

Oral Memoirs

of

Keith Frank

An Interview
Conducted by
Clinton M. Thompson
August 30, 2016

Development of the Tulsa Medical College:
An Oral History Project

Schusterman Library
University of Oklahoma – Tulsa
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Interview History

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The Development of the Tulsa Medical College project was conducted by the Schusterman Library at the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa from January 2016 to June 2018. The project focused on the development of the Tulsa Medical College, which later became the OU-TU School of Community Medicine. The project consisted of 28 interviews with former and current employees of the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa.

Keith Frank played various roles at the Tulsa Medical College including Director of Information Technology.

Clinton M. Thompson was the first Director of the Tulsa Medical College Library and went on to become the Director of the Robert M. Bird Health Sciences Library at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.

Alyssa Peterson was a Medical Librarian at the Schusterman Library.

Rhonda Holt was a Graduate Assistant at the Schusterman Library.

Keith Frank
Oral History Memoir
Interview Number 1

Interviewed by Clinton M. Thompson
August 30, 2016
Littleton, Colorado
Also present: Mr. Frank's wife, Connie Gould

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THOMPSON: August 30, 2016. Would you like to introduce yourself?

FRANK: Hi, my name is Keith Martin Frank.

THOMPSON: You want to tell us a little bit about your educational background?

FRANK: Sure. I got an associate science degree at Imperial Valley College in the Imperial Valley of California, near my hometown of El Centro, California; and then I moved up to the Long Beach area and went to Cal State Dominguez Hills and got a BA in Psychology, for what that's worth, which is nothing. (laughs) And that's it.

THOMPSON: And your, so then your employment record?

FRANK: Employment? First thing was the paper route. And then there was a day in the tomato fields. That's not good. Then, there was a day in the onion fields, and I almost got promoted after that; but they found out I was fifteen and couldn't drive a truck so I was fired. And then there was a stint dishwashing at Bob's Ember Glow restaurant, which was marvelous. I saw the moon landing at the bar, at Bob's Ember Glow. But then finally, after my mother forced me out of the house by sending letters all around town trying to get people to hire me to do something at a tender age, so that I would get out of the house and not spend the summer reading, I got hired at the El Centro Public Library and spent about three years there all the way through junior college as a page, an assistant, a check out, and reference and paint shelves and paint furniture and clean films and anything that needed doing really for a whopping dollar fifty an hour. But then, left there to go to college at Cal State Dominguez Hills, got hired at the LA County Library System, where I was a page at various branches, and then eventually finished college and moved from LA County to Long Beach Public Library System and spent ten years there starting out as a page, doing check out, and this and that and the other. And ultimately, there was a nice lady there who was the supply clerk who had gotten promoted, and I had a little bit of a crush on her; and she

suggested that maybe I should try out for the supply clerk job. So, I did and got hired, promoted for that, and so basically I ran a lot of the services and supplies, kept, you know the library in paper and overdue postcards and the annual major event of scissor and paper cutter sharpening. Librarians, you don't want to take their scissors away for very long, as you know, so that was a key job. And then later on was an administrator and wound up doing budgets. And then Howard Jarvis came along and Prop 13 and rolled back property taxes in California to a much earlier time, and the library lost 30 percent of its budget. And I laid off my wife at the time, who was the book van librarian because we couldn't afford a book van anymore. And we decided that we would move to Oklahoma and get in the oil business, which seemed to be where all the money was at the time, which was the late seventies.

And so we moved to Tulsa. Her parents were in Pea Ridge, Arkansas, so it was kind of, you know, in the neighborhood of her family. And I interviewed around a few places including Tulsa Medical College and TJC [Tulsa Junior College, now Tulsa Community College], and got hired at OU as an inventory control specialist in I'm going to say April 28, 1980. But you said you started in '76 and we're only two years different, so I'm not sure if that's an actual real date, but that's a number that sticks in my head. And my job at that time was to take the physical inventory—desks, file cabinets, furniture, equipment of all types—that had Tulsa Medical Education Foundation [TMEF] inventory sticker on it, find that on a list, comparing to a list that OUHSC [University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center] had made and swap stickers, so that all of the TMEF assets became OUHSC assets. The story Leeland gave me was that at the time the medical college was started in Tulsa, nobody in Oklahoma City thought it would last and they didn't want to have to mess with the inventory and keeping track of assets, but he knew it was going to last, so he made TMEF track everything and then eventually someone decided the medical school wasn't going away, so we had to convert all these assets into OUHSC property, and I was hired to do that, which I did. And did a bang-up job because I'd done physical inventory for Long Beach as well. And it took about maybe an hour a day of my time. I was officed in the suite with personnel, Connie Gould and Vicki, at the time. And next door in the office was Ralph Macon(??), who was kind of the operations guy, and I helped him out a bit, but mostly I went out and about and looked under people's desks and inside their typewriters and pulled inventory stickers and checked off lists. But it's really extraordinarily boring and you really couldn't do it for more than a couple hours a day, so I would do that for a while, and, you know, you really can't annoy people in the clinics too much because they're trying to do work and you're trying to crawl under their desk and it's just, it's not a great situation; but, so I read a lot on the job, which probably Connie knew, but maybe nobody else knew. I was pretty quick about hiding the paperback under the desk when somebody would walk in the office. So, I did that for a while.

