

Interview with Lillian Dees

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Date of Interview: October 25, 1985

**Location: Dees's Office, LBJ Student Center,
Texas State University, San Marcos, TX**

Begin Tape 1, Side 1

Laura Bounds: This is Laura Bounds interviewing Lillie Dees in her office at the LBJ Student Center on October 25, 1985. You came to Southwest Texas in 1962. And in 1969, you had a "Lillie Dees Day"—

Lillian Dees: Oh, you've been doing research!

Bounds: Yes, I got a hold of it [from] the News and Information Bureau. What year did you become Director of the Student Center?

Dees: In January 1984, so I've only been here about a year and a half.

Bounds: But you've been at Southwest for—

Dees: For a long time, for over twenty years. The pictures on the wall are all the deans that I've served under in Liberal Arts, but that's getting ahead of time. In '62, I was in Journalism and News Service; at that time, they were the same department and did not split off until several years later. And that was after I left there. We were a small department; we had a chairman and one faculty member; and a secretary, which was me. And Pat Murdoch, I believe she was in graduate school, working on her master's, and she was there the second year I came. She was away teaching high school the first year. And she came back to work on her master's, and she did a lot of the writing and the publicity end of it. And the other faculty member did the sports part of it.

Bounds: Where did you come from? Did you come here right after you graduated or—

Dees: No, I was working for a CPA.

Bounds: In San Marcos?

Dees: In San Marcos. And my neighbor was the secretary for the Physical Plant, which we called the Maintenance Plant at that time. And she tried—helped me get the job to come up here, and I've been here since. (Laughs) She had been, gosh, I don't know how long she'd been secretary,

Miss Minnie, and she retired, in fact, they went to the board and got special permission for her to work past her retirement date, the mandatory date, they had to go get permission. So, she'd been around a long time, too, and introduced me to a lot of people. And at first, I came in September, right after school had begun, it was so busy in that department that Mr. Roach, who was the chairman, was involved in something, I don't even remember now what it was, but he left me by myself, and they evidently had not had a secretary for a while, and he had a stack of letters. And he would sign his—when he closed at the bottom, he would just put his initials, B.R. and then—I've forgotten now what his title was, Chairman of Journalism and News Service, and he used initials. And I don't remember now, I just remember a big stack of letters, and I typed all those letters and did exactly what he had because he typed them out, being a journalist, he used the typewriter all the time, and so I typed them exactly like he had them typed, and had to do them over.

Bounds: Why?

Dees: Because I was supposed to spell out his name.

Bounds: Oh and you—?

Dees: And I just put what he'd put down there because no one told me. He walked off and left me, I came in that morning, and he left. I didn't see him, except to say good morning, for about a week. And he left me on my own, so that was—probably the best indoctrination I had for finding things and learning the job, was doing—was having to find everything on my own.

Bounds: How big was the school then?

Dees: I think, my memory is not too good, but I believe they had just broken three thousand students with that fall's registration. (Laughs)

Bounds: We have that many living in my apartments! So you came in '62, and you stayed in the News Service for—

Dees: For five years. The positions—the deans' offices were established in 1965. And the Dean of Liberal Arts had hired a secretary, or she was moved from some other position into that office, when those offices were established. The second year, in 19—I guess that would have been 1966, the secretary left, and they opened the position, and I applied for it. And I was told I could not transfer, this sounds strange today because transfer is a common thing here today, but I was told I couldn't transfer, that if I wanted to get the position I would have to resign from Journalism and News Service and take my chances. Well, if I'd resigned, I would have lost all my accumulated sick leave and vacation and all that, and I would have had a break in service and had to start over. And I really didn't want to do that. Dr. Houston, who was dean at that time, felt that he needed someone with a degree, which I did not have. So he hired another young lady. But the main reason was I couldn't transfer, so I'd already withdrawn interest. And so he hired a

young lady with a degree and found out that doesn't always mean that that's a good secretary. Part of the problem might have been she had a Home Ec. degree and not an office management or that type of degree (laughs).

Bounds: He just wanted a degree, in other words.

