

Dr. Aileen Creighton
Chair, Department of English: 1944-1975
Director, Division of Humanities: 1966-1967
Assistant Dean, Division of Arts and Sciences: 1975-1980

This is a recording of Interview No. 1 for the Del Mar College Oral History Project. Today is September 26, 2001. The time is 6 p.m. This interview is being held in Dr. Aileen Creighton's apartment, Baypoint Resort Apartments, 1802 Ennis Joslin Road, Corpus Christi, Texas. My name is Roel G. Carmona. Present during this interview are Dr. Creighton, Irma Carmona and myself.

I'm interviewing Dr. Aileen Creighton, a person who has been associated with Del Mar College since 1939. Dr. Creighton was chairperson of the English department from 1944 to 1975. She was director for the Division of Humanities from 1966 to 1967. She was Assistant Dean of the Division of Arts and Sciences from 1975 to 1980. Creighton Plaza, the area in front of the Administration Building, was named after her in 1981.

Q: Good evening, Dr. Creighton, thank you very much for giving us some of your recollections of Del Mar College. You are presently teaching a Saturday morning English 1302 class – Weekend College. Could you be the person who has taught the longest at Del Mar?

A: No, I'm not the person who has taught the longest at Del Mar College as far as I know. I think Warren Strickland taught longer than I did; that is, teach full time. I don't know when I started this part time being an adjunct. I think it was about three years into it – about '92 maybe, I'm not really sure. And so anyhow, I've never thought they would count although I taught two classes most of the time. I decided to take only one this spring.

Q: Okay. Well, could you please tell us about yourself?

A: How I got to be at Del Mar College?

Q: Right. Early schooling and maybe your college studies and –

A: Well, I graduated from high school at West Texas State Teacher's College (WTSTC), the Subnormal division. (Laughing). My husband and son and Grady St. Clair loved to tease me about graduating with the subnormals. Would you know we said that for short and then the next year, they became a teacher's college so there wasn't any jokes about subnormal, but all of the teacher's college were Normal schools. I've never learned why. I want to know why. I did a thing once – a paper once on French schools in education and they're called a normal – a regular BA degree teacher's college. Maybe we borrowed it from there. I don't know. Anyway, I graduated from high school there. The morning after my graduation, we moved to Austin because my brother needed to study architecture and he couldn't get it at WTSTC. I entered the University of Texas in the fall of 1927. I had graduated a little bit early from high school, not real early, but a little early and I hurried up because – well, frankly, we needed somebody to get out of school and make some money. (Laughing). So I took the maximum that would be allowed. After I got a "B" average, I could take six courses, you know, instead of five and I got through in three winters and two summers with a BA degree in June 1930. And then I went out to get a job teaching school. Nobody, but nobody would have me. They said I was too young. (Laughing). And when – finally when a job on East Sixth Street, which was in those days not the popular place it is now, it