And my wife and I wanted to buy a house. I wasn't making that much money, so I went to Leeland and said, "My wife and I would like to buy a house." And he, I guess, liked me for some

reason and decided to discuss it with Connie, and he bumped me to the top of the pay range, like two months after I started. I mean, it was nuts. I was then and forever a fan of Leeland Alexander. Later on he decided, I think, that things were getting a little complex and he had too many people reporting to him, and so he decided to insert me between his staff and himself, and that was a little bumpy, but I was appreciative of moving into administration and having more stuff to do. I don't actually remember if there was another job before that; I don't think there was. So, he created the title of director of administrative services. So, I was in charge of accounts payable, accounts receivable, switchboard, that sort of stuff. And for a while, I was an interim director of operations in between directors of operations for I think it was like eight months. And then, along about 2000, I think it was, just before we got the new campus at 41st and Yale, I got in a meeting with Leeland and the dean, Harold Brooks, and got crosswise with Brooks by speaking the truth, and wound up being given a choice of being, staying with administration or moving to starting an IT Department. And I elected to start an IT Department. So, I became director of voice and data services.

The crosswise bit was interesting. We were having a meeting about budgets, I'm sure, and Dean Brooks said that he'd like to give his assistant, Barbara Sappenfield a bonus, and I, in my naïve way, said, "There's no mechanism for giving bonuses." At that point in time, in my history with the school, there had never been a bonus given that I was aware of. And I just, you know, I'm the guy, you know, in administration who got people in Oklahoma City to write checks; and you have, you know, a reason to write a check, and there just, there was no mechanism for a bonus. And apparently, according to Leeland, Dr. Brooks thought that meant I didn't think Barbara deserved a bonus, which had nothing to do with my statement whatsoever; mine was just a procedural—it's great you want to do that, but I don't know how to get a check for Barbara Sappenfield that's a bonus. So, Brooks was upset. He wanted me fired, I think, and Leeland called me into his office, told me I had to apologize to Brooks, which I did, and gave me a choice of being director of administrative services or moving into IT, so I moved into IT. [It] would get me a little further away from Brooks, still working for Leeland, so life was good. So, that's my employment history.

THOMPSON: So, you then, then you started the IT Department?

FRANK: I was the IT Department. And before I was the IT Department, I was the IT Department. When we were on our, Connie and I were on our honeymoon in San Francisco and Yosemite and various sundry other places, we—IBM was introducing the PC to the world, and they had an event in New York and an event in San Francisco at the hotel we were staying at. So, not having anything better to do on a honeymoon, I thought, let's go down and check out this computer announcement and exhibit. And I wound up looking at IBM computers and decided that this was, you know, probably a good thing, and we should do—in Tulsa, we were much later than anyone else, but I did actually buy the first computer that the Tulsa Medical College had, a

personal computer. And then, Connie and I learned how to use it. We had one computer in an open area for people to share in the accounting area initially, that one computer, and then more and more as time went on. But I was the person that people went to when something went wrong—how do I do this? Why is this doing this? How come the printer's not working? That sort of thing.

So, I was doing technical support all the time for administrative areas in the college, and then it became, you know, a big enough deal that I essentially told Leeland that, you know, I can't just do this in my spare time, there are too many of them, there's too much trouble, there's too much complication, it really needs to be more of a full-time focus. And so, I started doing that with a full-time focus and wound up hiring an accountant for a new department and a phone guy and a desktop support guy and a video guy, and that was the core. And I, of course, took Sharon from the library because she had developed the college's first webpages under Janet's authority. And I told Leeland if I was going to do IT, I wanted web to be part of it, and I wanted to steal Sharon from the library. He agreed to that and got, I guess, Janet to agree to that. So, I went and told Sharon, "Hey, you want to come work for me?" And she said, "Sure." So, we had a group of basically five people was the IT Department initially. And now, you know, I go look at their webpage every once in a blue moon, and there's like thirty people in this department, this is nuts. But it was good.

