect you all of a sudden, when you say "I have no experience here," to have all the answers to everything. I thought, "I will never, ever get through this." And lo and behold, and Dr. Lick was the president, I did get called back and was down to three. Maybe the first interview only a full day, but one of them lasted two days, and each of us had to go through it. It was David Coburn, John Marks, and myself.

**Sellers:** John Marks as in —

**Spencer:** As in our mayor and FSU graduate. David Coburn, FSU graduate as in husband of Vice President Mary Coburn, budget chairman or staff director of the Appropriations committee in the House and in the Senate and a good friend when I was in the legislature. And I was selected. I remember being in one of the large committees and someone asking me, and it was a female, how did I think I would feel, would I get along with the other vice presidents since they were all men? I turned to her and I said, "Well, I think fine, I assume they put their pantyhose on the same way I put mine on." [laughter] That was the big question. And I've had a wonderful 13 years.

**Sellers:** So talk to me a little bit about those years, what you did.

**Spencer:** First off, I learned that I couldn't be frustrated [laughs]. I served with, let's see, Dr. Lick and then Bernie came in, Dr. Sliger, for a short interim. Then we had Glidden there for just a little bit, maybe, when Bernie got worse. Then when Sandy came in and then very briefly with T.K. So I had the full gamut. Most of my time was spent with Sandy. We had a lot of meetings under Dr. Lick, lots of meetings. If they were set for an hour and a half, believe me, they lasted for an hour and a half. I learned that's the norm for the university, that it's going to last for exactly how long they put on that sheet of paper, and nobody seems to want to make a decision. Dr. Lick wanted to know what kind of problems I was having. I said, "I'm frustrated because nobody seems to make a decision." When you're in a classroom, you've got to make it instantly. When you're pushing a voting button, either in committee or in the legislature, you've got to make it immediately. So I was used to making a decision, and then if you found out you were wrong you'd go back, and you'd say it was wrong and you'd correct it. Dr. Lick explained to me that these people in academe had spent all these years learning not to accept anything they had ever been told, but to study it, and to challenge it, and to massage it, and to research it and look at it again. This was just an extension of that. Once I finally got that in my head, I knew which people on campus I could deal with and we could make decisions, which we had to play with for a long time. So I was able to get along better. And getting to know the people, because my job was strictly PR, that's the way I looked at it. I didn't have a lot to do with anything that was particularly meaningful to faculty, or to students. Overall was the persona, I thought, of the university, and trying to get people to understand that we were garnet and gold, that there was an identity to us. They needed to know that the legislature met. Some of our professor friends had no idea when the legislature met. They just knew that they wanted something, but they didn't know or understand the process and couldn't see why it was important. And yet every bit of it is important, from the athletics to the academics. The athletics helps bring more money for the academics, and you need the legislature in all things. So I tried to do more of – they called me in many cases the "rah-rah girl." To make people feel good about the university, about themselves, about our students.

**Sellers:** Were you more PR to the university than to the outside?

**Spencer:** In a way, yes. I was never the spokesman outside. That's what Frank Murphy did or the university president. But as far as how to go about it, I was the one underneath. I had administrative responsibility for running the Boosters, the Foundation, the Alumni, governmental affairs, communications, all of the president's entertaining, the box, and the protocols and that kind of thing.

**Sellers:** So you were responsible for the impression that the people of the university created for the outside world?

**Spencer:** Basically, yes. The license tag program, things that could help us. Scott Atwell, who is now our new alumni president, came in with a wonderful campaign on our tags and license tags. That generates a million something a year that goes directly to scholarships, and yet

we had an opportunity to say some good things about the university in those advertisements. The more we can get people to care and learn about Florida State, the easier it is for them to separate and give us their dollars. I did everything from when I found out that they were replacing the bathroom in Westcott, and going to continue into the men's room – inadvertently we found out – the one across from the conference room, 216 Westcott – they were going to put blue dividers back up there. And I'm saying, "Why? Why don't we go with beige?" Why were our street signs that horrible yellow and black? Subtle changes like that. I'm really proud to see where we started changing and painting some posts garnet around there and doing some things like that. The reason we were going to put that blue back up there was because that's what had been there. Men were doing it, it's a men thing [laughter]. Trying to get the entryway to Westcott to look better. I thought that place looked horrible as you walked in.

**Sellers:** It did look pretty downtrodden.

**Spencer:** It did. Various things like that and various programs. Again, to make people feel good. When I would travel to an alumni group somewhere across the country and go there and tell them all the great things about the university — I would do a lot of history with it as well as some current events. They would sit there with their mouths open – they want to know so much. FSTimes that we put out, they really liked that. That was new, something that we did. Again, just to get information out. When you see people that feel so good and are just so excited — we take it for granted, it's all right here. But when you can't find anything out in California, and yet you want to know, it makes you feel good.