was really slums, and there was a job in some kind of factory over there that would pay six dollars a week and even they wouldn't have me. (Laughing). So I came back – I went back to the university and worked at two jobs. I'd always worked ever since the second year in the library as a page – 35 cents an hour. You got 25 cents until you worked 400 hours and then you got 35 cents an hour. (Laughing). For the Master's degree year, I got a job in the department of education. I want you to know the exact name of it. It was the Department of the Art of Teaching, and I adored the lady who directed my master's thesis. I went there because of her. Two reasons: I went there – for one thing they hired their student assistant or whatever you call it immediately in May. The English department wouldn't make a choice until September, and I quickly figured out that a bird in hand is worth two in the bush and that was much a better job than my 35 cents an hour. It was 60 cents an hour, I think. Wonderful. So that's the first – that's the BA degree and at the end of one whole year and two summers, I hadn't finished a master's thesis. I was still writing out cards and getting notes, and I took my box of cards with me to Hutto, Texas, where I taught four classes of English and one in math. It was a sin for me to teach algebra, but I had to because they had to have an algebra class. (Laughing). I'd had college algebra and I'd made "Bs," but I didn't know what I was doing, you know. I had memorized – but so then that was '30-'31. Back in – no, a BA degree in '30, yes – next year '30-'31 – back to Austin '31-'32. I know I got my Master's degree in August 1932. Then I went to teach school at Sonora for two years – high school English. Then, I came down to Taft to teach high school English where I stayed a year and a half. Somebody told me there was a vacancy in Corpus Christi and for me to apply and so I came over and applied, and I got it. Dr. Ernest H. Hereford was superintendent of the high school and also president of Del Mar College because Del Mar wasn't big enough yet to be separate. So I was at Corpus Christi High School in '37-'38. Married Jimmy Creighton in June of '38, whereupon they told me if a woman teacher got married, she automatically severed her connection with the CCISD. In short, I was fired. (Laughing). Mr. Creighton and I got an apartment and then I got a job working in the public library because, you know, I didn't have any library science, but I'd spent all those years at UT. Every time I went back in summertime, I worked in the library. I worked in the library always if I could. I worked in the Education Library, and I'm glad I remember the names of some of the books because I've heard a lot – I've seen a lot in print this year about how Del Mar College must be "learning centered." We teachers are encouraged to not just teach but make the students learn. Really, I always thought I was doing that, but it does sound good. (Laughing). But one of the books that I used to check out to people in the Education Library was "The Child Centered School." (Laughing). And that was in the 1930s – late '30s. So – but now where am I? I got a Master's degree.

Q: You were about to be hired by Del Mar College?

A: Yes.

Q: When did that happen?

A: Lorena Rhodes-Parrot told me that they had to have somebody to run the library for a year so that Mrs. J.W. Agee, who was the librarian, could have a year's leave of absence for her baby. So I took the job. We met behind the Wynn Seale Auditorium in what was called "the shacks." And once upon a time, the boys at Del Mar College put up a great big banner over the shack at the back of Wynn Seale reading "Harvin's Happy Haven for Half-wits." (Laughing). I presided over the library. And at the end of that year as a librarian, I applied to stay on, and I was allowed to, and everybody was going to the Army. Grady St. Clair was registrar, and they hired me as

assistant registrar. That library job was for one year only, you know, but then at the end of it, they needed an assistant registrar so I was an assistant registrar. The only good thing I did there was make on the form or each grade sheet teachers turned in a note to the course or something like that because I found that in two years we'd had very bad administrators. I don't know who they were, but they didn't do very well. (Laughing). And everything was disordered. You couldn't find out what English 768 was – you know there was no record of it, just a grade sheet, so I wanted to correct that and we did correct that. Otherwise, I was just a kind of make-do assistant registrar. Six weeks before school was out Mr. St. Clair went into the service. He was in France and England. In France he met the lady who wrote, "A Rose is a Rose is a Rose." She was experimenting with automatic writing.

Q: Stein?

A: Stein. Gertrude Stein. Well, in Paris he met Gertrude Stein and invited her to talk to the men in the service and she brought a great big dog. She was a very strange looking person – (Laughing) – he said. Very old with gray hair – kind of down – not fixed up at all. (Laughing). Yes, Gertrude Stein. When St. Clair came back to the registrar job, I became an English teacher. I worked a year for Del Mar before I began teaching English at Del Mar. After the registrar business was over, I was a full-time English teacher all the rest of the way to the end. And – somewhere along I got my master's degree back in 1932. Yeah, I told you that. Okay. Then – we were a small department. I think there were three or four of us and then suddenly when the war was over, we had a big jump in enrollment. Incidentally, let the world know that it was great to teach literature to the fellows fresh from service because they understood. If I had a terrible poem, you know, about death or something, they understood it. In contrast, I had little tiny giggly girls that sat on the front seat and whispered to each other and they didn't know what the poem was about, you know. It didn't touch them because they couldn't imagine it. But those were great days. Nobody in the room ever took it as gospel because I was saying it. They would argue. They would question. They would bring up an opposing point of view, and I loved it. It was great. I am corresponding off and on now with two fellows that were in my class – literature classes in those days.