THOMPSON: Now, was that all 41st Street campus?

FRANK: At the time that I was doing the tech support and creating the department that was still at the Sheridan Campus, but we had, and the administration actually had the offices in Dollar Thrifty Tower down the street on 31st Street. But when I became director of administrative services, my office, you know, before I hired anybody, was a small conference room on the lower level of the administration, former administration building on the Sheridan Campus, and room 128, which was right next to the phone room, which was great because I was also the guy that did the phone system from the day we had a phone system. Leeland in one of his, I don't know what, prescient moments, was, I guess, talking with maybe Jerry Rothlein at Hillcrest or somebody, and they said, you know, AT&T has divested and now you can go out and buy your own phone system, you don't have to get phone service, you know, on a rental basis from Bell, you can buy your own and save a lot of money. And so, Leeland said, "Hey, we want to buy a phone system. This is a good idea. Go figure it out." So, we did an RFP [request for proposal], and I bought a phone system, had it installed, and I was the administrator for the first phone system that the medical college had that wasn't, you know, operated by Southwestern Bell. So, I'd been doing technology since a couple years after divestiture, first phones and then computers and eventually networks and the Internet and all that stuff that I actually really don't know anything about. But shortly thereafter in 2000, we acquired the campus at 41st and Yale, and we took over the infrastructure that Amoco had. They were kind enough to leave it behind. The

copper and the fiber were all wonderful things to have. The networking equipment was all out of date, but fortunately the people that I had hired initially knew everything and enough, and in conjunction with the networking people in Oklahoma City, which were extremely helpful to us, we replaced all of the switches and routers, and eventually it went from Amoco's network that we figured out how to use to OU's network, and was really a very nice facility except for having the wrong phone switch, that I knew, you know, nothing about. Northern Telecom? I don't know what that is, I'm an AT&T guy, but I hired a guy from Hillcrest who knew everything about the Nortel system, and I just basically told Terry to go do whatever you need to do, tell me what you need and I'll buy it for you. And it was, it was an excellent core group of people to start an IT Department with.

THOMPSON: Other projects that you were involved in?

FRANK: Well, the moves. When we moved from the Midway Building to the Sheridan Campus, I was in charge of the move, getting the library moved. It was a lot of fun. I had also done that previously in Long Beach, so I had experience moving not just a library, but a lot of stuff. Long Beach had an old Carnegie Library that had burned down. And when I was hired on they were in a temporary facility and had been forever while they were building a new library. And they ultimately built a new city hall/library complex, and I was in charge of getting the library moved and getting all the new furniture placed, getting all the old stuff moved out of the temporary building, getting all the old stuff moved out of the storage building where most of the books were because the temporary facility wasn't big enough to hold an actual library. So, I had some experience moving stuff around and dealing with movers and dealing with the physicality of moving a library, which is, you know, a bunch of little individual things that have a particular order that's quite important. So, I was involved in the move from Midway to the Sheridan, and the library part I thought went pretty well. The clinics, when the clinic was finally finished, was problematic because the clinic didn't get finished on time and we would up having to move the clinics without being able to move the clinics, so we stacked the clinics in the gym for a few days, which was awkward, and then moved it out, that went pretty well. So, campus moves were kind of a big deal.

Budgets were always, you know, fun. Sometimes they were fun; sometimes they were hard. We went through some good years where oil was up, and we sat around as a team—the dean and Leeland and Connie and myself—and decided Marianne's a great worker, she needs 10 percent, department said 5, but she's really good, we need 10. It was really sweet to sit around a table and hand out money to people, that was nice. And then there were other times, in the later years, where we were deciding that we don't have the money, we're not going to have the money, we need to start cutting back, no raises, no bonuses, layoffs, we don't need a word processing center, ultimately, we don't need a medical illustrator, travel budgets are cut. Those were, those were tough times, but they were always, you know, Leeland always had people in mind first. So, we

did as little cutting as possible. I remember sitting around Leeland's house in an emergency meeting with the dean and Connie and Mike Lapolla, and okay, Christmas party's off, no more Christmas party, that sort of thing. You know, tough decisions, but you know, appropriate decisions. Seems like there was something else.