Dees: Right. He felt the dean's office needed—should have a degree, people working in that office. So the next, she didn't last but about a year—a little less than a year, and the position was open again. And I was still interested, I wanted to move up because there wasn't much where to go with Journalism and News Service, and at that time, salary-wise, I was—could not make any more because we had a rule that no one could make more than the president's secretary. And I made \$299 a month, and the secretary, and the president's secretary was making \$300. So there was no hope of a salary increase (laughs). And so I had the—Dr. McCrocklin was president at the time, and I don't know why I got called, probably because no one else was in the office, by this time being in Journalism for four years, going on five, I had learned to write news stories, I had learned to do the noon broadcast, news broadcast for KCNY, and so I was not just a secretary anymore, I was one of the reporters, and did a little bit of everything. So Dr. McCrocklin had called and wanted someone to come over because Dr. Jewell, who was Dean of Students, had decided to step down as Dean of Students and go back to teaching. And so I was in McCrocklin's office, and he used the word “transfer,” that Dr. Jewell was going to transfer back to the Department of Education. So when we finished, when he finished giving me the information, I asked if I could talk off the record with him, and he said yes. And I just bluntly asked him, I said, “What do peons around here have to do to be able to transfer?” And he started laughing. He knew, Dr. McCrocklin knew everything that was going on on campus, you didn't—I mean, down to the grounds keeps, he knew their names, he knew what they were doing, and he started laughing, and he said, “You want to transfer to work with Ralph Houston.” And I said, “Yes, sir,” and he said, “If you want that, go do it, we'll take care of it.” So—

Bounds: Just like that!

Dees: In essence, I was one of the first secretaries—

Bounds: You started the transfers—(Laughs)

Dees: To ever transfer at Southwest Texas. Faculty did that, administration did that, but secretaries had never been able to do that. And I interviewed, and Dr. Houston hired me, and I transferred.

Bounds: And you were there for a quite a while?

Dees: And I stayed there until 196—70, 80.

Bounds: So you were there fourteen years?

Dees: Yeah, I was there fourteen years in Liberal Arts. And I saw—

Bounds: You saw the whole department grow.

Dees: Oh yeah, I knew all the faculty when I went in, I knew the faculty. And the day that a person walked into my office with a change of grade card, he was dressed in jeans and a pullover shirt, young-looking young man, and I said, “I’m sorry, but we do not accept change of grade cards from students, you’ll need to take this back to the chairman of the department, and they will have to process this.” And he looked at me and said, “Ma’am, I am the instructor.” (Laughs) And I realized that I did not know all the instructors anymore. We had grown so much that I barely knew their names, much less their faces. And so—I guess one department, probably the English department ended up, when I left, had as many faculty members in it as the whole school had had when I first began.

Bounds: Oh my gosh!

Dees: And by this time we were, you know, at fifteen thousand, so we had really grown at that point.

Bounds: From three thousand to—I can’t imagine that. Well, what was the—I always wondered, I’ve always wanted to ask this. What was the campus like during the sixties? Did we have the, you know, the turmoil that you always see—you know, the peace marches and everything else on all the other campuses? Did that ever affect Southwest?

Dees: Not as much as other campuses. We had some of it, but it wasn’t as much—the kickers were the ones who ruled the campus. There were two groups when I came here, you were either a kicker, or you were a frat. And you could tell by the dress who was who. The kickers wore the jeans and the boots, and the frats were dressed in suits, you know they dressed up. Then when the sixties—that movement, it was the late sixties I guess when that came, we had the hippie movement come in. And they would have their demonstrations. And it was always before a war between the frats and the kickers. But the frats and the kickers united against the hippies, so it was a blending there (laughs). And to me, it was the beginning of—where the two were not distinguishable anymore because they joined together against another group. And then the hippies faded away, and we didn’t see that anymore. And after that point, it was difficult to tell the different groups, because everyone sort of blended and merged together in the seventies, and you didn’t see them.