**Sellers:** I have kids in LA. I get calls from them – "What's going on? We don't get this out here."

**Spencer:** No, they don't. Or maybe get a line. We take all of it for granted here. To think that we rub arms with Norm Thagard. To think like the Nobel laureates – that we have been in their company and presence.

**Sellers:** George Carlin.

**Spencer:** George Carlin, right [laughter]. Doug Marlette. Just the number of people that we've had the opportunity to consider ours.

**Sellers:** Burt Reynolds [laughter].

**Spencer:** There are some good ones, too.

**Sellers:** You mentioned something about Dale Lick, when he first came in, how he was very specific on time and a lot of meetings and things. There was that interim with Bernie, and with Bob Glidden — how did things change, or were they so temporary that there wasn't much change?

**Spencer:** They were so temporary that there wasn't much change. The meetings stopped when Bernie was there because some of those – I couldn't figure out why we had them. I don't believe in a meeting just for the sake of having a meeting because it's a routine that you do on every second Wednesday. If you need it, fine, if you don't, don't. We had meetings with Sandy but they were a totally different kind of meeting.

**Sellers:** Now Sandy took everything in a completely new direction.

**Spencer:** Yes, yes, very definitely in a new direction. But Dr. Lick is not given much credit for it, but he's the one who really started, to the best I can tell, the AAU talk. One of his very first presentations was at a faculty convocation, I believe, and the slide show or the transparency showing the history of AAU and where we needed to improve and do things, and then it sort of died down. We were talking earlier about things that are sort of secure, it becomes like that [laughs].

**Sellers:** With Sandy, with his historic connection to Tallahassee and to the university, how did his emphasis change?

**Spencer:** Learning to work with Sandy — the vice presidents and key administrators had an interesting time learning how to work with Sandy, because Sandy would see anybody, just about. And he would agree to things that he really in effect didn't know for sure he agreed with, but he had. And we would be the last ones to find out about it, and then trying to either implement it or figure out a way to say, "No, Sandy, you really can't do this." So it was always interesting. But a great person to work for. You never knew what was coming on that email [laughter]. And it came at all hours of the night or day. Or what was going to come in through that door and expected to be done. There are so many stories that I can tell about Sandy. One of them was, one of his good buddies he was meeting with wanted to get condoms licensed with the FSU logo. Now licensing was a part of my responsibility through the Boosters, and I was the overall head of that. Sandy didn't like to tell anybody "No." [laughs] So I was the lucky one that got to continue this conversation, and suggest that, no, this was not something that we thought would be in the best interest of the university [laughs]. You just never knew what the next challenge was going to be. But a wonderful person to work for. Sandy and I differed very much politically, but we teased and respected each other on that, it never got in our way. He tells a story about coming down to my office and finding me on the floor and wanting to know what I was doing. I said, "I'm stuffing these bags." He said, "Well, why are you doing it?" I said, "Well, they needed to be stuffed and this person said they're busy and they needed to get done so I'm doing it." The same thing about, "Why are you answering the phone?" Well, the phone was ringing. I told him a story which he often repeated, that my mother as she aged, wanted to know what I did. She asked me again "What's your position out there at the university? You're the secretary to the president, aren't you?" I said, "No ma'am, I'm the vice president." She said (my mother in her wisdom), "Well damn, I'm just going to keep telling them you're secretary to the president. That's more powerful; vice president's nothing but somebody waiting to be president. The secretary does everything." [laughter] I told Sandy, and he repeated that story on several occasions about Mamaw, my mother, and what she had done.

He was very interested in the historical side of the university. This made me very happy because it went along with my garnet and gold and things like that. He was also in the arts overall. He had grand visions. His visions, all of them were extremely costly. Somebody said, "How do you deal with Sandy and his ideas?" And I said, "I treat it like a plate of spaghetti. There's so much more there than I can ever get done, and yet if I see a noodle getting ready to drop off, I try and grab that one and get it done." Because you could not follow through with as many ideas as he had. Now there were people out there who would bust their necks trying to get everything like that done. Some of the rest of us didn't. I know certain things I would slow down on if I knew there was a real financial thing or it would take a lot more than they thought. You could not get it all done.

**Sellers:** I think of Sandy as more of a dreamer than a practical person; he's an idea guy but not the concrete way to get it done. More the "Wouldn't it be wonderful if —"

**Spencer:** Right. And with the professors, a lot of them do live in that ivory tower. When he'd say "Wouldn't it be wonderful if —" they would take that as "Okay, I can go ahead with this." That's where we had a little difficulty. He would tell you that he would rather have 100 ideas and maybe one or two of them work, than only one idea and nothing worked.

**Sellers:** He's still that way.

**Spencer:** Yes he is.

**Sellers:** What are some of the highlights of those years?

**Spencer:** I can tell you some of the low lights [laughter]. One of the real low lights was getting through the Sports Illustrated, the athletic thing that was a big scandal.