Q: Very interesting.

A: Then our department grew to be five. We had had Catherine Evans and Joan Vanderford and then gradually one or two people that didn't stay very long. Then gradually it got bigger and bigger, and our night school enrollment increased too, and we had more and more adjuncts. I thought it was a pretty hard job. I used to give myself night classes because I could work all day in the office and just stay over at night. And finally they lightened the load. I had one class short – had four classes and then finally I had three classes.

There were some good moments. 1952 was the year that we allowed black people to come to the college. It had been a thorn in the flesh of the Board of Regents and the president because we had to pretend there was an equally good junior college across town – (Laughing) – in north Corpus Christi. That cost a lot of money and of course they didn't have the science labs and the other things. And the way Dr. E. L. Harvin – what he said to me one time was that he asked his children, his daughters and his son, "What would happen if we admitted black students?" And they said, "Nothing, nothing would happen." He proposed it to the Board of Regents, and they passed it. We had – then – *Life Magazine* sent down a reporter and a photographer. I was

impressed because they got a hundred dollars a day each. (Laughing). Anyway, they wer going to make a great big double page spread in *Life Magazine* about Del Mar College had admitted black students, and there was no blood running in the streets. In fact, the little fella who was going to write the article was much impressed with something he saw on the campus. It seems that a black boy had dropped a fountain pen out of his backpack or something, and the girl that was coming toward him just reached down, swooped it up and handed it to him. This little fella from the North thought that was significant of some sort. I didn't. (Laughing). I just thought it was what anybody would do.

Q: You know, you have known all of the presidents –

A: Yes.

Q: – for Del Mar. Could you tell us a little bit about what you remember of them?

A: I can talk most about Harvin and St. Clair. Do you know they both applied for the job of president in the first place, and they couldn't both be hired so they chose Harvin for the No. 1 and St. Clair as his assistant. They were close friends already – both had graduated from Baylor, and I was much impressed with both of them. I loved those two men. (Laughing). I felt that they brought me up in the way I should go, sort of. They were here a long time. I don't remember what the last year for Harvin was or St. Clair. St. Clair stayed a year or two longer. And I met Buddy Venters because his wide was secretary in St. Clair's office. And Virginia Stone worked for one of them, too, for a while. Anyway, Harvin's great virtue was that he kept a tight rein on the money. Before he came, some president that preceded him had gone kind of hog wild, and the books were all in a mess. They were in the red, and Harvin wasn't going to let the College be in the red. They used to tease him about being so stingy. Do you think we could have a roll of toilet paper? (Laughing). But that was all joking. He wasn't that stingy. He did tell us to count the number of pages when running off copies of things. I mean not be too lavish with it. There was a certain time and the superintendent of the schools was the president of Del Mar College automatically because it was sponsored by the downtown board. But at some point in time, they stopped calling him just Dean Harvin. He was President Harvin and St. Clair was Dean St. Clair. When Harvin retired, St. Clair became president. The reason they were such a wonderful combination was – Harvin was as hard as nails. He would be abrupt – he'd just tell you what's what without any softening of the blow. St. Clair could soothe the feathers of any faculty member that had gotten crosswise somehow or other, and he was a nice kind of person, you know, gentle – kind of like good cop/bad cop. Though they didn't play that out. And that's about all I can say about those two. Harvin ran a good tight ship. He ran a good college, and we were soon in the black and everything's fine. Both men had known that Baylor University got a name for itself by pouring money into the music department and the drama department. Well, they at least believed in the music business; you remember, we had Bud Wolfe who started the Corpus Christi Symphony with the name of Del Mar College on it as sponsor. He was a great organizer, and he got lots of players to come from out of town and play for the symphony. The symphony's been here ever since.

Q: How about Dr. Jean Richardson?