Now today, I’m beginning to see with the punk rockers—you see a difference, you know, maybe not in what they do, but in their dress aspect of it, you can begin to see. And then the kicker moment, you know it got to be a big thing, everybody wore jeans to class—when I came, you didn’t wear jeans. Women didn’t wear pants. And at one point, when the pantsuits became popular, we had a dress code passed for staff and faculty. It came down that if you wore pants; you had to wear nice, dress pantsuits.

Bounds: Really? (Laughs)

Dees: Can you believe that? When I first came here, the Strutters could not walk across campus in their shorts to practice. I'm not sure, but I have the feeling that that's where the capes came from, because they had to wear, they—ended up wearing the capes over their shorts to go to practice and go to eat, they couldn't go in the cafeterias in shorts.

Bounds: Things have changed! (Laughs)

Dees: A lot. I had, one of the deans taught history class. I can remember when the “no bra” fad came in, and he said—he came in from class one day, and he said, he was really having trouble. He said, “You know, when the miniskirts were popular, I could keep my eyes at eye level with the students and avoid the short skirts.” But he said, “I have trouble,” and he'd had a young lady that day in class that was evidently well-endowed and was trying to get his attention, rather intentionally or unintentionally, and she was on the front row, and he said, he completely lost his train of thought, and so he lectured the rest of the day looking out the window. (Laughs) So, I would assume that faculty have gotten adjusted now to the different—you see a little bit of everything, you see everything from people dressed in suits, and the young ladies dressed very nice to nothing—shorts, short shorts, short skirts, the whole realm. So I assume faculty have become adjusted to all that and have learned to lecture without becoming distracted.

Bounds: I had not even thought about the dress codes, you know—my age especially, you just always wore what you wanted to. But that must have been a big breakthrough just wearing pantsuits.

Dees: Oh yeah. And to wear shorts—oh, heaven forbid. (Laughs)

Bounds: So—you came to the Student Center in 1980—

Dees: Eighty-four. When I left the dean's office, when Dr. Lovin left, I said this is it. I've been through too many deans, and I was getting close to finishing my degree, and I had wanted to move on. I did not want to be a secretary all my life; I had other goals in mind. So when he resigned, I said this is the time for me to make the move. I'd averaged a dean every two years and because of the constant moving, or constant changing, I was in a continual training of a new dean, and that sounds conceited, but I don't mean it to sound that way, but when you're constantly in the office, you're the one who has all the information. And I was just ready to move on to something else and have a bigger challenge. And Dr. Watson, who was Vice President for University Affairs, at that time is what we called it, had been interested in me a couple of times and had wanted me to move. And I'd never been interested; in fact, I probably wouldn't have ever moved if there would have been something available that I could have expanded and gone on in academics. But he was without an administrative assistant, about the same time that Dr. Lovin resigned, and so I talked to him, then interviewed and was hired. So we both abandoned ship about the same time. I worked for him about a year and a half before he moved to Vice

President for Planning, and Dr. Mallory came in. Then I was with her for about a semester, and then she gave me the promotion to Director of the Student Center. So that's kind of the involvement—

Bounds: Do you love it?

Dees: Yes, I'm glad to be back with students. I really missed; being in the Vice President's office, you didn't have the contact with students. And when I went in there, Dr. Watson had not hired student workers, so we didn't even have that contact. Before I left, I had convinced him that students would work in that office, and I'd hired a couple, so I was getting a little contact, but for that two years I really missed being involved with the students. This is a big undertaking, but I really enjoy working with the students and being back in their lives.

Bounds: I'm sure they enjoy—especially the facilities; they're beautiful, there's so much—it's always crowded; they're having a good time.

Dees: No, we've outgrown the building. We need another building.

Bounds: The expansion alone is unbelievable.

Dees: Well, when I came in '62, we had Old Main, Lueders Hall, which is now gone for the Chemistry Building, the Science Building, what we called the Education Building is now—what did they call it now? —Psychology Building, and then across the street, or across the mall, what's now Flowers, was the library, and then you came up to the Art Building and then back to the Administration Building. And that was the main campus right there. And then the Fine Arts Building, which is now the History Building, was the Music Building, and then Evans was there.

