

Oral Memoirs
Of
Leeland N. Alexander

An Interview
Conducted by
Clinton M. Thompson
March 1, 2016

Development of the Tulsa Medical College:
An Oral History Project

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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.

Leeland N. Alexander has worked at the Tulsa Campus of the University of Oklahoma since 1974 serving in positions ranging from Assistant Dean for Administration and Business Manager to Associate Vice President for Community Advancement.

Clinton M. Thompson was the first Director of the Tulsa Medical College Library and went on to become 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.

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Leeland N. Alexander
Oral History Memoir
Interview Number 1

Interviewed by Clinton M. Thomson
March 1, 2016
Tulsa, Oklahoma

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THOMPSON: Today is March 1, 2016. Would you like to introduce yourself?

ALEXANDER: I'm Leeland Alexander.

THOMPSON: All right, you want to talk about your education?

ALEXANDER: I graduated from Okmulgee High School; attended Oklahoma State University [OSU], Stillwater, with a degree in accounting. I started off in general business, and then switched to accounting. So, I graduated in five years.

THOMPSON: Would you like to talk about your career now then?

ALEXANDER: Yes, my career interestingly was all determined by one of my professors at OSU. Dr. Morgan was my intermediate accounting professor. It was very interesting, probably the only time in my life it happened, but on our first exam, I made a ninety-seven on the exam, and the closest to me was a fifty-four. And so he thought I was some kind of really smart person; and he had been contacted by the Comptroller at OSU saying they needed one accounting student for this job. And he called me in after class and asked me if I would be interested in this job. And I told him I was not interested, I already had two jobs on campus, and I felt like that was plenty of time working. And he said, well, as a favor to me, would you at least go interview with the Comptroller. I say yes to my professor. And so I went over and interviewed with the Comptroller of the University, Mr. Dean McGlamery. It turned out that I got the job and went to work for OSU. I worked as a student assistant for about one year, and they had an opening as a staff accountant. So, they hired me professionally before I had my degree. I enjoyed working in the accounting office, working for the university. Dr. Morgan determined my entire career.

I was working for OSU when I graduated, they held my position, when I went into the military and then I came back and went to work. My wife got her master's degree at OSU. We love Stillwater; we wanted to stay there, and then they started Tulsa Junior College [ed. note: now

called Tulsa Community College] in late 1969. The president, Dr. Al Phillips, called and asked if I would consider being his Chief Accountant, and I turned him down. I had just got out of the military and I really was not interested in moving. And he said, well he wanted me to think about it, you can call me later. And about a week later, he called and said he was going to have lunch with the president of OSU, and would Diana and I consider coming and having supper with him while he was in town. And so we met, and he told me about starting the Tulsa Junior College, and I thought, sounds very interesting. I made the decision that I would come over and join the staff of Tulsa Junior College. I think I was like the fifth person hired when they started the school. So, I stayed there, worked four years. It was growing; it was doing very well.

And then I got a call from a friend of mine again from the University of Oklahoma in Norman saying they were starting a medical school in Tulsa, would I be interested in being their chief financial officer. And I said, no, that I was very happy with where I was at. And he said, “Well, would you please meet with the new Dean?” They’d hired a new Dean, and he was not really for sure how to get things started, would you mind visiting with him? I told him I would be glad to do that. And so I met Dr. Martin J. Fitzpatrick who was the new Dean who was a faculty member in the College of Medicine in Oklahoma City in the Department of Internal Medicine. And he convinced me that starting a medical school would be very interesting. I agreed to leave the Tulsa Junior College and join the University of Oklahoma Tulsa Medical College, and that was forty-two years ago.

THOMPSON: What renditions of jobs did you have at OU-Tulsa—I’ll refer to it that way. You were, you started in the Dean’s office.

ALEXANDER: I started in the Dean’s office; I started working before the Dean got here. And I was the Assistant Dean for Administration and Business Manager for the College [of Medicine] and for the [Professional] Practice Plan [PPP]. And, from there, over the years, I stayed with the Dean’s office as the Chief Financial Officer for the College of Medicine and the Private Practice until we made the move to the Schusterman Campus. And then my responsibility became more campus focused as opposed to just the College of Medicine.

THOMPSON: Okay. So you were always in the Dean’s office. So, I guess a natural question to ask you is: your impressions of the various Deans that you worked for while you were here.

ALEXANDER: Over the years, the Deans were all really unique individuals. Each of them had different skill sets, but some of the Deans were fairly short in their tenure. Some were here, Dr. Ed Tomsovic, for some time. And I really enjoyed working for the different Deans. And it was always a very close relationship between what I did, which was to support the Dean. My job was to try to figure out where we had the funds to make that all happen. So, all of the Deans have been really unique to work with.

THOMPSON: Any special characteristics of each of those Deans?

ALEXANDER: Well, as you know, working for physicians and you're around physicians, after a while, you can almost tell what a physician—what specialty he or she is in, without them telling me that I'm a pediatrician or I'm an obstetrician. Each of them had their special traits depending on their specialty. Dr. Ed Tomsovic was a pediatrician, and, as an example, you could tell that by the way he conducted business and where he worked. So, we had a Family Practice Dean, we had Internal Medicine Deans, Pediatric Deans.

THOMPSON: One in the early days that I think all of us have interesting recollections about was Dr. Jim Lewis, because he wasn't a physician. Anything you want to say about that Deanship since it was early in the history of the College of Medicine?

ALEXANDER: He had a PhD in geography. He looked at the college differently than the other Deans. He looked at how we operated, how we ran it administratively, so it was a kind of a unique period of time. He did a lot of detailed study of how the physicians practiced and how our residents worked, and how we costed out the residency programs, how we costed out the departments.

THOMPSON: Another individual that I know that you worked for and then you also worked with was Dr. Daniel Plunket because I refer to him as the "Interim Dean of the University of Oklahoma Tulsa Medical College." Comments about Dr. Daniel Plunket, either as the Interim Dean or as Chair of the Department of Pediatrics?

ALEXANDER: Well, Dr. Daniel Plunket was one of our first chairs that we hired. When we started the medical school, the hospitals in Tulsa for years and years had residency programs. And each of them had surgery residents and internal medicine residents and pediatric residents and family medicine residents. And, they had program directors, they didn't have chairman. When we started the school, one of the things that the hospital was asking us to do was they felt like that they needed a new chairman of pediatrics from outside. Dr. Daniel Plunket was one of the first chairmen we actually hired in a chair position. He came from the military. He'd been in that position for a long time. But since he was here from the very beginning, he understood TMEF [Tulsa Medical Education Foundation], he understood the hospitals.

THOMPSON: Well, since we've talked about Dr. Daniel Plunket, do you want to mention any of the other original chairs?

ALEXANDER: I'll do that, I will mention some of them, I probably will leave out some of them. In the beginning it took us a couple of years to get chairs in all of our departments. We took some time before we hired a chair. Dr. Roger Good in Family Medicine; Dr. Les Walls in Family

Medicine were really very good. Dr. Daniel Plunket, Dr. Bob Block in Pediatrics, Dr. Block came after Dr. Daniel Plunket. Dr. Jack Nettles in OB. Jack was one of the program directors of OB, wanted to join us as a chairman. We hired him as a chairman, so he was very familiar with TMEF and how it worked, and very familiar with the OU residency programs at the hospitals. So, that was again something that helped us. Dr. Daniel Duffy in Internal Medicine was one of our chairs. Dr. Steve Saltzman followed Dr. Jack Nettles in OB, followed by Dr. Jim Beeson. All of those were in OB. Dr. Tom Broughan in Surgery. Dr. Tony Howard in Surgery. Dr. Mike Morris followed Dr. Jon Calvert in Family Medicine. So, we've really been very blessed to have some outstanding chairs for our academic departments.