A: Oh, Dr. Richardson came along in 1947. I met him on the campus when I was up there the winter of '49-'50 at Austin.

Q: He was an instructor first – government?

A: Youngest one ever hired. He told President Harvin “You made a great mistake in hiring me. If I had been in your shoes, I wouldn’t have hired me.”

Q: (Laughing).

A: I think he was 24 years old or something like that. Anyway, he was youngish. He soon got his Ph.D., and he was Dr. Richardson and he was just fine. I have liked every president that I’ve worked under, but I haven’t know the ones since I retired officially in 1980.

Q: Okay. Can you tell us a little bit about the growth of the English department?

A: Yes, in the very beginning, we had two teachers and then I got Katherine Evans to come and then there were three. And Dr. Harvin used to call us his redheaded department because we were three people with red hair. (Laughing). And then we had Mrs. Doris Grace. We grew to ten, and finally it was 25 or 30 before I quit. There was one great surge of enrollment. We became a college of 9,000 academic students not counting all the other things. And there was a great push under Harvin in those years for a comprehensive college.

Q: Was the emphasis only on academics like the first two years of a university?

A: Just a little bit right at the beginning. Dr. Harvin had in mind an academic college that offered the first two years that you’d get at the university. The student could stay at home while he was getting those two years.

Q: Right.

A: And he wanted us to have very high standards. He finally decided that if he couldn’t employ Ph.D.s, he could make us do it on our – he could grow his own. That’s how it happened that I went off to get a Ph.D. And I don’t know when I did that, but I think it was – yeah, I do know ’49-’50. I went back up there and finished all the course work. I had been going every summer forever.

Q: What process was used to hire people? Did you advertise or was it word of mouth?

A: Mostly word of mouth, I think. In the very early years, it was entirely undemocratic; that is, the dean of each division and the vice president and the president just hired the teachers. Honest Indian, that was the way it was. That’s how I got hired. (Laughing). Then later we didn’t even have departments for a while. Then we had divisions, you know, with groups together – math and physics, and chemistry in one; biology and English and history and government in another. You’ll find all that in the old catalogs. I have wondered lately why I didn’t keep a catalog always, but I didn’t have gumption enough.

Q: When you were hired then, you would be interviewed by the vice president or the president?

A: The president usually.

Q: And then you would get the okay or not the okay?

A: Right. A little bit later you would meet four people. You'd meet the president, vice president, and the dean of the division. That's just three.

Q: Maybe the chair?

A: The fourth one was the chair when we got to the stage of having a chairman. There was a chairman before me. He was a man that came to teach here. His name was Vernon Lynch, Dr. Lynch. He went from here to the college in San Marcos and spent the rest of his life there. His wife taught in elementary school here.

Q: How long have we used adjunct teachers? When did that begin?

A: It began early because the first thing I did for Del Mar College was teach one class at night. We didn't have the term "adjunct." I think we learned it from other colleges that had part-time – we just called them part-time teachers.

Q: Now do you have an opinion as to whether it's correct or not correct to hire adjuncts?

A: Yes. I did get a lot about that with Dr. Richardson. He thought it was better to have a good teacher teaching more students than to have an adjunct. And I wasn't sure – I thought with composition where you have them write themes, and you're trying to help them, I thought we needed small classes. I used to talk to the math teacher Warren Strickland about that. He gave me this nugget: He bet if the school system had all the money in the world, and they could do anything they wanted to, the last thing they would do would be to reduce the number of students in the class. You know he's proved wrong. They are beginning now to reduce the load. I thought our loads were horrendous, and I went around to the high schools and learned that the average high school English teacher had at least 150 students, five classes with 30 or more in each class, and the principals thought that was just fine.

Q: Okay. Could you tell us about the English department? How many chairs have we had and what are your impressions of them?