Bounds: And that's the whole campus? (Laughs)

Dees: That was it. Physical Plant, and now what's the Music Building, was there. The gymnasium, that was there. And the print shop, and the—

Bounds: Agriculture?

Dees: No, that wasn't there either—Industrial Arts Building was there, but that was it.

Bounds: Do you think the school's growing too fast? Is this positive, this growth change? I mean, I've been here—this is my fifth year. I came in '81, it was just over fifteen thousand, and now it's topping twenty—

Dees: It's grown too fast in the sense that we haven't been able to keep up with the buildings, and the space we need—financially and, I guess too, with the faculty—but my feeling is that, we're a state institution, and I don't know how you can really not grow. Or you really can't turn people away, if they meet the qualifications to get in—the requirement to get in.

Bounds: You can't turn them away.

Dees: Right. I have problems with that when it's a state institution. If you were a private, you could have a little more control, I think. There are things, and we are doing things now to try to curb that fast growth, and it's been—I don't know if anybody has been able to explain why Southwest Texas has grown the way we have. I remember when UTSA went in. The talk for a couple of years before they opened the doors was, well, we'll drop when UTSA opens. That's going to take our commuters from San Antonio, they'll be closer. And that didn't happen.

Bounds: Has it affected us at all?

Dees: No. We didn't skip a beat. In fact, if anything, we grew more. And people—that's the interesting thing, why do people drive all the way from San Antonio, or ride a bus, when there's UTSA there?

Bounds: Well, I think the personal atmosphere of this school. You just don't get that in a larger university—

Dees: That's true.

Bounds: A lot of the growth is due to the fact that more people can afford to go to college. I mean, in '62, a BA could get you through, and now a BA, in some fields, are a dime a dozen.

Dees: That's right. Bachelor's degrees are like high school diplomas were—fifteen years ago. The market is not flooded in the sense that, in some areas are flooded where there are no jobs available. But there's so many people with degrees now that employers can be a little more selective in their hiring process. The other thing, too, is that they can afford—that's a cycle I've seen happen here. When I came in the early sixties, it changed pretty rapidly, but the students as a whole didn't have to work. There were more students coming with checkbooks from Mom and Daddy, and they weren't looking for jobs. And then we went into a cycle where everybody was having to work and everybody was looking for a job. They needed to help Mother and Daddy put them through school. And then we went—changed again, and people were still working, but not as much as they had been. And they had a little more money. But I see us back in the cycle where everybody's having to work again.

Bounds: (Laughs) I agree!

Dees: You know, Mother and Daddy don't have it to send them with an open checkbook.

Bounds: It's true. It's just not there. Plus all the extracurricular activities to pay for. In the sixties, did the Vietnam War affect this campus, as far as enrollment? Did you see a lot of—what was the atmosphere like? I always wondered this. You know, when I first came here, they still had the Korean [War] Memorial here—and the World War I and II. It's hard for me to think—

would my generation put up a memorial. I mean, would it affect us in the same way that it had when they put up the Korean Memorial. Did the enrollment drop during the—?

Dees: No, see that's when—we've never dropped since I've been here; we've been on a continual increase. I haven't seen the enrollment figures for this fall, but I've heard that we're almost to a leveling point. I think we still had an increase of like—a few. I don't know what the number was, but not in the excess that we've had in the past. So it appears, for at least now, we're at a leveling, or beginning to level. But we've never had a drop—I'm trying to think back, what the campus was like—The thing I remember most about the Vietnam era was having to document the students—the males were in school and taking full loads. Because if they were doing that, they didn't have to go (laughs), that type of thing.

Bounds: Then it would make more sense, that enrollment went up instead of dropping off.

Dees: That may have something to do with it at that time. More males—I remember conversations with people who had been here during World War II, that the campus became all-female practically because all the men went to war. But Vietnam was not quite like that because it was not ever a real declared war. It was just a conflict.

Bounds: It didn't have the patriotism with it.

Dees: Right. And there was such controversy about the war, that was part of the demonstrations, was against the war. But it never—we never had the violent demonstrations, they were—in comparison to others, ours were pretty calm and mild. And it was more what everybody called the hippie segment of campus that did the demonstrations, so, you know, it was a small group.