THOMPSON: The two you've missed, which you don't miss much—Dr. James Allen?

ALEXANDER: Dr. James Allen—

THOMPSON: In Psychiatry

ALEXANDER: Dr. James Allen was our first chair and did an outstanding job. Really provided a lot of leadership, not only for the department, but for the campus. He worked very closely with the Dean, particularly with Dr. Ed Tomsovic, and was really one that helped us a lot with the school, as well as run the Department of Psychiatry.

THOMPSON: And just to comment, because a couple of people have mentioned her—his wife? Because I know you worked with her as well.

ALEXANDER: His wife, Dr. Tomsovic's—

THOMPSON: Dr. James Allen.

ALEXANDER: Dr. Allen's wife

THOMPSON: The psychologist that worked at—

ALEXANDER: She was a very neat lady. Kind of quiet, but very good academically. Very strong, helped us recreate our residency. [She] was good at recruiting the residents, helping us decide who we would make offers to. So, a very unique team.

THOMPSON: The other department that I'm surprised you didn't say something about, were the early chairs of Surgery.

ALEXANDER: The Surgery residency was one of the original residencies started in Tulsa, Oklahoma, when the hospitals first started their residency programs. And, the majority of the TMEF board was made up of surgeons. So, our challenge was to find a surgeon that could be the chairman. And, we really had some good chairs. Because of the problems with that particular specialty and working with the hospitals, we were always in a tug of war of: how much surgery can you do, how much do you not do, how much do at that hospital, how much do you do at the other hospital. Dr. Tom Broughan was really the first chairman. But the other thing was, by the time he got here the Surgery Residency Program was on probation. He got it off of probation, but he moved all of the Surgery residents into a single hospital. And therefore, once he did that, accreditation was approved and we went forward. But that solved a lot of the problems with where the residents were at St. Francis or St. John's or Hillcrest, or how they rotated. So he pulled them back to one hospital so he would have enough faculty to cover the requirements for accreditation.

THOMPSON: The Dean's office, other people in the Dean's office that you might want to mention that stood out to you over the years?

ALEXANDER: Dr. Charles McCall helped us as associate Dean. He went from here to Oklahoma City, he was the first Dean at the ORU [Oral Roberts University] School of Medicine, and when they had problems getting their accreditation he left there, and joined us in the Dean's office. He came with a lot of knowledge and experience because he [had] done that before; helped us tremendously getting things up and going. Dr. Clyde Jenson was a second one that I remember early on who really did a lot of work, was very close to the Deans, did a lot of administrative work with helping us get up and organized into our different departments, into the committees that we needed to have to run the school. So we really did have some very unique individuals with a lot of experience that helped us.

THOMPSON: Now other people that you were involved with were most of the other administrative people who worked in those early days and then on into the early eighties. Any of those stand out in your mind? Anything you'd like to say about their activities and the work that they did here?

ALEXANDER: Yes, but let me back up for just a second. Talking about the assistant and associate Deans we had. We had some people from the College of Medicine in Oklahoma City that were very helpful as we got started. Some of those, Dr. William G. Thurman, who was the first provost at the Health Sciences Center, was interim Dean here for a while, understood Tulsa, was very supportive of Tulsa. So, he was very helpful politically and financially getting us up and running. Dr. Donald B. Halverstadt from Oklahoma City who served in several capacities with the College of Medicine as other capacities was an OU Regent at one time, was very helpful, was very supportive of the school here in Tulsa. [He] helped us get started, helped us

when we bought our first campus over on 28th and South Sheridan. Dr. Ed Brandt was also another one who spent a lot of time in Tulsa helping us. He was very supportive, again a very good administrative person, understood medicine, understood the politics of the state, and was very helpful. Dr. Jerry Vannatta, another one from Oklahoma City who spent a lot of time in Tulsa, also understood, supported us. Dr. Joseph Ferretti who was our provost for years in Oklahoma City was supportive. Dr. M. Dewayne Andrews, who is now the Executive Dean in Oklahoma City, was actually the Interim Dean here for a period of time in Tulsa, helped us while we filled in a gap that we needed filled in, and did a very good job of helping us with the school. So, we had a lot of support from the Oklahoma City campus, both from the College of Medicine, from the provost's office, and administratively.

Before I get to administrators, there were some physicians and community leaders in Tulsa that were very committed to having the medical school, that helped the medical school administratively, financially, and helped me. A couple come to mind, W.K. Warren, Sr. from St. Francis, who started St. Francis Hospital. The St. Francis Hospital was started and opened about ten years before we started the medical school in 1974, with Hillcrest and St. John's being older facilities, older hospitals. St. Francis was a newer facility, but W.K. Warren, Sr. was a very quiet, behind the scenes supporter of the medical school. And he really helped us in some times that were very critical, and I think without his support, the medical school would not be in Tulsa today. Mr. Bill Bell with the Chapman Trust, was president of TMEF for years, was head of the board for Hillcrest Medical Center, was very supportive. [He] also spent a lot of time working in Oklahoma City with the House and the Senate to make sure we got up and got started. And helped us financially where he could through the Chapman Trust that they had. Dr. C.S. Lewis, Jr., cardiologist, internist, had probably the premiere practice of internal medicine when the school started, was one of the major supporters that understood the need, had worked with the chamber to get the Booz-Allen [and Hamilton] reports done that really justified us, and said: Okay, yes you can have a third and fourth year medical school in Tulsa. There is the clinical material. They do have the ability to meet the requirements for accreditation, and it was very interesting. We tried several times to get him to become the Dean of the medical school, and he always said, "You know, I would love to do that, but I enjoy my freedom. I'm a physician; I enjoy my freedom." He was very helpful.

He [Dr. C.S. Lewis, Jr.] also started our international program that was a forerunner for a lot of things that we did. We had residents and medical students going to India, to Nepal, to Africa, to South America. And these were all places that he and I had visited to talk to the faculty, to look at hospitals, to look at what kind of program they would have for our residents and our students. Very popular rotation, it was an academic rotation. They got graded as part of their educational experience. Most of them went for a month. A couple of times, we had particular residents that they would go for two months at a time if they had the time to do that. The Tulsa hospitals were very supportive of this program. The residents really enjoyed it. They were required as part of

the program that they would give three lectures while they were in India, or wherever they were at. Their lectures were chosen by the faculty there. Then when they got back, they had to write a paper of their experience, what they learned, told us what, how they saw the rotation. And all of them had very unique experiences doing that. And Dr. C.S. Lewis's goal was that the residents traveled to foreign countries in the third world countries would see what medicine was like in the third world. It also taught our residents how to see a patient, diagnose a patient without a huge laboratory behind them, without a huge x-ray facility behind them. So, they had to listen to the patients, they had to diagnose them. A lot of times they didn't have medicines that they would have here. The other thing is they truly would see diseases that we would not see in the United States. So, they got to experience of seeing people. While I was traveling with Dr. C.S. Lewis JR., we visited a couple, as an example, leprosy hospitals. I'd never seen leprosy before, and what terrible things it does to a human body. We saw a young lady with tetanus, something you normally don't see in the United States, what that does to your body. So, it was really even fascinating to me, a non-physician, but I was always fascinated by some of the things that we saw in third world countries, and how they practice medicine. His son, C.S. Lewis, III, was an OU Regent. So their family had a long-standing connection. Dr. C.S. Lewis, Jr. also was not just only supportive of the medical school here and TMEF, but he was the president of the American College of Physicians, American Board of Internal Medicine, state medical society, local medical society. He was involved statewide and nationally, across the whole world.