A: The first chair of the English department, I think, was Vernon Lynch. When he left, I can remember that Dr. A.C. Pierce, who was functioning, I think, as Dean of the Division of Arts and Sciences took me for coffee to tell me that he and the president had talked it over and thought maybe I would make a good chair for the department and that's how that came about. And I stayed until the spring of 1975 when several things were coming due at the same moment. See that book over there written by my husband? It had to be ready for the publisher in the spring of 1975, and the people in West Columbia, who were having a history of that town written, the people in the historical society there threatened to go on to press with it not quite finished. I mean not – not proofread, not anything, and I had to get that done. I saw a chance when the word came out that they wanted somebody to be assistant dean of the Division of Arts and Sciences, but I didn't want to do that. Then all of a sudden I did want to do that and so I took that job. I wasn't really a dean, not really. The chief thing that Dean Sloan wanted was for

somebody to be there at night school, and I didn't mind being there at night. Meanwhile the elderly parents at home were gone, and my boy had grown and I could do it.

Q: So then Dr. Virginia Stone came after you? Do you remember some of the things that she was responsible for or that she did for the department?

A: Oh, yeah. She was a ball of fire so far as working and keeping up with things. She got everything shipshape and organized in the English office. And she got the Learning Center on the road. Even crawling around on the floor to plug in things.

Q: Who decided that she would be the chair?

A: We had a vote of the department, but I didn't give a very good opportunity for anybody to nominate anybody else. Well, I think I put out a statement suggesting that she would be a good chair and if anybody wanted to nominate anybody else, they could and nobody did. Because, you know, it's spring, and everybody's busy and grading papers.

Q: What is the duty of a chair in a department?

A: I think there ought to be a chairman of a department. I thought my job was to do everything I could to give the teachers time to teach. You know, take off of them whatever routine matters, like the ordering of furniture. That was totally alien to me, and I had to get into it. I thought the teachers ought to select the textbooks, but they didn't have time. I would get the price of the contending textbooks or the possibilities and have the price with a little piece of paper because I thought we were very careless about spending too much on student's textbooks because we paid no attention to what it cost.

Q: What about the English department and remediation classes?

A: Vernon Lynch started the first one when he was here. He made two sections, I believe. At any rate, I know I taught one. Because I know very well a boy whose father taught in a college came up to me on a final exam and said, "Mrs. Creighton how to spell athletic?" I said, "Athlete and you leave the 'E' out." He said, "Yes'em, but how does it begin? Is it K-Y-O?" (Laughing). And that set me to wanting to know how the brain works, and why kids are dyslexic and what to do about it.

Q: You know now we have quite a few remediation classes?

A: Oh, yeah. There were more of them than there were regular freshman sections for a while. Another interesting thing, one year I happened to tally – you remember our system of numbering was so good once upon a time because you – you knew how many sections you had because of the numbers and then if three got cancelled you must subtract – we had 60 sections of freshman English in the big years, and I counted for UT – we had more than UT had that particular fall, which shocked me.

Q: There were some famous people that came to Del Mar? I read where Will Durant?

A: Yes, Will Durant. (Laughing).

Q: You remember him?

A: Yes. I have his set of books. (Laughing).

Q: What did he do at Del Mar? Did he just lecture?

A: Oh, he just gave a lecture. But he was a fascinating man. There was then and there is now a committee that selects people – you might call them the lyceum programs, and we had lots of musical performances. We couldn't ever have a play because then you have to pay all the members of the cast. It's too expensive, but we could have a very good speaker, and Durant was terribly interesting.

Q: What about social life at Del Mar between administrators and faculty and students? I remember that Dr. Pierce would invite students to his home from our club, and we would visit with his family.

A: He invited all faculty of his division to his home, too. Once he wanted to have it on the island and did and it was interesting out there. Dr. Pierce was a good administrator and a good man, and I thought the world of him. When we were giving Dr. Harvin a farewell party – do you have any more minutes?

Q: A couple of minutes.

A: Well, Dr. Pierce thought about giving him a toy airplane because Pierce had wanted to much to talk him into letting the college have an airplane to take people to meetings, but Harvin wouldn't go for it. (Laughing).