Bounds: How—how did the students feel about—I don't know—I don't even think I can word this right. But how did the students, when they had the McCrocklin scandal, how did the students deal with that? Did they—

Dees: I think there were probably—for the most part, most of the students didn't either care or didn't understand what was going on. But most of the students went on as normal, as far as I can remember. You had groups who were, at one time or the other, were vocal. But it was mostly faculty or staff that were—and I guess you can compare that situation as much between the war between the North and the South, it split families and that—split faculty. People who had been friends for years and colleagues were on different sides of the fence, those who defended McCrocklin and those who were opposed. It split friendships. It was a—it's hard for me to really say—say for students because we were so involved as faculty and staff in the turmoil that—it was difficult to—to really be—remember what the students were doing because we just weren't thinking about how the students felt, because we were in a crisis. And not knowing what was going to happen to our leadership and who was going to come in. There was always that, and what kind of president you were going to get when he left. I—you know, I don't know—that has come up again, it hadn't been talked about for years, people had let it drop. And then there's

been some things happening lately that I think people are beginning to—those that remember mention it now. I just—in my mind have never been resolved that he was guilty.

Bounds: He resigned though, didn't he?

Dees: Yes.

Bounds: Instead of going through the—the whole—

Dees: He was on President Johnson's staff at the time. And, in my mind, I always will feel like that—I don't know if it's true or not, but I feel like maybe he was not able to fight—the situation. That he may have been requested not to—because of where he was—

Bounds: Yeah—political—

Dees: And the other, maybe he didn't want to fight, I don't know.

Bounds: Well, he did well for himself! (Laughs)

Dees: Oh, yeah—you know, I don't know—the whole details about it. But I also know that he was in the service, he had access to documents. But I also know how the service operates. Sometimes, they want things published, and they want something to happen, and they let people take the fall and won't back them because it's supposed to be classified or whatever. I always try—I compare his situation to the ship, and I can never remember the name of it, but the poor captain was caught in waters he wasn't supposed to be in, and you know, he got court marshaled.

Bounds: Somebody had to take the—yeah—

Dees: And it's like the guy from Vietnam that was the only person that was tried for the killing of all the children and the women, and they put him—he was under arrest and had been in jail—I don't know where he is now. I'll never believe that young man made all those decisions all by himself. If you know the service and know how they operate, someone higher up had to issue some orders, or he—

Bounds: He was like the patsy.

Dees: That's how I feel, but that's a personal opinion. But it was one of those things you didn't discuss very widely, right— (Laughs) because evidently there was enough documentation— my understanding is that UT pulled the diploma. And it looks as if it no longer exists. But the other thing that makes me feel like—that my feelings are accurate, is I can't believe he would have stayed and done what he's done, had built the life that he built, if he hadn't had a clear conscience.

Bounds: That's interesting, I hadn't thought of it like that. And plus he's responsible, more than anyone else, for building up this corridor [San Antonio to Austin]. This area.

Dees: I admire him very much.

Bounds: Do you still keep in touch with him?

Dees: I see him occasionally, but it's just a friendly hello. That's about it.

Bounds: Why doesn't he come public? I can understand him not wanting to face that hurrah. I couldn't—

Dees: Well, I admire him very much, because to stay here and go ahead and put your life back together. Most people, I think, would have left and tried to build a new life somewhere else. And he didn't. I admire him for that. To have the courage—

Bounds: What year was it that he left?

Dees: That would have been the late sixties, I'm not real sure what the year was.

Bounds: Then Smith came in right?

Dees: No, Billy Mac Jones came.

Bounds: He was that interim president, wasn't he?

Dees: No, Billy—he's the one where I'm standing up on the top, second—[referring to a photo hanging in her office] No, he was—Mr. Cates was an interim president for a year—I don't have a picture of him—Dr. Derrick was also an interim president, but I believe Dr. Derrick was an interim president when McCrocklin went to Washington. And then I think Cates was acting president after McCrocklin resigned. Because Cates—Mr. Cates was president during the streaking period.

Bounds: (Laughs) I'd forgotten about that!