The other ones who have been helpful, really in the starting in roughly late 1999, 2000 was Ken Lackey, who was our first president on the Tulsa Campus. He was followed by Ken Levit, who now works for the George Kaiser Family Foundation. Ken Lackey works for Nordam, he's the chairman of their board. Dr. Gerald Clancy who now is vice president of TU [the University of Tulsa]. And then our current president, Dr. John Henning Schumann, who is a physician in Internal Medicine.

The other person that has been a strong supporter of the medical school and the programs in Tulsa is the current president of the University of Oklahoma, David L. Boren. Without his leadership, without his vision, without his support, we would not be the campus that we are. He is the person who is responsible for this campus we have today. We purchased it with the help of the Schusterman Family. This had been an Amoco research facility since the early 1950s. They built this campus in 1952. Amoco, early in 1999, was purchased by BP, British Petroleum, and shortly thereafter they surplused this property because they already had their own research facility and they didn't need two of them. So, they decided they would sell this property. President David Boren is the one who made the decision that this really would be the right place for the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa Campus. A very unique track of land. We had purchased the property at 28th and Sheridan to give us a home. And we, over the years, had bought about nineteen additional tracks of land, and we were in the process of getting ready to clear both sides of 28th and South Sheridan and make that our campus. This put us years ahead of anything we

could do over on the Sheridan Campus. So, we purchased this property through the leadership of President David Boren and sold the campus at 28th and South Sheridan. President David Boren is the one who came over, looked at the facility, and he said he felt like this was the right thing for us to do.

The cost of the campus was \$24 million. He asked me the question I knew he was going to ask me, “If we buy it, Leeland, where are you going to get the money to pay for it?” I knew that was coming, and so I suggested to him that we only had seventy days in which to close the transaction because BP wanted it off their books before December 31 of 1999. So, we had seventy days in which to get the \$24 million, get everything, all the due diligence done on the campus. I suggested to him that since he’d been the President of the University of Oklahoma he’d been very successful in raising money that went into the OU Foundation, whose mission is to support the University of Oklahoma. The College of Medicine in Tulsa would borrow the money from the OU Foundation and over time we would pay that back. In the interim period of time, we could borrow the \$24 million from the OU Foundation. And he said—there was a long pause when I said the OU Foundation. And I remember thinking: Was my resume up to date? When he came back on the phone, he said that he agreed that that was really the best thing to do because of the shortness of the seventy days. We could not do a bond issue. It would be very hard to go through a bank in that short period of time. And he said, “I will take care of the OU Foundation. I will call Mr. Ron Burton, the president of the Foundation, and we’ll work this out. I know it hasn’t been done before, but it’s the right thing to do. You start getting the campus ready to move into.” It was with his leadership that we were able to purchase it. About the same time, when it became known we were interested in buying the campus, Charles and Lynn Schusterman, who were in Canada, called President David Boren and asked if they could help the University buy this campus. They knew the campus would be a tremendous asset, and they wanted to see the University have it—Charles, being a graduate from the University of Oklahoma. So, they donated \$10 million for the purchase of the campus along with the money we had borrowed from the OU Foundation. The OU Foundation Board thought that it would be okay to do this, but they set up an LLC, owned by the Foundation that would protect the Foundation in case something didn’t go well with the campus, it would not in any way affect the OU Foundation.

The other thing was, right after we purchased the campus—we closed around December 13, 1999, on the campus. My wife and I were having supper right after Christmas, and I told her, “You know, that transaction went so smoothly that I’ll probably never do a transaction again in my career of that type, and particularly of that amount of money. That everything could not have gone any smoother than how that transaction [went]. There were no legal problems; everything had just been very smooth. Right after New Year’s, this was a couple weeks after we’d closed, I got a call from London, that’s the headquarters from British Petroleum, from their head attorney saying that he wanted to meet with me that week, that he was flying in from London, and he

would not tell me the subject. He said, “I need to meet with you.” As I hung up, I’m going “Oh my god, what is going on with this transaction?” So, on Friday of that week I met with him, their attorney from Chicago and an attorney from Houston. I met and sat down with them and they asked me—the question was: was the University of Oklahoma happy with the transaction of buying the campus? And I said, well, we were extremely pleased. It could not have gone smoother. I complimented him on their handling the transaction, and they did everything they said they were going to do. And they said, well, the University had done everything they said they would do; therefore, they had made the decision that they would leave everything on the campus. Every piece of equipment, every chair, every computer, all their equipment to run the campus, they would donate to the University of Oklahoma. They handed me a notebook that had every piece of equipment listed, and it was a little over \$9 million worth of equipment, furniture, and fixtures that they’d left. There were two items that they did not leave. The first item that they did not leave was a supercomputer, which I really would have loved to have had, but that was not to be and I understood that, those were multi-million dollar systems. They had three electron microscopes on this campus. At that time, the University of Oklahoma did not own an electron microscope in Norman or Oklahoma City or here. So they said they would give us our pick of the three, and that the other two, one would go to McGill University in Canada, and the other one would go to Texas A&M. The Oklahoma City campus came over and looked at the three, and they chose the one that would be most useful for them in medical research. Those were the two things that were removed; everything else was left on the campus. I mean literally, you’d walk into an office, and you could tell that people had picked up their personal items and their pictures and walked out. Paintings, computers, staple machines, everything was—they left them. They didn’t move anything. So, the transaction was for \$24 million, and we got \$9 million back. So, BP Amoco really were super people to work with. President David Boren has been our supporter; he’s the person who has stood behind us. And, the success we have today in Tulsa, Oklahoma, is because of President David Boren.

THOMPSON: Let’s—if you’ll let me follow another educate, if you will.

ALEXANDER: Okay, I will.

THOMPSON: Because you did a good discussion of this campus. You’re a unique individual. Walk us back from this campus [to] the various sites where OU Tulsa Medical College has been.

ALEXANDER: Okay. When we started the medical school, my first job was to find office space for Dean Martin Fitzpatrick and myself. TMEF had offered that we could share an office with them until I could find space. They were located at 31st and Harvard in the Ranch Acres Medical Building. Their executive director was, at that time, a young lady by the name of Gabrielle Hardesty [ed. note: later Gabrielle Thurman], and she had been executive director for several years for the TMEF. The resident programs were under one umbrella called the Tulsa Medical

Education Foundation. Their offices were in the large medical building at 31st and Harvard called Ranch Acres Medical Center. And this was a medical center made up of mainly Family Practice Physicians, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, but all of them had very large individual practices of medicine. For the first several months, we actually shared offices with them. There was an old radiology suite there, and we converted that into the first offices for the Dean Martin J. Fitzpatrick and me. Dean Fitzpatrick, when he got here, asked Gabrielle if she would join us as administrative assistant because she knew Tulsa, she knew the hospitals, she knew the leadership of the hospitals, and she knew the residents. There were four of us, it was Gabrielle, Dr. Fitzpatrick, myself, and Rhea Aceves, who was another young lady who was working with one of the hospitals, who when I was interviewing for an assistant applied, and because of her experience at Hillcrest, I picked her up, so there were four of us. As we started hiring chairman and program directors who joined us, we quickly outgrew the Ranch Acres Medical Building. We moved the chairmen into a medical building right there on Harvard, right next to where we were at. So, there for a couple of years, we were actually in two buildings, right there together on 31st and Harvard. As we started growing, we were quickly outgrowing our space. There was no more space in the Ranch Acres Medical Building. The other building we'd already taken all the space that was there, and again those were mainly physician offices in that building.