Continuation of Interview No. 1 with Dr. Aileen Creighton conducted on October 12, 2001, in her apartment.

Q: Good afternoon, Dr. Creighton.

A: Good afternoon.

Q: Will you tell us a little bit about the deans in the Division of Arts and Sciences you worked with? Did any of the deans have a special area of interest, which received strong support from them?

A: No, not particularly. I came aboard when Dr. Pierce was the dean of the division. He was a government teacher, but I don't think he favored government departments over any other. (Laughing). I never felt anything like that. When he moved up to be vice president, they asked me to fill in until they could get somebody to be dean of the division, and I got out of it within a year or less because I didn't really want to do that. I was going to try to work our freshman English. (Laughing). What we ought to teach in it, and what we could leave out.

Q: Okay. Let's talk about say Dean Robert Sloan and Dean Everett Powell?

A: Well, Dean Sloan was the dean all the rest of the time that I was there. He moved up from the math department. And he was just a person that had everything to do with the departments under the category of arts and sciences.

Q: Were you teaching when Dr. Powell became dean?

A: No, I had already retired.

Q: Did you know him?

A: Did I know Dr. Powell? Of course I knew him. (Laughing). He came to apply for a position in the English department – every time he could for about three years. (Laughing). He was teaching at Kingsville A&I, and he wanted to be in Corpus Christi because his parents were here and because he and his wife wanted to live in Corpus Christi. They had a young daughter. She was a great joy to me, too. She used to come see us in the English department. She was very, very bright. She was the young woman who at age six or seven took a book back to the public library and said, “This was a very good book of its kind, but it did tell me more about turtles than I really wanted to know.”

Q: (Laughing).

A: I’ve heard that joke since, but she actually said it spontaneously to the librarian down there.

Q: What do you know about Dean Powell when he was a dean?

A: Well, when he was a dean, I didn’t know him very well because I didn’t go in and out of the office then all the time as I had before. But he seemed to have been very efficient. I always thought Powell as an English teacher who was extraordinarily efficient. He worked like lightning. I mean he was swift at whatever he did. He did his dissertation while he was teaching, and it could be done on a computer easily, but he did it before computers came into use, and it meant counting the words in a certain poet’s body of work.

Q: Well, now we have Dr. Ann Lopez.

A: I have met her. She’s a very charming lady. I have gone over to have coffee and cookies or something or at the beginning of school, the general meeting of the division.

Q: Can we talk about the types of students you have worked with or seen at Del Mar over the years?

A: I can’t say anything very much about that. So far as I can remember they’re always just students. They’re good ones and bad ones. They’re superb – “A+” ones and “Bs” and “Cs.” (Laughing). And “Fs.” I do not notice that there was a time when students were particularly bad. I will say that when – about the time that a shooting took place on Kent Campus, Del Mar had many students from the families most able to pay for the student to go off to college. We had many of those as we have never had before. I taught Howard Butt and his sister who came along as freshmen, and remember we had – well, just nearly all the young people there were – rich or poor – mostly rich in Corpus Christi.

Q: Can we talk about Del Mar College as a community college? What programs or services can you recall that were set up by the college to serve the community?

A: Right. Well, what will come to mind instantly is the West Campus courses. You know all of those technical and vocational courses over there. Furthermore, our evening school has not only academic classes, but also sundry things from how to play bridge to belly dancing or any kind of dancing – a whole lot – just a great lot of things. I have a feeling that that has diminished a little bit in the last five years, but I'm not sure of that. I have no statistics.

Q: Can you talk a little about any interesting or unusual teachers we've had over the years?

A: I think one of the most interesting we had was the history teacher, Dr. Edith H. Parker. Well, Dr. Parker had been the secretary to the U.S. Senator in charge of the Foreign Relations Committee.

Q: In Washington?

A: In Washington D.C. and when we declared war, nobody could find him to write the Declaration of War for World War II. So she wrote it. (Laughing).

Q: Dr. Parker?