**Sellers:** With the shoes?

**Spencer:** Yes, I guess it was the shoes. That was quite a thing trying to figure out. One of the highlights was bringing on Allen Sunburg, from a legal standpoint. That was one of the better things he ever did. I think his visions for the arts and the "Yes, you can" spirit and attitude, and "Let's give everything a try." I have to, Robin, go back and really look at some things and think of the various things that happened while he was president. But you can just look at the campus. It really stop and think, that one dorm we have over there, west part of campus, it's so ugly. He said can't we do something about it. Yes, we could, and we did. To the same degree with the president's house, let's go ahead and make that the alumni center. We'll figure out how to do this. The gateway to the university with the brick signage. You'd have to say the pitch for the medical school, although controversial – it's done a lot for the campus and it's going to do a lot more for the campus. It's a beautiful addition to the campus.

**Sellers:** It's gone so much more smoothly —

**Spencer:** Than anybody could have thought. The bringing in of the number of scholars, Sandy's attention to diversity. I think Sandy, although probably upon selection, quite controversial – I'm probably one of those that wasn't sure exactly, just as he wasn't sure exactly about me—

End of Side A

**Spencer:** I think from people that I know that felt very much the same way, that were quite disturbed about Sandy's selection, are now some of his biggest fans. From the outside, non-athletic types, others that just thought that it should have been somebody else, would be Sandy's biggest cheerleaders now. They couldn't believe all he did in highlighting the fund-raising. He just did everything. Such little things like finding a golf cart. He wanted a golf cart, so my office with the long distance money raising which we had, then bought him his first golf cart. And then for he and Patsy, we decorated it one year and they rode it in the homecoming parade [laughter]. And then he did the bicycle. All those kind of things. And each president has their own mark, and so we did a lot. With Sandy's final bowl party, we used a bowtie theme and had bow ties for everybody to put on and they glowed and twinkled in the dark. We did a song or a skit or a little film or whatever of Sandy's bow ties. Each president will have their marks. He's the one I spent the most time with, so he's the one I have the fondest —. I have the most appreciation for Dale Lick for hiring me [laughter], for giving me the opportunity. Sandy and Dr. Lick were two entirely different people. Dr. Lick was certainly more of the academic and Sandy more of the dreamer- politician. I say that in a very good way.

**Sellers:** What have I not asked you to talk about?

**Spencer:** I don't know.

**Sellers:** What are you up to now? As little as possible? Happily retired? [laughter]

**Spencer:** My husband – I was Episcopalian, not a good one up here, and he did not like that when I married Ronnie. So after his death, the first thing I did was reconnect with the Episcopal Church. I had been to that church when I was in college here, Church of the Advent out on Piedmont Road. Our church split – our two priests and about two-thirds of our members left, and I was one of those who were left there at the church, a new face. When the Bishop appointed a new vestry, he put me on the vestry. So that has been just these last two years, or three, and it has really taken a lot of time. It's hard for me to believe it will be five years of retirement in June.

**Sellers:** You just can't stay home and read a book with your feet propped up? [laughs]

**Spencer:** No, I did a lot of traveling. Joann Blackwell and I go a lot of places together. Joanne's had some health problems, not serious, but she hasn't been able to really travel. I didn't know her that well in Westcott. We were claimed to be, you know, the witches of Westcott. But I got to know her more. Of course I knew Carl from having been in the

legislature and him lobbying for the Board of Regents and all of that, and then again with the University having to work with him when he was down at the Board. They are so great. Carl lets me go along and takes his two women with him. [laughter] But he'll let Joann go off. So I'll cook dinner occasionally and take a bunch out and feed them because she's tired of cooking. I'll go sit out there and have a cocktail with her. Joann and I have lunch at least one a week together. We were going to movies, but she hasn't found anything good – she's my movie maven. We haven't been to movie lately.

**Sellers:** It's slim pickings.

**Spencer:** That's what she keeps saying. I've been to see my daughter and her husband in Jacksonville, my little ones. Everybody, when they retire, I believe, says they're going to organize – every woman – their recipes and their pictures. Those pictures are going to be there when I'm dead; I'm working on the recipes.

**Sellers:** Better than throwing them out [laughs].

**Spencer:** I'm doing more cooking than I have done in years and years and years and trying a lot of these. I'm still tearing them out of books and papers. They have to be easy, fast, and what I think would be good. I have come up with some wonderful things. I do that for a lot of widows in the church. I'll call and say, "Okay, anybody want some food?" I'll stick it in a plastic tub and take it around and give dinner to various – some of them couples, some of them single.

**Sellers:** Let me give you my phone number [laughter].

**Spencer:** I really enjoy it. Sometimes I might not make it again, but then other times I've found a real keeper. I don't do as much as I should. I would love to mentor, but I don't want to commit to every Wednesday at one o'clock to be anywhere. If I want to go take a snooze or just sit there with my feet up, or do whatever I want to do, I do it.

**Sellers:** Sounds to me like you're content.

**Spencer:** Yes. I have a good time doing it. I'm sure there are a million things I would love to tell you that I don't know about.

End of Transcription