Dees: Mr. Cates was the equivalent to—I don't remember now exactly what his title was—but he was equivalent to the President of Finance and Management. And it was well known that he followed the letter of the law, followed the book, and you didn't do anything unless it said so in the book with finances. So when he became president and the streakers started, if anyone had asked me, I would have bet a year's paycheck that, [he would say] "That's against the law, we'll call the police on anyone who streaks." But that's not what he did, which surprised a lot of people, what he did was—(phone ringing) What Mr. Cates did was designate the street down near, you know between Sterry and Falls? And he said, "If you're going to streak, you can streak on this area between this block and this block, between this time and this time, any other time, the police will be called." One night—streaking was over—it was the best thing he could have done. But I wouldn't have thought that's what he would have done, because he was usually—

Bounds: Did they do it? Did they streak?

Dees: Yes, that one night. But it was mainly people from town who came up. Students weren't that involved.

Bounds: McCrocklin went to Washington, you said?

Dees: See, President Johnson went into office while McCrocklin was President of Southwest. And of course, President Johnson was very involved in coming back several times. He came back for the McCrocklin Inauguration. And then, this celebration we're celebrating the seventh and eighth of November. He came back and signed the Higher Education Act of 1965 on our campus.

Bounds: That's what all the pictures of him on campus are from. I'd always wondered what—

Dees: You see, he was—he graduated from here and was pretty involved—he was on the debating team, and he was editor of the *University Star*. And he was—worked for the president—

Bounds: I didn't know that.

Dees: He was—for President Evans, he was his secretary, worked as a secretary for him. So somewhere in there he, and I didn't know the details on that either, but he offered or took McCrocklin to Washington to hold a post during his time. And I've forgotten now what it was he held. What his title was—but he served on his staff. And it was while he was gone that all the hoopla came about the doctorate. So, he was at a disadvantage from the beginning because he wasn't here to defend himself. And there was a lot of room for people to operate without—and say things he couldn't defend.

Bounds: So after McCrocklin resigned—?

Dees: And then Cates was the acting—and then Billy Mac Jones came. And Billy Mac was here—in fact, that's where one of the deans came [from]. Ralph Randolph came from San Angelo with Billy Mac Jones. And Jones was here probably about three years—three or four years. And then he left and went to Memphis State as Chancellor. And that's when Smith—they hired Lee Smith. And Smith was here the longest of anybody after that. And he was here seven or eight years.

Bounds: And then Hardesty.

Dees: And now Hardesty.

Bounds: Another one of President Johnson's—we still have close ties with Johnson.

Dees: Yes.

Bounds: I didn't realize that Johnson had kept such close ties with the university. I know his wife is always up here. She goes to special—

Dees: Yes, he came to visit pretty often. Now, even after—

Bounds: Now his grandson is here.

Dees: But I think his grandson is keeping a pretty low profile.

Bounds: I met him during [freshman] orientation. The awe, I mean, this is President Johnson's grandson. I'm sure he can't avoid that. But he's very down to earth.

Dees: I think he would like to keep it as low as possible. I imagine that he's had all the limelight he likes.

Bounds: Let's see, what can I ask? When you came to the Student Center in '84, there had been one predecessor before you?

Dees: No, there has been several before me. And not being—being in academics, I didn't know a whole lot about this side of campus. Martha Sinclair was Director—Do you know Martha? She just retired this year out of Admissions. She was an admissions counselor.

Bounds: That's right.

Dees: She was Director of the Student Center when I came here—well, she came after I did, I think. I don't know prior to that who was director because I just never thought about the Student Center or went there. I know that at one point, the Student Center was under the Art Building. In the early, early years, I can remember going. One time there, and it was just—it was a real dingy place, with long tables and benches. And then they built what is now the University Service Center, and that was the new Student Center. And—oh, I know who was there when I came, Jim Walls, because his wife was secretary to the alumni director. And she and I became friends, I shouldn't have forgotten that. He was Director of the Student Center then, and then Martha took over from him—

Bounds: And they outgrew—

Dees: That one, yeah.

Bounds: Now they're outgrowing this one.