THOMPSON: Well, it will come back.

FRANK: It will come back.

THOMPSON: It will come back. People that you remember?

FRANK: Uh, Connie. (laughs) Biggest influence was always Leeland. Best boss I ever had, most frustrating boss I ever had. I had spent I don't know how many hours in his office listening to his half of a phone conversation, trying to figure out what the other half was. Learned a lot from him, he knew everybody, he knew how things worked. He had a much better ability to hear the boss say, "I want to do this," and say, "We'll get that done"; whereas, again, I was the guy who had to get somebody else to write the checks, and my response was always, "It's not strictly legal." So, that was my failing always. I was—and I think maybe he did this on purpose—but I was the guy who could say no, on some things, and on other things just no was not really acceptable, you had to figure out a way to do it and Leeland was very good at doing that.

I never liked supervising, never liked supervising. The first group of people I had to supervise were Leeland's employees, and they were extremely loyal to Leeland, they loved Leeland, everybody loved Leeland, and they didn't care much for the whipper snapper being inserted between them and him. So, there was some uncomfortable times, and, of course, I had never supervised before and knew nothing about supervision, and so I was, you know, winging it completely. But I found later on, when I was able to hire people from the beginning that it wasn't so bad, and turns out a lot of them liked me a lot. So, that was kind of nice. I really enjoyed the people in IT that I hired, and the creating a department from scratch was really a good thing. The other project, which wasn't really a project, just kind of an annual or every other year event was the Bellmon years, which were difficult. Henry Bellmon, I think, didn't really get education, and didn't understand why there were twenty-seven educational institutions in the state, and why did we really need so many. And so, every couple of years there was a move to shut Tulsa Medical College down. And so, Connie and Leeland and Mike Lapolla and myself spent a lot of time doing research. Mike was excellent with statistics and Leeland was excellent with making statistics make us look good. And so, we spent a lot of time developing fact sheets about the Tulsa Medical College: how many patients did we see, how big was our budget, how small was our administrative cost—Leeland was excellent at keeping—defining administration in advantageous ways so that the administrative burden was a very small percentage of the educational endeavor, and the clinical effort was, you know, how many residents and students

did we have, and serving how many different, small communities because, you know, that was what we were supposed to do at the time, and so we spent a lot of time fighting for survival really. And I think beyond the core mission, which was medical education in rural Oklahoma, the biggest thing that kept us alive was debt. Leeland had purchased the campus and now we were \$5 million in debt, and you can make us go away, but you've still got \$5 million in debt you have to deal with, so it's really not cost effective to make us go away, we're cheaper to run than we are to kill. So, that was a good thing.

And then I was also involved in a lot of the architectural stuff, design stuff for the new campus, you know, the new clinic, and meeting with architects, that was a lot of fun stuff. Renovating a football practice field into a 30,000 square foot clinic with the help of Lloyd Rader and DHS was, I think, quite a coup for Leeland. Never quite understood the DHS connection, but they were able to do stuff, and so for the initial remodeling and building of parts of the Sheridan campus, DHS did all the work, and Tulsa Medical College and OU avoided all the bidding process, and so it was very smooth. They had, DHS had a construction supervisor, and you told him I want these walls moved and I want to make these offices and this needs soundproofed and we to do this stuff, and they said, "Okay, we'll do it," and DHS did it. Everything happened expeditiously instead of one RFP after another to, you know, make things happen, so that was good stuff. That was good stuff.

THOMPSON: Anything else you want to say about the campuses or other projects that you were involved in, or?

FRANK: Well, we were talking about people, so influential people. On the Oklahoma City side it was definitely Gary and Mark, no question about it. Mark was always wonderful to work for. Gary, of course, was Gary. (laughs) But clearly Gary, Leeland, and Mark had a special relationship, and they were just extremely supportive of Tulsa. I mean, it was not always possible to have everything Leeland asked for, but there was certainly an understanding that this was an operation that needed to succeed, and Gary would do whatever he could to, you know, try and make that happen on the administrative side.