We leased a couple floors in the office building [the Midway Building] at 21st and the Broken Arrow Expressway and they had several floors in that building that were vacated, and so we took all of the first couple floors up through, I think, the fourth floor. The two floors above us, they were still open. And so we were there for a couple of years and we quickly outgrew that. We moved a nuclear pharmacy in there; we moved [the] Internal Medicine clinic in there. We started the library, and its first home was there in the building at 21st and the Broken Arrow Expressway. The Tulsa County Medical Society gave us their collection, so we had a collection once we had the library started. From there, we quickly filled up the rest of that space. Our problems there: one, we were out of space; and two, we were out of parking space. The other thing, this was late, in the late seventies, by the '78, '79 that we were there. There was a move made by the Governor to close down the OU Medical School in Tulsa. We had the Osteopathic School and OU Medical School for the last two years, third and fourth year.

So, I knew that if we didn't do something to give us a permanent home that we were gone. We could not survive the governor trying to close us down. There was an American Christian College campus at 28th and South Sheridan that was for sale. We had approval from the OU Regents to purchase that facility and we did that. Again, the question was: how are we going to pay for it? And the purchase price we had agreed to was five and a half million dollars for the campus. It had been there since the early sixties, so it was twenty years old. Part of the agreement was that I would finance it through a bank in Oklahoma City, and I felt comfortable with doing that. My main goal was to get it purchased. We signed a contract for the purchase of the campus for five and a half million dollars with a closing date to come in about sixty days. We

did everything we were supposed to be doing, had everything lined out, we submitted our financials to the bank. They'd given us the okay, and so everything was set. The day before we closed on the purchase of this property, I got a call from the bank in Oklahoma City stating that they had reviewed the financial reports of the University of Oklahoma, now they didn't say the Health Sciences Center, they did not say the College of Medicine, they said the University of Oklahoma, and they didn't feel like that we were a risk that they were willing to take. They had concerns on our financials. So, twenty-four hours before we closed, the financing was pulled out from under the deal. My concern was that when that become public knowledge, we would be in a very weak position, and might be closed. So, I didn't know what to do.

I called and talked to the one person that I knew the best in Tulsa, W. K. Warren, Sr. I explained the deal to him, and he listened very carefully to what had happened. I went through everything: told him what we had done, where we were at, and that we had lost our financing, and I asked him what his recommendation was. And he said, "I think my recommendation is that it's lunchtime, you need to go lunch. Come back, call me at 1:30, and give me a few minutes, give me some time to think about this." And I said, "Okay." So, I left and I couldn't eat lunch. I came back. 1:30 the phone rings, it was Mr. Warren. And he said, "There's going to be a man come to your office, and he'll bring you a check for five and a half million dollars, and I want you to buy the campus tomorrow." And I said, "Mr. Warren, I don't even know what to say to you, but we can't do the deal because there's no agreement between the University and you. And you don't have a contract or anything in writing." And he said, "Did I ask for anything in writing?" He said, "Go buy the property." So, literally within five minutes, a gentleman walked in, and he said, "Here's your check. Do what Mr. Warren said." Mr. Warren told me that once I received the check, I was [to] put it in the safe, go home, don't talk to anybody, come in the next morning, pick up the check, go to the closing without talking to anybody. So, I did that. I got the check and put it in the safe. The next morning I came in, picked up the check, went to the closing. So, we got to the closing, everything was going well and I handed them a check. And the attorney for the people selling the property said, "W. K. Warren signed this check. I thought we were dealing with the University of Oklahoma." And I said, "You are dealing with the University of Oklahoma. Mr. Warren is well, just handling the actual purchase of it right now." So, Mr. Warren actually bought the campus for five and a half million dollars for the University of Oklahoma that day. And that's again the reason that we're here today is because he did that without a signed agreement or contract. The University did pay him back for his very wonderful consideration of five and a half million dollars.

From there, we were there for twenty years. Like I had mentioned, we had purchased nineteen other tracts of land. In that period of time, I had put together a little over forty acres of land. We owned the Bowman Shopping Center, we owned the Bowman Office Complex, we owned the Bowman Apartments on the east side of the road. And we owned from the campus all the way down to 31st on the west side. So, we'd bought everything up on both sides of the road that was

commercial. Most of it we'd purchased out of bankruptcies. Anything that touched the campus that came up for sale, we purchased it. We were going to scrape everything down and build a new campus there, and we had airway between the west and the east campus, so you could go up and walk across the street. Having Sheridan come right down through the middle of campus was always a problem, but we were going to make it work.

THOMPSON: Well, you are a unique person because you were involved in all of those. So that gives us that track history. Now you want to go back to administrators.

ALEXANDER: I do.

THOMPSON: Okay.

ALEXANDER: All right, over the years there have been several administrative people that we have that had played roles, and I'm not going to remember all of them. Particularly, once you get into the departmental levels. We had people at the Oklahoma City campus, the Health Sciences Center. We had people in Norman that were always very supportive and helped us at different times. When we first started the school, some of the early support we gained came from the vice president at the Health Sciences Center, Mr. Gary Smith, and his chief financial officer who was—who later became the vice president when Gary moved from the Health Sciences Center up to the State Regents Office. Mr. Mark Lemons was extremely helpful, particularly in the beginning years as we were trying to get the college put together, hiring people, getting our purchasing done and everything. We had Mr. Frank Rose, who was the director of HR, I believe that was his title, from the Health Sciences Center, really was very helpful in hiring our staffing, particularly when we got into to the clinical staffing. He hired a young lady by the name of Connie Gould, who for years was our, she didn't have the title, but was our HR director. She did have that title before she left, and her husband was Keith Frank. And both of them worked in administration. Mr. Marty Thompson was our first librarian. I hired him and I do remember interviewing him for the position. Marty was just back from Vietnam and had served his country, was looking to move back to Oklahoma, [he] grew up in Oklahoma City. And we needed somebody that knew about libraries because I knew very little about libraries, and it was one of the best things that I had done. Marty brought the collection from the Tulsa County Medical Society over, plus then added the all of the additions that were needed for the different departments we had. The other thing about Marty was the fact that he was a part of the team. He wasn't just the head librarian, whatever needed to be done, back in those days, we all worked on the projects. Whatever, we were opening a new clinic, everybody worked on the new clinic. Marty left us and went to Oklahoma City as the head librarian at the Bird Library. Also Mr. Mike Newman was our director of resident affairs, student affairs. Had a good background and did a great job.

Our first clinic director was Mr. Mike Lapolla. Mike came to us from Trinity University in Texas. Mike was a West Point graduate; he had done two full tours of duty in Vietnam. He is the most decorated Vietnam veteran that I know personally. He was decorated nine times in the field for what he did. He was a company commander. His job both times on both tours was that whenever a company or division, anybody would get pinned down, he would go out and bring them back. His job was to go out and save as many lives as he could, and bring them back, hopefully alive. Mike when he came back went to Trinity University where he received his Master's in Public Health. Trinity University was recommended him to me by Mr. James Harvey, who was at the CEO of Hillcrest at that time. I called the Dean of Trinity, told him who I was and asked them if they could recommend three or four candidates, not more than four, that they thought would do, who'd run our clinics, help us get started. Mike was one of those four people that came up, and he and I interviewed, and I made a decision that Mike was the right one. Again, we were very fortunate to get someone of his caliber to come here and help us get started. As I interviewed Mike, I took him back to the airport on Friday evening to fly back to Texas, and I asked him, I said, "Mike, are you interested if we were to offer you the job?" And he said, "I am, but it depends. If OU wins their football game, I will come. If they lose their football game tomorrow, I'm not coming." I said okay and we kind of smiled, and OU had won seventeen or eighteen games in a row at that point. Everybody picked them to win. It happened that next day, they lost. Monday morning when I got to work, I had a phone call from Mike saying, "Now, you do know I was kidding about OU winning or losing." And I said, "Mike, I do understand."