Dees: Mm-hm. Now we have a new building on the drawing board—

Bounds: Oh, really? Where?

Dees: It's in the master plan. It's just in the beginning stages. If I can read the master plan, it looks to me like it's going to be over near the president's home. Somewhere in that area.

Bounds: In that field?

Dees: Yes, in that field is what it looks like, it's hard to tell. It's in that direction. The mall is to be extended to where you can go from Old Main, all the way to West Campus on the mall area. And the new library is to go somewhere in the vicinity of Harris Hall. And then we're going to be on the other side of the library.

Bounds: This campus is going to be so long!

Dees: Yes.

Bounds: It's going to take—it's not very wide, but it goes straight—

Dees: Straight up.

Bounds: Straight back. I remember when they bought—when they got hold of West Campus—Everybody's going, What are they going to do with it? But now—

Dees: Oh, we need it. We need it.

Bounds: What will become of this building?

Dees: I'm not really sure. I haven't seen the—I think it will be given to—probably one of the academic departments.

Bounds: Um—what was I going to ask you? Tell me about “Lillie Dees Day,” I was going to—about that. You got an honorary degree. I see that up there—

Dees: Yes. They made me Honorary Dean of Liberal Arts. Dr. Lovin, he is probably the closest thing to a mentor that I've ever had, decided that I had been there—it was getting close to starting the fifteenth year, and no one had ever done anything to let me know how much they appreciated my being the one constant in all the deans. For two years, Dr. Norris—do you know Dr. Norris?

Bounds: No.

Dees: He was Dean of Science and then was promoted to Vice President of Academic Affairs. And in between Randolph and Franklin—he was acting dean while they were searching, and it ended up taking two years for them to find a dean. Well, he just couldn't—he was the assistant. Joe Wilson was still Vice President, but he was on his way to retirement, and his health was not real good. So Dr. Norris was picking up more and more of the Vice President's—vice presidential duties. And he was just really didn't have enough time to take care of Liberal Arts; he had too many things to do. So I ended up taking a lot of responsibility and making a lot of decisions and doing a lot of the things that weren't normally the secretary's right or function. But somebody had to do it. And by that point, I'd be there long enough that I felt that those were my

faculty, and my chairman, and my—Dr. Norris use to tell me all the time that when I'd use that terminology, that they weren't mine, that they belonged to the university, but that's okay, they were mine. (Laughs) So, I had for two years almost run the school. I'd leave things for Dr. Norris to sign or would call him if there was something I didn't think I could handle. But most of it, I went ahead and did. So Dr. Lovin, and Dr. Lovin had been chairman of the philosophy department, so he had seen me in action, and he decided that someone needed to do something to recognize that. So he did the "Lillie Dees Day," and all the people from—[looking at a scrapbook], my daughter decided I needed—

Bounds: A scrapbook!

Dees: A scrapbook of the day, so she put the scrapbook together.

Bounds: What did you finally get your degree in? You mentioned a while ago that you were working on your degree.

Dees: In sociology and business.

Bounds: Business. Now, that has grown in the last ten years.

Dees: Very much.

Bounds: Because always before it was education. This school was always known for education.

Dees: Right. We were known as a teachers school. In fact, we carried that in our name, at one point. I was trying to remember the other day, when I came here—we were known as Southwest Texas State Teachers College. And then we dropped the "Teachers," and I can't remember when we did that. And then, we were just, Southwest Texas State College, and then we went to the "University." And I remember that, because everybody was very excited when we—because university was associated with size, and we had grown to the university status.

Bounds: But I mean, just the rate our business school is growing—

Dees: And I understand that we are beginning to get national recognition. We're one of the leading, or in the top, I don't know where we rank with other schools, but I understand that we're really moving up.

Bounds: But that's all happened—

Dees: Oh, just in the last five years, I'd say, that we've really moved up.

Bounds: Really? I just keep thinking that—when you think of Southwest Texas, you think of business or education. It takes a lowly second now. People say, What are you in, history? What history? You're not a business major? But—

Dees: I haven't seen enrollment figures, but just from my perception is, I would assume that business has passed education enrollment.