A: Yes. She was his secretary, and she had two or three helpers, and they imitated one that had been written sometime or another and that was all very interesting. Besides she was a very charming and very wise and learned person.

Q: She took care of the department of history at one time?

A: History, yes. Well, we were all so small. I don't know when we began having chairs. At first there wasn't any. I can remember Dr. Pierce telling me that I would be chair of English. The whole department consisted of five people and we were the biggest one on campus because everybody had to take English.

Q: Okay. How about the use of consultants? Did you all have consultants in those days that would come and talk to you as a group in a department or division?

A: Well, I remember one who came to talk to us when Dr. Harvin was planning to rename the College Corpus Christi Community College and try to get away from the name "junior college" because he thought that was a sort of pejorative word, "junior." It made people think about junior high school or something and made it sound as if we weren't really a college so he wanted to get away from that, and there was a consultant who came. He was on the faculty at Harvard, I believe, in the department of education.

Q: Yeah. Do you remember what he suggested or advised?

A: Well, he thought we were doing very well. (Laughing). He thought we ought to be a model, and he sort of told about us in his book.

Q: That sounds interesting. What about when you were chair of the English department? What were some of your more difficult tasks? Were they dealing with personnel or supplies?

A: Well, yes, dealing with personnel was always hard. See, Dr. Harvin said over and over again to the faculty his philosophy was to pick good teachers and leave them alone. So when you started to pick a new teacher, you remembered that. (Laughing). And I knew also that we would have that person probably for years and years and years so selection of teachers became a hard task for me. In the very early years, there was no democratic way of selecting teachers – the president and the vice president just did it. A little bit later, and even along in the '40s and the '50s, each person that you brought to campus to be interviewed for a job would be interviewed by four people: The chairman of the department, the dean of the division, the vice president and the president. And we would all talk to them and then meet together and make up our minds.

Q: A consensus decision, then?

A: Yes. That was a step on the way toward getting the whole department to help pick out the teacher.

Q: How about the scheduling of classes? Did you always please the teachers with the schedules you gave them?

A: There's no way to please the teachers, but I gave it a try. (Laughing). I can see Dr. Harvin in the very first year with his paper clips taking the schedule as written and making out a typical sophomore schedule to make sure that all the sophomores could schedule what they needed. And when he satisfied himself that that worked all right, we would go ahead with the schedule. Now I had kind of grown up under that and when it was my job to make out the schedule for the English department I did work on it endless hours. I didn't work with paper clips. I worked with – (Laughing) – with colored chewing gum. You know, little rounds of – and I would have – and count the sections of freshman English and make sure that – but as the college got more sections of everything it became less of a problem. You could – you could invite the teachers to write on a piece of paper and hand in what they would like to teach. I always prefaced that with "Remember you won't get what you want." (Laughing).

Q: But they had the right to suggest?

A: List what they would like to have.

Q: Try to get what they wanted.

A: And it worked pretty well. I think it's heavenly now. No chairman has to work on the schedule at all. It's done either by some member of the department who accepts that as a duty in lieu of a class or it's done by the registrar's office. They did do it one year for me. See they could – they could work statistics.

Q: Keep tabs of who had done what before.