One of the other early on administrators who did a lot of work in Tulsa, did a lot of good work for us, particularly when we were in the building at 21st and Broken Arrow [Expressway] and the new campus, was an architect by the name of Mr. Bud Miles. Bud Miles was really very supportive, very creative, helped us. A lot of times we didn't have budgets for projects we were trying to do, Bud would figure out a way to get them done for us. Bud and the people that worked for him there at the Health Sciences Center were very supportive of us. When we purchased the Sheridan Campus, there had been a period of time in there for about a year between when the college closed down and we actually took over, and the Victory Christian Church had tried to run it as one of their sites, and they just didn't have the money, and the campus had really run down. It was not in good shape when we purchased it, and so one of the things we needed to do was clean it up, fix it up, do a lot of inside renovations to it for the library, for the offices for the chairs. We actually took down a full building there on campus, but we had no money. The provost at that time came over, Dr. Donald B. Halverstadt. He and I were visiting, and he said, "Leeland, how's it going?" And we talked about the problems with the things that we needed to renovate. To move the library over, we didn't have a space that was actually big enough as it was to move our collection. We didn't have offices for the chairmen, we didn't have space to put people into. And so he said, "Well, let me bring Mr. Lloyd Rader over from Oklahoma City," who was the head of the Department of Human Services at that time,

“and I’ll let him look at.” I wasn’t really for sure why Mr. Lloyd Rader was being invited to come over to see the campus. But we met Saturday morning at 7:30 in the morning on the campus, Mr. Rader, Dr. Halverstadt, and I. And we walked through, over the next four hours, we walked through every single room, hallway, bathroom, mechanical room, on the campus. And Mr. Lloyd Rader looked at them himself. This was Saturday, we finished about noon. Mr. Lloyd Rader thanked me for my time, and I thanked him for coming, and Dr. Donald B. Halverstadt. On Monday morning, I came to work about 7:15 AM, and when I drove into the campus, there were people working everywhere on campus. They were putting new roofs on the buildings, they were tearing out carpet, they were removing walls. And I’m going, “Oh my god, what has happened here?” We had no money and here are all of these people working. I honestly did not know at that time who they were. And I saw all of these guys working, and I knew I had no money. So, I ran into my office, I grabbed my phone, I got ahold of Dr. Donald B. Halverstadt, and I said, “Dr. Donald B. Halverstadt, What is going on? Who are these people?” And he said, “What are they doing?” So, I told him, and he said, “Stay out of their way. Let them do their work.” I said, “No, Don, I have no money.” He said, “That’s okay.” So, Dr. Donald B. Halverstadt, Mr. Rader, without their help, we wouldn’t be where we’re at today. Without Mr. W.K. Warrens, we’d never have the campus. Without the campus, they would have closed us. Without Mr. Rader, without President David Boren, we wouldn’t be sitting today on the Schusterman Campus. Without Charles and Lynn Schusterman, W.K. Warren, Sr., without Mr. George Kaiser, without the Chapman money, without the Oxley money, without the Tandy money, without the Founders money and many others we wouldn’t be here. We’ve been very blessed to have them give all they have.

A couple of other administrators who’ve been very supportive, Paul Massad from the Norman campus has always been very supportive from the very first day. We’ve been very helpful to also support the Norman campus in high school recruiting. Matt Hamilton, who is now at the Norman campus, who is their Vice President for Student Affairs, started in Tulsa, and officed on our campus, I helped him do the things that we could do to help him to be successful in recruiting for the Norman campus. So, Paul Massad, Matt Hamilton have been key people. Guy Patton, the current president of the OU Foundation. The president before him, Ron Burton, have all been very supportive of our campus, of the money coming into the Foundation for the endowed chairs. The Tulsa campus set up the one hundredth endowed chair at the University of Oklahoma Foundation. The Founders’ gift of one million dollars at that time was matched for a million. The one-hundredth chair within the University of Oklahoma was here in Tulsa. Guy Patton and Ron Burton both have been very supportive of the campus, of what we have done here. Ray List who joined us as Director of Operations just before we had actually just moved to the Sheridan Campus. He ran that campus, ran this campus over here until he retired a few years ago. He was very important, he was a retired thirty year colonel, United States Marines, very outstanding individual. Really helped us from the operational standpoint. Jonathan Joiner, who is now the Associate Dean of the College of Medicine and the Chief Financial Officer for OU Physicians,

was located in Oklahoma City, worked for Mark Lemons, and I recruited him almost fifteen years ago now to come and join us. He runs the College of Medicine finances and has done an outstanding job of leading the campus before we moved over here. Dr. Milt Olsen, when Mike Newman left, came in, was director of Resident and Student Affairs for years. He had been at Oral Roberts University Medical School before he joined us and had done very well at working with our residents and our students. We were very fortunate to have him in the Dean's office while we were coming through all of this process. So, these are some of the administrative people that I remember. Who am I leaving out Marty?

THOMPSON: I don't know that you left anything out. I think where I'd like to go with you though is back to '74 when you came here because you were the first. Your feelings about the establishment of the school? You talked about the people in town who supported it. Are there any other comments you want to make about that time period because you're the only one who has insights into that time period.

ALEXANDER: Well, the school was actually—the community, the chamber, and TMEF, hospitals working together, had for many years been trying to get the medical school here in Tulsa. And they had two different Booz-Allen reports done for justification for this. They saw it, and I think that probably Mr. Warren summed it up the best, the reason—because I asked him, we were having lunch one day and I just asked him: why was it so important to him, as owner of a hospital, the builder of St. Francis Hospital, have OU Medical School here? And he said that hospital buildings were just buildings. Quality of medicine and the reason that people came to your hospital was because of the physicians practicing medicine inside those doors. And to have good physicians, you wanted to have the students and the residents here, so that for a period of time they could observe different residents, different students and make a decision, okay, I want this doctor on my staff at this hospital or I really don't want this particular person on my staff. So, he knew to be successful he had to have good physicians, and to recruit them to Tulsa, Oklahoma, he needed to have a medical school churning out really well educated people. And he had done that successfully. When he had started St. Francis Hospital, he went to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, he went to Harvard, he went to the Cleveland Clinic, he went to California to the different medical schools and would hire one or two physicians. He might hire from Rochester, an ENT person, he might hire a surgeon from Harvard, he might hire an internist from California. All these different faculty had been educated in different medical schools, so they all brought—but they also brought that connection from Rochester to Tulsa, from Harvard to Tulsa, from Stanford to Tulsa, and these people could reach out and then bring in.