On the IT side, later on, there were any number of people in IT that had, in Oklahoma City that had a big influence. I really, with a BA in Psychology, I had no training for anything that I was doing in IT other than some hands on work and interest, but, you know, servers and networks were well beyond my capabilities, but there were a number of people at HSC that were extremely helpful: Sal Mirada(??), Theresa Mercer(??), and Daniel Ferrules(??) and, you know, Jeff McCannleys(??), all those guys in the nineties and two-thousands were really helpful to me. They got, they got me started in doing what Tulsa needed to do, and they were in a changing environment because they, you know, were centralized and then they were separate and then they were centralized, and, you know, it was very difficult for me. You know, they came over the first

time I had a meeting with them and they said, “Well, you know, we can help you buy a server, and, you know, here’s all the things it can do…” And I’m going, oh, this is exciting. And they had already been over providing us with network equipment and connecting Tulsa to Oklahoma City for mainframe communications at the time, and, you know, you can get the stuff and then, you know, you’re on your own, I’m going, “What do mean on my own? I don’t know anything about this. I thought you were going to tell me what to buy and then, you know, do it for me.” And they go, no, that’s not the way we work. And I said, “Oh.”

Tulsa had been, you know, very separate, very much behind the technology curve compared to the rest of the Health Sciences Center, and so, you know, I bought the first server and learned a little bit on how to administer it, and set up an email system for Tulsa, and things were going along okay, and then Oklahoma City said, “Hey, we’ve got way too many email systems, you know, we should just have one for everybody.” And I said, “Okay, let’s do that.” And so Tulsa was like the third or fourth unit that joined the new Outlook Exchange system from Microsoft and never looked back. That was a good thing. So, I felt that the closer we could tie ourselves to Oklahoma City, you know, the better off we would be, and those were some fun times—getting new systems up and running, teaching people how to use email, and you know, it’s hard to think today, that, you know, that was a thing that you had to teach somebody how to use email. Sometimes I really think I have been around for a long time. You know, buying the first personal computer, setting up the first email system, setting up the first network. You know, all the stuff you take for granted today, there, there really was a time, and it wasn’t that long ago, that it didn’t exist at all; and you know, there were typewriters and paper requisitions sent on a daily courier to Oklahoma City in order to get, you know, checks cut. We’ve come a long way, baby.

But a lot of good people in Oklahoma City in IT that helped us along. And they, I don’t think, ever had an attitude that Tulsa shouldn’t be there and we shouldn’t support Tulsa. It was just like Tulsa was there. They were never part of the beginning of Tulsa, so they, you know, when they got there Tulsa was there and it was just, you know, ninety miles away and kind of a pain in the ass, but we needed to support them as well. And probably my favorite philosophy or saying or whining was in the early years Tulsa spent half its time being mad about being forgotten by Oklahoma City and the other half being mad that we were remembered by Oklahoma City. So, that kind of puts the whole Oklahoma City/Tulsa thing in perspective. We were just fine doing our own thing most of the time, and then we got mad because they forgot that it was, you know, Tulsa’s here and why didn’t we, you know. And then the other half was stuff coming down the turnpike going, oh, damn, they remembered we were here and now we have to comply with whatever. So, that was fun.

THOMPSON: The deans in Tulsa?

FRANK: Deans in Tulsa. I came with Tomsovic being the dean. Super nice guy. Always liked him. Very thoughtful fellow, very kind, very nice. Shame to see what happened to him in the later years with more pressure and influence from Oklahoma City. We had, I think, really good times. Connie and I were, I think, at our most influential during the Tomsovic years. We could sit down with him, you could get time with him, you could talk to him about, you know, issues, and he would understand your administrative issues and your budget issues and would try and do something about it, try to fix problems; and he was just really easy to work with. But in the later years he just got beaten down by Oklahoma City, Doug Voth(??) in particular would just come over and scream at him for hours. It was hard to take; you could see him age. Those were not good times. But the early years, super good, super nice.

Brooks I never cared for. I mean from the first day I saw him I thought, this guy's a dean? I mean, just a nebbish, wouldn't make eye contact, [mumbles]. This guy's a dean? I didn't see it. Everybody was high on Harold Brooks. And I didn't quite get Harold Brooks, I guess. Never quite got him. Didn't see what anybody saw in him.

Liked Clancy real well, until he became president. Was a good dean I thought. Nice guy. God, I'm blanking on his name. Who's the little dude that was president? From Williams Company, oh crap. Geez. I don't know. Anyway.

PETERSON: Was it Levit?

FRANK: Yes. Ken.

CONNIE: Yes.

THOMPSON: See, I told you, she's good. She remembers this stuff.

CONNIE: I haven't thought about _____ (??).