Bounds: Do you think the quality of education has—just from what you've seen in the last—

Dees: I think we've gotten better. I think we've improved.

Bounds: The curriculum has expanded, that's for sure.

Dees: I think that teachers probably demand more than they did at one time. Of course, that comes too, with growing. The teacher doesn't have as much time for the individual, which is sad in some respects, to spend individual time. Because the class size has to grow, as we've grown. But, I think it has probably been good, because they—

Bounds: Like I said, I think a lot of it goes back to having that personal touch.

Dees: Yes, and I hope we can still maintain that. It's not easy.

Bounds: Because even in the large classes, you still feel like—you know, it's not like UT, where you have four hundred people in one class—

Dees: That's right.

Bounds: The most we have in one hundred and twenty?

Dees: Well—there are some classes I know of that have three hundred in them.

Bounds: I can think of one offhand. (Laughs) Human Sexuality!

Dees: Yes—

Bounds: Dr. Hardesty's class.

Dees: Yes, that's in our—they're holding classes in the Chautauqua Room.

Bounds: Oh, really?

Dees: Because Evans [Auditorium]—

Bounds: Well, at least it's comfortable!

Dees: Yeah—

Bounds: Well—

Dees: Some of the art, music, and drama classes that—that Intro to Fine Arts class, used to. I think they still do have some big classes. And I hope we can—I hope we don't lose that because I think that's one of the big plusses for us. It gets harder every year, with the growth, to be able

to maintain that personal touch. But we've always had administrators and faculty that have worked very hard to maintain that.

Bounds: We have a very good faculty system. Well, I know you have an appointment at eleven. Thank you so much for doing this for me. I've enjoyed it. It put a new—I'm starting to—that so cute(??) I'm starting to appreciate Southwest more in means of the history. And that's what they hope to do eventually with all this. You know, nothing's doing to be done today or tomorrow, but they hope that in two or three years, they can get an overall perspective of what it was like. Especially the—the term you've been here, the phenomenal growth.

Dees: Oh, yeah. Well, it's—I never thought that when I started that I'd be here this long. The loyalty and the affection I feel for Southwest is really great. And I guess that was brought home to me when—my daughter started here when she got out of high school, of course she's grown up here, you know, she knows the campus, she came up here with me when she was small, so she's been able to walk to campus. And I really guess I didn't realize until she had an accident—I don't know if you've—

Bounds: Yes, I've met your daughter.

Dees: And she was bound and determined to come back up here. And I kept trying to talk her into going someplace else because this campus is just not conducive to a handicapped person in a wheelchair. But her counselor, she was going to, Victoria Junior College has a campus at Warm Springs for handicap, and she, we put her there last fall, and she was not happy at all. I made more trips down there because she was so unhappy. And she wanted to come here so her counselor brought her up. And just to see her face that day that she came on campus—she was home. And her love for the campus was just—it's been the best therapy for her. She's here now, loving it.

Bounds: I always see her around campus.

Dees: Yeah. She's in Summit Oaks [a woman's resident hall].

Bounds: Oh, is she?

Dees: Yeah, she lives in Summit Oaks.

Bounds: I bet she loves that. That apartment atmosphere. It's a dorm, but it's not!

Dees: Well, and it was just right for her to be able to come back. And she's managed—how she's done it, I don't know, to get in and out, and up and down the places she has to go.

Bounds: Well, I think the—with the, you know, new handicapped laws that came in the—that's really made a difference.

Dees: That amazing thing has been that this campus has, we were not ready for her, and people have just bent over backwards. And now—just in less than a year, the things that have been accomplished, is—just tells you a little about the people on campus, and what they'll do to help students.

Bounds: She's part of this family, too. That's exactly it. Well, I'm glad that things worked out so well for her. I hope other students can come. Because I know we have a number of blind students. But I hope other students will come.

Dees: I think they will.

Bounds: I think they might influence the kids. It can't hurt us, that's for sure!

Dees: No.

Bounds: Well, again, thank you.

Dees: You're welcome. I enjoyed it.

Bounds: I had the best time.

End of interview