So, the critical part is that they really saw that they needed good connection. In the early fifties when they started the residency programs here, you could have free-standing residency programs without being tied to a medical school. Over the years, as accreditation bodies tightened down, increased their requirements, brought it closer and closer to the educational home of the medical

school, they realized to be competitive, they were going to have to have a medical school here, to have the residents. Otherwise, they were going to lose the residency programs. So, that's why TMEF had already been set up, said okay, we're going to lose this game, we're not going to be competitive, they're going to close our residency, we're going to lose our accreditation—is really what they were saying. So, that's why they wanted the medical school over here, was to have a medical school here, so they could have residents here, so they could recruit for their three teaching hospitals. So they understood that, they saw that. The leadership of the hospitals were also very large community leaders. They gave a lot to the community, they worked with the Chamber, they worked with the different big corporations here in town, particularly the oil companies at that time, and they all worked together. So, the community really wanted the medical school here for all of these reasons.

At the same time, Oklahoma City, where the medical school had been for the MD program, did not want a branch in Tulsa. They didn't want it because of the financial seducate on the state budget. They were having problems having enough money to run that campus there as opposed to starting another medical school in Oklahoma. And the bill that actually created the medical school in Tulsa also created the osteopathic school. [ed. note: There were two separate bills for the two schools, but both passed in 1972.] So, in 1972 when it passed, both medical schools were started. So, all of a sudden, Oklahoma went from one medical school to three. So, there was a lot of hard feelings about the Tulsa branch starting. And the consideration really was over money, and where was the money going to come from. They didn't really care in Oklahoma City what we did in Tulsa as long as we didn't take a penny from them. But if we took a penny from them, then it was a different story, and I understand that. So there were people in Oklahoma City, who honestly tried to close us down. For several years, the Health Sciences Center did that, and there were some people there that had they been a little bit more successful, we wouldn't be here today.

The people in Tulsa saw the advantage of having a medical school, so they were supportive of that, and that really became very critical when the governor tried to close us down. And, what happened is Governor Bellmon, was the governor at that time—and it really crystalized everything in Tulsa, it brought everybody closer together. And it kind of meshed us in Tulsa. We do want the medical school. We do want it to be successful. Yes, maybe I need to help them financially, maybe I need to help them do different things. So, it really helped us with what the Governor did, but also, had we not pulled together as a community, the medical school would have been closed. It would have moved back to Oklahoma City. The Chancellor for Higher Education, E. T. Dunlap, wanted the OSU school [ed. note: the osteopathic school became part of Oklahoma State University (OSU)] to be the only school in Tulsa. He did not want another medical school here that would be in competition with the OSU school. He was very supportive. In fact, he called me right after I bought the campus, he told me that the next time he saw me that I would be in McAlester. I have found out that over the years I wasn't the only one that he made

that comment to. So, there were people who didn't want us for that reason. The other thing, Marty, as you remember, for the first several years almost all of the teaching was done by volunteer faculty because we didn't have faculty. A couple departments only had chairmen or interim chairmen in those positions. So all the teaching, almost all of the teaching was done by volunteer faculty. They were used to teaching because they had residents, so we interjected seventeen medical students, and they just picked it up and it carried forward. Over the years that's changed as we've hired full-time faculty, we had to mainly for accreditation reasons, but in the beginning, thousands and thousands of hours were donated by different physicians. In their practice, they would have residents, they would have medical students, so it worked out.

THOMPSON: That kind of goes to one of the other questions that I wanted to cover. What do you see as the major changes from when you entered being involved in medical schools in 1972 to now the year 2016?

ALEXANDER: I think, Marty, most of the changes that I have seen over the last forty years have been changes that have been good. A lot of the changes have taken place in the academic requirements for the medical school and for the residency programs. As new things come on the market, new ways of practicing, the whole system of healthcare for our nation has changed. And medical schools really struggled to keep up with some of these changes and how they practice medicine in hospitals and the private practices. We have hospitalists today as opposed to having physicians in the private practice, came to the hospital to take care of Mrs. Jones or Mrs. Smith, or whoever it was. Now somebody gets to the hospital, they're seen by hospitalists, as opposed to seeing their primary care physician. So, there have been changes, I think most of the changes have been good over the years. The requirements for accreditation, Marty, have improved. We're getting more standardized. Hopefully, if you go to school in California or if you go to school in Boston, you're getting the same education, or very close to the same education, and it really doesn't matter. I think the biggest change you might see, if you look forty years ago to how the DOs educated their students and residents as to how they educate them today—a lot more similar to ours, the MD side. So, I think everybody's coming to an agreement of what the standard should be. There's still some minor differences in residency educating, but undergraduate is pretty well the same now. So, a lot of the work, Marty, now can be done in simulation centers. Students, particularly residents, first year residents can practice procedures ten times, a hundred times, on a mannequin before they do it on a real patient. So all of those things are good. The other thing I think is a major change is in the number of hours that a resident has to work, can work. And in the very beginning they worked them for twenty-four, forty-eight hours. That's not learning medicine, that's not practicing good medicine. And now they don't do that. The hours are limited on how many hours in a day, how many hours in a week, how many hours over a weekend, how many hours they can be on call. All of those changes, are good, for medicine and good for patient care. So, there have been a lot of changes in that area. I can remember, one morning, one of our students, it was the first year that we were open, it was in the early spring of

'75, came to work one morning, again at Ranch Acres, and one of our medical students was sitting on my desk sound asleep. When he had left St. Francis Hospital, he was going home, got to our office, came into my office trying to look for his address, and went to sleep on my desk. I had known that particular medical student when he was at OSU, and I knew his wife, so I took him home, and I took his car keys away from him. I took him home, and he went to sleep. So, hopefully you don't see that type of thing happening today.

THOMPSON: Your career. You want to make any comments. I mean, you came here extremely young.

ALEXANDER: I did.

THOMPSON: And stayed forever. Any things you want to talk about, the changes in your career?

ALEXANDER: Well, my career was determined by one professor that I had. But my choice of colleges, universities was determined by my father. My father and my mother both attended Oklahoma State University. My father went to Oklahoma State University on a full scholarship to play football, so he said, "Son, you can go wherever you want to go, but if you want my help, you have to go to Oklahoma State University." I understood the dynamics. When I went to college, I wasn't for sure what I wanted to do. I just remember telling my dad—he asked me, "Son, what do you want to do with your life?" And I remember saying to him, remember I was eighteen years old, I had just graduated from high school, I said, "I don't know, daddy, but I'm never going to work for a university." Why I said that to my father, I don't know other than the fact my father worked for OSU for thirty-two years. When I made that comment, my daddy just smiled, he didn't say anything. But anyway, I went to OSU and started in general business, didn't know for sure what I wanted to major in. I took my first accounting course and I loved accounting. So, I dropped general business and went into accounting. I went to work for the comptroller; I worked in the accounting office. I had no idea what an office was or what you were supposed to do. And I just remember my professor saying, "You know, this really will be good for you. If you'll do this when you come out of college you'll be with a whole other group of other college kids that have all graduated in accounting, but, none have any experience in accounting, and you're going to be the one candidate that has a year or two of experience working in an accounting office." And all of that made sense to me. I grew up on a farm raising cattle, and I knew nothing about how you ran an office or how you did accounting. So, I thought, well, this is good experience. And then for me to be chosen professionally before I had even my degree—I've been very fortunate.