FRANK: He was a nice guy. Never thought he was presidential material, but he was a nice guy. And was nice up until he decided to hire somebody in above me, take me away from Leeland, and give me different bosses. I never liked, I guess I never really liked having a supervisor. I guess that's the core problem for me: never liked having a supervisor. And Leeland, I don't know, he was my supervisor, always was my supervisor for, you know, twenty years, but never really felt like supervisor, more like we were, you know, in it together. But then I had to report to Nancy Lewis for a while, and then to Rick. You reported to him, too. Rick? Rick, Rick, Rick, Rick. Koontz. Yeah, Koontz for a while. Didn't enjoy that. Then I got a boss inserted above me, between me and Rick. I never, never liked the idea of him, I never liked him, and ultimately

that's what led me to retire at the ripe old age of fifty-two. That and an excellent benefits system. So. Did we have any other deans? Bunch of interims.

THOMPSON: Yeah, I was going to ask you about one because it's one we have not had the opportunity to interview, and that's Dr. Plunket.

FRANK: Sweet guy. Yeah, we liked Plunket a lot, liked him a lot.

THOMPSON: He probably spent more time as interim dean—

FRANK: Yes.

THOMPSON: —than anyone.

FRANK. Yeah. Yeah. Several stints, I think, yeah.

THOMPSON: It was two, maybe three.

FRANK: Yeah. He was real easy to work with. He was, to me, famous for being in a meeting and saying—I don't what we're discussing, you know, could be anything—"But now for the sake of exaggeration..." and he would take something you were talking about and take it to beyond its logical conclusion. Well, I don't think that would ever happen, but okay, let's talk about that. (laughs) He was, I think he was real easy to work for. I think pediatricians make good deans, you know, I mean they, I think, I think they were probably two of the best. I think Clancy was a real good dean, despite being a psychiatrist. One of the few psychiatrists in our experience that was not, you know, crazy himself.

THOMPSON: Any other of the chairs that stand out in your mind now over the years?

FRANK: Well, I mean, they all, you know, stand out. I mean, they were all outstanding people. I mean Plunket and Duffy, Les Walls, you know, Bob Block, I mean, they were all, you know, really sharp individuals. Jim Beeson, that we're, you know, kind of still friendly with. You know, I got to know them in different ways. Sometimes you're the guy that goes and tells them, well, we just had to cut your travel budget and they're not very happy, and other times you're the guy resetting their password and making their computer work and oh, they're so happy. You know, and then the faculty members that were, you know, around forever like Jack Nettles. What a pack rat. Boy, what a pack rat. But, you know, nice guys, and as far as we knew they were doing their jobs. I mean, you know, on the administration side we don't know really what the faculty do, they're going off on rounds, they're giving lectures; you know, we're trying to give them a budget, support them, and deal with their administrative problems, and you know, buy the

stuff they need to have bought so that they can do their jobs. But you don't, you don't really know that this guy's an excellent, you know, instructor. You know, it's kind of weird to, you know, be in a school that essentially doesn't have any classrooms. You know, there's no lectures, there's nobody teaching at the University, they're all in the hospitals or in the clinics doing whatever. I guess the main source of friction was always the Professional Practice Plan with the faculty—I saw the patient, I earned the money, it's mine, I can spend it anyway I want. And me, no, it's the University's money, you can take it home if you want and buy whatever you want, but, you know, then you're going to be taxed on it. So that was, you know, that was always, you know, a hard thing for everybody to understand, how I see my private patients and it's not my private money. A constant battle for administration. I'm sure it still is today. As is the dean's tax. Why are you taking so much of my money? What do I get for it anyway? Stuff. (laughs)

THOMPSON: Other administrative people that you remember?

FRANK: Well, Mike Lapolla was memorable. (laughs) An excellent use of strategic swearing. He was actually quite inspiring to see Mike and his clinic managers, and the loyalty that he inspired in the clinic managers as a supervisor is something I would have always aspired to. He knew his stuff. I mean, he really knew his stuff despite being the early convert to Apple instead of IBM. Always a divide between us, but clearly very sharp guy, knew what he was doing. Thought it was kind of weird that he left and went, you know, to TU [University of Tulsa]; and then I thought it was weird that he came back, but, you know, different paths for different people. But he was, you know, could be abrasive, but he was always genuine. I mean, you knew where he stood, you knew what he wanted, there was no pussy footing with Mike, if he wanted something done he'd, you knew chances were pretty good that he needed it done for what he thought was a really good reason, and so you have to respect that and try to accommodate, you know, where you can. He's a good guy, I think.