- A: And I had the statistics always of how many took freshman English last year and I learned that ten o'clock in the morning was the most desired class all across campus. So if you wanted your section to be sure to make, just put it at ten o'clock on Monday, Wednesday, Friday.
- Q: Can we change the subject a little bit? Did you ever visit the Solomon Coles –
- A: No, I never did. I never did, but I remember that – what the artist's name?
- Q: Lavernis Royal?
- A: Lavernis Royal was making a little speech at an evening meeting of the Former Students' Association. He told about how when he was a senior at Solomon Coles, somebody came to the campus and said to them that they could enroll at Del Mar the next year. He thought it was a joke. He said, "Oh, we can't." But sure enough they did enroll. We accepted black students for the first time in 1952.
- Q: From the research that I've done, I found that the library had 193 books in 1938. Now, of course, we have thousands of books. How did the college faculty help to increase the collection?
- A: Well, the College teachers were supposed to select books for the library, but if we were asleep at the switch and didn't do it, then the librarian would make suggestions to us. They would read in *Publisher's Weekly* that there were certain books that we ought to have. In the English department when I was the chairman, I would push and push and push to get people to select books. If they didn't, I did it. I guess that built up the collection. Frank Hankins, the librarian, would buy books when he was off on a trip and saw them on display. Most of the time he made the right choices and everything. So just gradually we had enough money and a budget for the library until relatively recent days. I don't know when it started dwindling. I guess around 1980 or something.
- Q: How did the budget work in the early years? How was the allotment made for each of the departments?
- A: In the early years, I didn't know much about that. That was done by the Deans of the divisions. A division got a certain amount of money and as a department chairman, I would put in a request for so and so and perhaps get it and perhaps not.
- Q: You had your choice of requesting.
- A: Maybe not getting it, right. In the very early years we were very, very frugal because the College had almost disappeared just before 1938. There had been a couple of not-so-efficient administrators and the College was in the red. Dr. Harvin was determined to operate always in the black. We teased him a lot about being so stingy.
- Q: He succeeded?
- A: He succeeded. It was a good thing. And the College was never again under threat of closing down. Dr. Hale, who was on the original faculty, had gone down the night that they were meeting to vote to eliminate the junior college or to keep it going. He paced back and forth

down there under the streetlight waiting for the decision, and they decided to keep it going. Then they employed Dr. Harvin to be dean, and Grady St. Clair, who was the runner-up, was named Associate Dean and Registrar.

Q: You know at one time we had a Basic Studies Program. When I was hired, I came on as a teaching assistant. I remember the program had five components. There was English, reading, mathematics, psychology, and speech. Do you remember that?

A: Yes, I do. (Laughing). Yes. We didn't quite get our way on that. The remedial student couldn't take five classes so we made English, but Dean Sloan, as dean of the division, wanted us to be sure to put math in there. We finally had English and math and reading, and we first kept speech because the speech teacher at that time was Nell Bartlett, and she became enthusiastic about it. She said, "We will have a separate school up on the top floor. We'll have wonderful things and activities." Well, that didn't quite happen because we had to have English and Math and that just left room for maybe two more. (Laughing). So we put psychology, and that was the smartest thing we ever did. That was great.

Q: Okay. Let me ask you one last question here for today. What do you think about Del Mar at this time in your life? How have we done?

A: I think we'd done splendidly. Of course I'm prejudiced. I like our College. I actually like the students who come to us. When we wanted to get the remedial program going, I decided to employ you and a few others to be permanent teachers of that group.

Q: Right.

A: And it was very hard to find any teacher who was content to remain the teacher of the remedial courses. I thought they were harder to teach than any other course because it required more of the teacher – more personal contact with the students, more skill to teach them. I scheduled myself to teach one section and found that it was a lot simpler to teach my British literature sophomore course than to teach a section of the remedial course. It takes more energy for one than for the other. (Laughing).

Q: But now I think we select people who want to do that. They are given a choice.

A: Yes.

Q: In fact, when I decided to go into the remediation reading, and you may remember I had the choice of going into English or staying in the reading, I decided to stay with reading because I saw that many times we would get people who did not want to teach those classes.

A: All right. It's a kind of – you could feel like you were doing good to some people who were desperately – it was like feeding the hungry a little bit.

Q: I remember Dr. Al Pierce telling me, "Carmona, you're really doing missionary work."

A: Right. I had exactly the same feeling about it, but not everybody does. English teachers think there's a little more honor to teach a sophomore course than a freshman course. (Laughing). I

don't understand that, but at least the material that you talk about is more interesting to you. I think we're pretty good. We've won honors. It used to be that Del Mar College was the best junior college in Texas, but I never knew how they measured it. (Laughing). I enjoyed having people say that, but I didn't know how.