And when I came back out of the service, my wife and I were very happy to be back together. And neither one of us wanted to leave Stillwater. We loved it there, she'd got her master's

degree. So, we were going to stay. And then Dr. Phillips called me. I turned him down the first time. When we had supper with him he drew out what he saw for the Tulsa Junior College on a napkin, campus downtown on the four spokes, and I've kept that piece of paper for years that he drew it out on. But I was just intrigued by that, and what he said to me. He said, "You know, Leeland, you'll be our chief accountant. You'll bring the accounting system from OSU. You got a good system here. You'll go with it. I'm going to leave you alone. If something doesn't work, I will come to you and say, 'That doesn't work, you're going to have to do something different.' And you've got to have the ability to say, 'I'll change it tomorrow,' and not even worry about it." And I thought, that's kind of unique for him to give me that kind of flexibility. And he said to me, "Do you have the ability to do that? If something is not working, we'll change it." And that was intriguing. Our dream was that we would have a thousand students our first semester. We made all of our planning for a thousand students, and we had twenty-seven hundred students. And the Junior College was very successful. And so I was very happy. But one of the men who ran the registrar for the first two years had left TJC and went to Norman as a head registrar at Norman. And he's the one who told Dr. Fitzpatrick, because Fitzpatrick called him and said, "Who do you recommend in Tulsa that I hire?" So he knew me, so he said, "Here's the name, you hire him." He said, "Whatever you do, you hire him." So, when Fitzpatrick called I accepted the position thinking this would really be neat to help build a medical school.

THOMPSON: Let's talk about your contributions.

ALEXANDER: Okay.

THOMPSON: What do you think your contributions to OU-Tulsa College of Medicine have been?

ALEXANDER: That's an interesting question to ask someone after forty-two years. What contributions? My contributions in my mind are different probably than what other people might say. But I will tell you that I have been extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to work for the University of Oklahoma for forty-two years. And one time, several years ago, my oldest son and I were out shooting basketball and he said, "Dad, I need to ask you a question, and I want you to tell me your secret." And I said, "I don't have secrets, but I'll answer your question." He said, "Tell me how you planned your life. How did you plan it out? All of these things that you've done, all sequenced out. How did you plan that? How did you know what you wanted to do?" And I looked at him, and I thought, that is an interesting question. The problem is, I didn't sequence it out, and it all really changed when I went to college. I have one son that from the time he was five years old said, "Daddy, I'm going to fly jet airplanes." Today he is a Navy Commander, flown, I don't know how many missions, and flies for Southwest Airlines, but it never changed. My oldest son who asked me the question, started school and said he wanted to be a doctor. He had some medical problems. He really was impressed with the doctors who

saved his life. And he got through his freshman year and then decided he wanted to switch into the ministry, and he struggled with that decision of which way he'd go. He asked me to make that decision for him, and I said, "Son, I can't do that. Your mother can't do that. It's your life. My life, I chose my life. You have to choose your life. Whatever you choose, you're going to do it for the rest of your life, so be happy. Don't worry about the money, don't worry about anything. Choose your career." But when I really enjoyed accounting, that's all I wanted to do was accounting. I really interviewed at college with Merrill Lynch, and I wanted to go work for Merrill Lynch because they were stockbrokers. Merrill Lynch told me the same thing you heard when you interviewed, was "When you get back from Vietnam, come and see us, we'll talk to you." Everybody I interviewed with told me the same thing. Good thing was I had a job, I was already working for OSU; they held my job, but I've always enjoyed working with college students. And you don't put up with some of the things that happen that an eighteen- or nineteen-year-old college student might do. But to have the experience of starting two new schools from scratch and watching them grow. I've been a part of a team, not what I've done, I've been a part of the team. The big points in that were literally buying a campus when I knew we had to have a home or we were gone. Probably a big thing was the fact I took a chance at buying the campus with money that wasn't from the University of Oklahoma. And that's still it's never been talked about. And working on buying this campus. This is something I never dreamed that the College of Medicine, Health Sciences Center, or the University would ever have here in Tulsa. We have the premiere piece of land and the campus. And to have the opportunity to be a part of that is unique. To be able to say that I knew W. K. Warren, Sr., W. K. Warren, Jr., I now know John Kelley Warren, not as well as I knew his father and his grandfather. Mr. Bill Bell, Mr. Charles Schusterman, Mrs. Lynn Schusterman, Stacy Schusterman Sharon Bell, the Founders. I knew all of the Founders. Not many people have had that opportunity.

But the other thing, part of that, Marty, was working here gave me opportunity not only to do that, but to go through Leadership Tulsa. I was encouraged to do that, go through Leadership Oklahoma, go through Leadership USA, go through Leadership for the 21st Century through Harvard University. That's pretty unique that I had that opportunity because I worked for the University of Oklahoma, and I was able to do that. The fact that I also, with Dr. C.S. Lewis Jr. have travelled around the world a couple of times, have been all over India, and in Nepal, all over Africa, and South America. So, I've been extremely fortunate. I've been blessed. My wife and I have four sons. We have twelve grandkids now, so I've been very fortunate. But the University of Oklahoma has given me that opportunity.

THOMPSON: My two questions then.

ALEXANDER: Okay.

THOMPSON: Number one: What do you say about yourself in the way you've been able to work with the people in Tulsa to permit the college to grow as it has grown? What do you think the secret is? You're known for that. Almost anybody we've talked to about you has talked about that. What do you think has allowed you to do that?

ALEXANDER: Two things I think, Marty. One is my ability to negotiate for a common goal, and my ability to trust people and not belittle them. If I don't trust them, it makes it very difficult. But I've always found the ability to negotiate for the greater good, for the College of Medicine or the Schusterman Campus. How do you negotiate something so that both parties are happy? BP Amoco was very happy, they gave us nine million dollars worth of gifts because of that. So, we did what we said we were going to do. We kept our word, didn't hassle them, didn't hassle them over the price. They said twenty-four million dollars, we paid them twenty-four million. Could we have got it for twenty-two five? If we had of done that, we'd have knocked out the \$9 million in the inside. I've had the honor of working with very good people. Very seldom have we had a person that created problems. Best thing I can say about my career is that in the forty-two years that I've been here, I've had to fire very few people. It's easy to fire somebody; it's hard to make somebody a useful person, a useful player.

THOMPSON: Now the other name that you have among your, maybe so-called friends, is you're called the money man. How have you always been able to balance that money?

ALEXANDER: I have always understood the value of a dollar, and I've always had money somewhere stashed in case of an emergency. A day-to-day budget, Marty, for a university is pretty easy to put together. It's the ability to cover the unexpected and not cripple yourself in the process of doing that. And we've been fortunate that we've had good funding here through the years. We were very fortunate at Tulsa Junior College that we had the funding there. We've had taxation there. They've had money, that's why they're the size they are. They've always had money. The years that I worked at OSU, they had money there. So part of that ability to make a deal when a deal is good, not make a deal when it's bad. I bought property over at 28th and South Sheridan out of bankruptcy that people said, "Why are you buying that property?" Well, because it was for the goal of growing a big campus. It wasn't the value of one piece of property. It was the value of what the goal was, the goal was to build a campus that would become a permanent home, which we now have here. A lot of times people at times challenged me, they didn't understand. Why would I buy a piece of trash almost, and I said, "It adds value to what we're going to do overall." That particular purchase gives us street control over where we were at, as an example. But always to have the money. If a faculty or a chairman came to me with a project where they really had to have something, my job was to find the money not to say, "I'm sorry I don't have any Dr. Smith." That doesn't work here. The librarian comes to you and says, "You know, I'll need another \$10,000 to buy books. We don't have any books of this nature, I need

them.” My job is to find that money, not to say to the librarian, “I’m sorry, maybe next year we can do that.”