Mike Newman and Hoyt, you know, for old timers—. Mike was, Mike was a nice guy as well. I think he truly cared about his residents and students and his staff that he was trying to serve. Always trying to accommodate their needs. Could get a little whiny every now and then when his budget got cut, as everyone did. I remember him sitting in a meeting, I don't remember the direct quote now, but it was a small meeting about budgets, and we were talking about what he wanted versus what he needed, and he basically told me that, "Well, if it's your money, I need all that I can have, but if it's my budget, I really don't need it that bad." Okay, he said that out loud. That's a budgeting strategy I hadn't heard before. But, I understand completely, totally, understand completely.

Hoyt was kind of a hoot, a different guy, you know, completely different than anybody else. For a while I was, towards the end there, I was kind of put in there as a manager, financial helper for the Department of Medical Graphics because they could never make any money, just never could

make money, and they're supposed to be a profit center, but they never make money. So, I tried to help; and eventually my analysis was that, you know, you got to decide if you want the service or you don't want the service because it's never going to make any money, nobody's ever going to pay what he's worth because he's worth a lot, but then technology moved on and departments started doing it themselves and they didn't need medical graphics to make a PowerPoint slide. And, you know, Mariann Duca could do just as good a job as anybody else for Duffy to, you know, make slides for a lecture. They bought their own equipment and—. You know, I mean clearly the guy's an artistic genius, nobody can touch him, but do you really need his service? And then, you know, the answer ultimately was no, and that was, that was really a shame because he was really good at what he did, really good at what he did. And I can only think what he would be doing today, I mean, back then in the eighties he was making, you know, prosthetic ears for people, and, you know, think what he could with a 3-D printer today and some appropriate software. He'd be awesome today, I mean, no doubt about it.

Let's see. There's HR. They were always a pain. Boy, talk about a roadblock. (laughs) We had a good HR Department, good HR Department. Always very helpful. To me, I didn't take their advice nearly often enough; didn't act on it appropriately nearly often enough.

Had some nice library directors. One fun guy back at the beginning; always nice to talk to. Janet was great as well, except for her obsession with WordPerfect instead of Word, but. She was super nice as well.

Operations. When we got the Sheridan Campus, we got an Operations Department. Previously it'd just been Ralph, you know. They were rented facilities, so, you know, there really wasn't much need for facilities, but then we got a campus and then we needed people to mow and people to clean and people to take care of the HVAC systems and campus security and all that stuff. Ralph Holmes was a bit problematic over the years. (laughs) Leeland liked hiring ex-military; he's got this thing about military, and many times it's great, but Ralph was a bit too authoritarian, even for me. I mean, he really liked the rules, and he had some anger issues ultimately. But then after him, Dale Josey(??) came in on physical plant and he's just a sweetheart of a guy, and knew the physical plant stuff because that was his background, was actual HVAC stuff. And he hired some good people, the Holdermans, the Holderman brothers. And, you know, operations got huge, just like IT got huge over time. More buildings, more people, more facilities, more networks, more computers, more, more, more, more. And so, operations became pretty darn important over the years. Ray List(??) in operations got back to the ex-military and a little on the authoritarian side. We butted heads a lot, but his heart was in the right place. Also, he wanted to do, you know—.

I mean, really there weren't many people, especially department heads that you would run into that, over the years that didn't have their heart in the right place and didn't want to do a good job.

So, you know, ultimately, you could get cranky with people, you know, from time to time; when budgets got tight, and that made people even crankier, but, you know, it really was a good crowd to work with, especially when we were, you know, left alone and allowed to do our own thing. Overall, a good group of people.

THOMPSON: Anything else that the discussion's brought to your mind that you would like to mention?

FRANK: Well, you've got a question about like medical education or something like that.

THOMPSON: Yeah.

FRANK: I never had much to do with medical education, except to try and support it in different ways, but, you know, Tulsa Medical College was started for a reason, and over twenty-five years that, I don't know, changed. I tend to think it got lost, and I think that's kind of a shame. I mean, the original point and the emphasis was we need to get more doctors into rural Oklahoma, and the Physician Manpower Training Commission [PMTTC], you know, funded residency programs, and you had to, you know, fight every year for their budget so you could have your budget, your piece of their budget. And sometimes those were tough fights, but there was always, you know, a focus in the early years for let's count how many counties we have doctors in right now, let's count how many rural clinics we send students to. And then, the whole 41st campus and bringing all of OU into one place, and the emphasis on Norman programs, or Norman versus HSC, and that butting of heads all the time seemed like, to me, that the purpose of the medical school changed significantly and nobody cared about PMTC, nobody cared about were we sending doctors out to rural Oklahoma. That always seemed like a shame to me. I'm sure it's just my perspective; and really the world changed and the college, you know, needed to change with it, but just coming from an environment where, you know, during the formative years all you heard, you know, we were in Tulsa, so we weren't HSC, and we certainly weren't Norman; but from afar watched Oklahoma City and Norman duke it out, and for years watched them be as separate as possible, and be intentionally separate. Norman was doing this in computer systems, Oklahoma City did this and made sure that it seemed like something that was not compatible with what Norman was doing so we would always be separate. You know, Tulsa was always kind of its own thing, and now it's, it's just another location of two other things. So, that always seemed like a shame to me, to lose that emphasis. And it really did seem like it was the joining, maybe it was just coincidental in timing, but the joining of OU and OUHSC onto a single campus at 41st kind of made, you know, there's a lot of animosity between OU and OUHSC, or from OU towards HSC, from the HSC point of view that didn't seem necessary or helpful in any way. But I did always feel the loss of the origins of the school and what it was supposed to be doing. That's wouldn't be there without that rationale, and just seemed like the rationale was completely lost or forgotten or set aside. I always thought that was a shame.

THOMPSON: Anything else?

FRANK: Connie and I made a good one-two punch. We'd go into Leeland and harass him about some issue, some budget that needed to be increased or somebody who needed a raise or somebody who needed to be fired or whatever the situation was, park in his office and jaw at him for a while, and if we got our way, we'd come out and go, "The old one-two punch!" He probably had agreed all along with us, but we felt like we were influential. And that I think was one of the things that we lost along the way, with the joining of the campuses as well. You know, maybe a bit of a big fish in a small pond, and then the pond got a lot bigger and we weren't such big fish, and there were much bigger fish around and we lost—when we lost Tomsovic we lost influence and it made it not as nice a place to work personally, for me anyway. But it was a good place to work for a long time.

THOMPSON: Well, it seems that you enjoyed it.

FRANK: I enjoyed it until I didn't. I mean, there were a lot of hard times, and there's a lot of difficulty, there was a lot of stress, you know, ups and downs over the years, but, you know, overall I think it was a really nice place to work. Pay was good; benefits were great; people were overall pretty decent. You had a mission, you understood what you were trying to accomplish. For a guy with a BA in Psychology I made more money than I thought I ever would. Being even on the periphery of medicine is financially a good place to be, or was in those days. So, you know, I have no complaints. If I hadn't gotten, you know, crosswise, most of which was my personal issues with new bosses in IT, you know, I might still be working, probably would still be working, but ten years in October being retired, I got no complains.

THOMPSON: Well, I think you make a comment, which I think most of the people we've talked to have emphasized was it was an interesting group of people that TMC collected over the years that always seemed to be moving in an appropriate, or a good manner.

FRANK: Yeah, I would agree.

THOMPSON: I don't, you know, know that's something that everybody kind of feels, I'm not real sure everybody feels that about a place that they spent twenty-five or thirty years at, but the people were good.

FRANK: Yeah, I, I would agree. And, you know, early on TJC offered me a nickel more per hour, and I thought hard about that nickel; and I'm not actually sure what now pointed me towards TMC instead of TJC, but I think I'm glad. I know I'm glad.

THOMPSON: Anything else you'd like to say?

FRANK: Biggest regret.

THOMPSON: Okay.

FRANK: Not going for the 40k limit on TRS. (laughs) Who knew we'd retire and TRS would stop giving increases. Coincidentally, I'm sure. Ah, well.

THOMPSON: I did.

FRANK: Ugh, son of a gun. At the time it seemed like money out of your pocket, and who's going to retire, I mean, geez, who's going to retire? Am I going to be here in twenty-five years? No. Come on. Get real. I'll take the cash. If only I knew how much Leeland had socked away right now in TIAA-CREF. Boy, what I'd give for that number. (laughs) Or Jack Nettles, you know. Boy.

THOMPSON: The question is is it more than two. That's the question.

FRANK: That is the question.

THOMPSON: Well, we appreciate it. Thank you very much.

FRANK: You're quite welcome.

End of interview.