THOMPSON: Unique skill. Unique skill. Another question: the Doctors’ Hospital. The foundation that came out of that, you were very involved in, not sure that we’ll talk to anybody else who has the kind of knowledge about that. Do you want to talk about that because, you know, I know how important those groups are to medical facilities, we’ve got one in Oklahoma City, so you want to talk about that one, and?

ALEXANDER: I would love to do that. The, a little bit of history, going all the way back in history there were a group of doctors at Hillcrest, they were all family practice physicians, that when they came out with some new guidelines as qualifications and certifications for physicians practicing they said you had to have a formal residency program in length of two years, three years, whatever. And back at that time most family practice physicians only had to do a year. Rotating internship and then they could practice medicine. Most of these guys who had been in practice for years had only done the one year. So, Hillcrest said goodbye. “You can practice medicine, but when your patient comes to the hospital, we’ll take over and take care of your patients.” Doctors said, “No, you’re not going to take care of my patients, you know, that doesn’t work.” So a group of these guys got together, they were practicing physicians, and they decided to build their own hospital. So, a group of fourteen or fifteen of these physicians went together, drew up the plans, borrowed money on their own, each of them putting up their own house or their practice or whatever, to cover the note and build Doctors’ Hospital. And for years they were very successful.

In the early eighties, everybody was buying any hospital they could find anywhere. And this group out of California came into Oklahoma. They came to Tulsa, talked to the doctors and they made them an offer that was unbelievable to that group of doctors. And, so they agreed to sell Doctors Hospital, back in 1982. After they paid off the bills, any liabilities, they had twenty-nine and a half million dollars left. The doctors were just going to divide it up between them—the IRS said, “No, you can’t do that. You’re a 501(c) hospital; you can only give it to a foundation.” So, this group of doctors said, “Wait a minute, we can do that.” So, they set up the Founders of Doctors’ Hospital using the same 501(c) destination that the hospital was, so they already had it set up. And they had an agreement with the IRS that they were going to set it up. So, that’s how they got to that point. And the IRS said okay. The way they set it up, they had to name a primary charity to support. So, this group of doctors were, nine of the twelve were family practice physicians from the University of Oklahoma, and they said, “We’re going to support the brand new College of Medicine just starting in Tulsa, the Department of Family Medicine.” So, that group voted without us, we didn’t know about it until after it happened. They told the IRS what they were going to do, and the IRS said, “Okay, you can do that, but you’ve got to name one of the people from the University on your board of directors. He or she has to be at every meeting

you have when you're going to have a meeting. They have to be on the finance committee and they have to be on the investment committee." So, our Department of Family Medicine was chosen by this group of doctors to be on their board, to meet the requirements that they had with the IRS. So the, in the very beginning Dr. Les Walls was that nominee. They chose him. They said, he's Family Practice, he's the chair, we want him. And about a year after he was chosen, he decided to leave as chairman to go to California as the President of the Optometry School out in California. And so they said, "Okay, who do you pick, Dr. Walls, to take your place?" And he said, "I think Leeland Alexander would be the right person." So, I was selected. I've served on the board since 1992.

But the foundation is to give money to its primary charity, which is our Department of Family Medicine, which they always have, and other projects that they approve for the University of Oklahoma as long as they're within a seventy-five mile radius of Tulsa. Their giving has to be in seventy-five miles. The reason is they felt like this group of doctors, most of their patients came from within seventy-five miles. So, they're giving back to the people who paid them money. So, they have given back, Marty, about \$65 million now, to the community. And they have given the University of Oklahoma a little over \$15 million, not counting the match, the state match on several chairs that they have.

So, we're now on what I call the third generation, or fourth generation of trustees. The original doctors chose their replacements—they chose their wives. Wives chose their successors, so they chose their children. Their children, in one case, has already chose, their child, so we're on fourth generation. None of the doctors are still alive. Two of their wives are still alive, but most of that whole first generation—again nine of them were OU graduates of family practice. They have done a lot for this community. They've done a lot for the University of Oklahoma. As you know, we have the Founders Hall, we have the Founders Student Center, we have the Founders Lobby in the new Tandy Center. We have multiple endowed chairs of a million dollars from Founders; we have a lot of research money from Founder's that's here. So they've been very supportive of everything that the University of Oklahoma has done here in Tulsa.

THOMPSON: Excellent.

ALEXANDER: A unique group of people, and their only obligation is to give money away.

THOMPSON: You got any other comments. I have one parting question I want to ask you just for fun, but do you have any other comments you want to make?

ALEXANDER: No.

THOMPSON: Okay, just so it's recorded. I want you to talk about the jobs you had at OSU when you were going to school.

ALEXANDER: My first job at OSU was washing pots and pans at night and on the weekends. And I got paid seventy-five cents an hour to wash pots and pans. And I apparently did a good job because after one semester, they moved me from washing pots and pans to running the cash register for all of the students in the dorm, all the men in the dorm. I'd been there two weeks, and I almost got fired because it was a Saturday evening and I was washing pots and pans and the lady who ran the kitchen came in and said, "What are you doing?" [I] had all of the pots and pans down on the floor, and I told her that the pots and pans were not clean, so I was rewashing all of the pots and pans. They had grease on them. So she explained to me why some of the pots and pans had grease on them. And I asked her to look inside of them and see. And she had not looked inside of them lately. So, she let me finish washing the pots and pans and then did not fire me. So I really did like that job because I had plenty to eat. The second job I had was to, I worked for vending on campus. The Vending department filled all of the Coke machines, candy machines, milk machines, which the University owned. And part of what I did, was I did that every morning because I could go at 5:00 AM out to the OSU dairy to pick up the milk, and the chocolate milk, and the orange juice and deliver it to the girls' dorms, which I did. But I had keys to every vending machine on campus, and I never went hungry for anything at any time. So I really enjoyed it. So, that was my second job, and then my third job was working in the accounting office. And shortly after I had worked in the accounting office for a period of time, a couple of months, they almost fired me again. I got called in, and I thought I'd be fired because there was a university policy, which I did not know that says students can only have one job where you get paid on university time. And my only response was they hired me; therefore, that must have meant they couldn't find anybody else to do the job they were hiring me for. So after some consideration, they said, "Okay, you have to give up one of the three." So, I gave up the vending machines, and I gave up also the working in the cafeteria. But I'd already stopped working on the cafeteria before that happened, and I was the RA for two floors in the Dorm. So, at that time when I got caught, I was just doing the vending machines and the accounting office and working in the Dorm.

THOMPSON: (laughs) I had to ask. Anything else you want to say before we're done?

ALEXANDER: The only thing I say in ending is, my whole life had been made easy by people like yourself. You did an unbelievable job. You were a part of the team. I trusted you 100 percent always, and I've been very fortunate in my life. When I look at you, I look at Mike Lapolla, I look at Mike Newman, I look at Hoyt [Smith]. We've just been very fortunate in Tulsa.

THOMPSON: I think you ought to know that everybody who's talked about you so far in these interviews, which I now find interesting because of what you said your boss at Tulsa Junior College said to you, that, to the man, we've all said the same thing, that we came to work here, and nobody meddled in our business. We were hired to do a job, was expected to the job, and we went about doing that job. And I think it's interesting that you made the comment that your boss at TJC told you that because I think that you in turn have done that with the people that you've hired and were responsible for over the years. And that all of us realize that and realize what that did for us in our careers. That it let us grow and mature in the jobs that we had to have. Not sure that we did a whole heck of a lot if you look at that crew. It's a very motley crew in the early days. In the '76 era especially. I appreciate it. Thank you very much.

ALEXANDER: Thank you.

End of interview.