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Interview with Shannon Simpson

Shannon Simpson

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**LOUISE PETTUS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**Interview #273
SIMPSON, Shannon**

SIMPSON, Shannon

Undergraduate student from 1995-1999

At Winthrop: 1995-1999

Interviewed: June 12, 2013

Interviewer: Martha Manning

Index by: Cody Willis

Length: 43 minutes

Abstract: In her June 12, 2013 interview with Martha Manning, Shannon Simpson detailed her time as an undergraduate student at Winthrop from 1995-1999. Discussed are details of Simpson's life as a student – residence halls, classes, meals – rules and regulations on campus, and her desire to go back to Winthrop as a graduate student in 2013. Included are Simpson's thoughts on professors, traditions, and cultural events on campus. Simpson also shares details of her career as a police officer after attending Winthrop to a transition as an employee in Human Resources. This interview was conducted for inclusion into the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections Oral History Program.

Keywords: Alumni, Sociology, course schedules, food, Baptist Student Union, Lee Wicker, physical education, DiGiorgio, 1990s, police officer, Human Resources, graduate program

Interview Session (June 12, 2013): Digital File

Time	Keywords
00:00:00	<i>Start of Interview</i> /Interviewer's Introduction
00:00:05	MM: As you are aware, I called you here for an oral history interview, and I need to get information from you because you are a previous student from Winthrop. The time is 2:15, and this interview is being conducted by Martha Manning, and I'm conducting the interview with...
00:00:33	SS: Shannon Simpson.
00:00:35	MM: Thank you. We're here at the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections at Winthrop University, Rock Hill, South Carolina. Now, we're

ready, but first I want to get your permission. I want to make sure that you know you're being recorded. Is this okay?

00:00:56 SS: Yes ma'am.

00:00:57 **MM: Thank you so much. Now think as I ask you these questions as you were a student here at Winthrop. What years were you here?**

00:01:01 SS: From '95 to '99.

00:01:09 **MM: From '95 to '99. Four years.**

00:01:14 SS: Yes ma'am.

00:01:16 **MM: Why did you decide to come to Winthrop?**

00:01:19 SS: Well, I'm from here, and it was either come here and stay on campus or go to Limestone College and move even farther away and stay on campus in Gaffney, South Carolina. So mom and dad said "okay, Winthrop is fine."

00:01:35 **MM: And you stayed on campus?**

00:01:37 SS: So I stayed on campus, yes ma'am, and I only lived 20 minutes from here. I grew up 20 minutes from here and I still lived on campus.

00:01:44 **MM: And that was a good experience?**

00:01:45 SS: Yes ma'am. I'm very glad I did it, very glad.

00:01:51 **MM: Can you tell me about the environment that you were placed in to live here.**

00:01:55 SS: Well, I lived in Lee Wicker because I turned in my paperwork really early because I knew immediately I was coming here once mom and dad agreed that that was where I was coming and I submitted my paperwork early. Most freshmen were moved to Wofford. I was fortunate enough to get to live in Lee Wicker.

00:02:15 **MM: Is this better than Wofford?**

00:02:16 SS: Much better, yes. Wofford is mostly freshman and it gets loud and kind of wild. It's bigger, many more residents and it's beside Richardson which mirrors that but it's all boys. So Lee Wicker, even though it was on Cherry Road, and I grew up in the country, Cherry Road was loud; fire trucks, ambulances, car

horns—it was loud. But it was nice because I was away from home and Lee Wicker was nice and I had a roommate that was a sophomore and two suitemates that were sophomores.

00:02:51 **MM: And they were serious?**

00:02:52 SS: Yes. They were serious, and they—

00:02:55 **MM: You had quiet time?**

00:02:56 SS: I did. I had quiet time. They were one year older so they were able to help me with anything Winthrop related because they had already had their freshman year. It was great for references for professors and anything. It was just good to have them as my roommates.

00:03:13 **MM: And did they help you with library skills.**

00:03:14 SS: They did. In fact I came here my first year without a computer, but my roommate had one, so we would go to the library to research and then come back. I was able to type it right in my room, which these students now, they all have them and they carry them with them, but at that time I did not have one. I had a word processor, but not a computer. That was in '95. So I got to use my roommate's computer and they showed me how to use it and then I took a computer class.

00:03:44 **MM: You were right on top of it.**

00:03:45 SS: I was trying to be. They helped me.

00:03:47 **MM: So in Wicker where you lived, was this like a suite?**

00:03:51 SS: It was.

00:03:54 **MM: Four to a room?**

00:03:55 SS: Well, it was one single room that held two students. We shared a bathroom with another room that had two students. It was all females, and we had one kitchen on each floor. So we lived right across from the kitchen. We used it more than anyone else.

00:04:14 **MM: You used it a lot?**

00:04:15 SS: We used it a lot because you could just go right across the hall and use it.

00:04:20 **MM: So how is the food on campus?**

00:04:21 SS: The food was fine. You know I grew up with three home cooked meals that were very big and you ate really well. So when I came here I still got stuff I had at home, but it was like a buffet all the time because at Thompson it's—you know, you get choices; anything you wanted and it was fine with me. At that time there was Dinkins, so all the students hung out in Dinkins. At that point we would go to Dinkins for something other than home cooked food. We would go there for—

00:04:56 **MM: When you wanted sandwiches.**

00:04:57 SS: Sandwiches, yes, but it was fine. The food was fine. I didn't have any problems. Sometimes they offered, like during exams, we got to go have breakfast at night at Thompson. I think they may still do that, but I know that was exciting for us because we were up anyway. Sometimes they would have popcorn parties at Dinkins. I'm not sure that they do all of this at Digs.

00:05:21 **MM: So did you get up to eat breakfast?**

00:05:22 SS: I did. Well, we didn't go to bed. Oh, you mean every morning, or during exams?

00:05:26 **MM: Every morning.**

00:05:27 SS: Yes ma'am. I did. I'm an early bird, so I always got up to have breakfast every morning. I had the meal plan where you got all three meals each day, so I didn't skip any meals.

00:05:40 **MM: That helped with your grades?**

00:05:43 SS: Yes, I didn't have to leave campus. I had a car, but I didn't have to leave campus. I could study while I ate because the time was unlimited there. You didn't have to leave so I would sit and eat. That may mean that I ate more [laughter] but I was able to sit and study while we ate.

00:06:02 **MM: Did you have to take any kind of entrance exams to come here?**

00:06:08 SS: I took the SAT. I took it I think maybe just...I think eighth grade because I did not take the PSAT, which I heard now is what they all do, but I just I went to Lewisville, a really small school.

00:06:24 **MM: That's where Blair went.**¹

00:06:25 SS: Yes, right down the road from me. So I went there and it wasn't that big of a deal because I took college prep classes. I was going to college. It was very separated in my school. You were either going to college or not. You decided this a long time ago. So in this case I knew I was going. I didn't take the PSAT, so I took the SAT twice and then of course we had some sort of graduation exam, but I don't remember much about that; something just so I could exit high school [laughter] and get my diploma.

00:07:00 **MM: Did you get homesick?**

00:07:01 SS: I did not. I missed it on mom and daddy all the time. Anytime I went—and then that was the other thing that was so good about me being a part of my roommate and suitemates' lives—being local. They became my parents' children as well. Sometimes they would go home with me. Sometimes they would go home without me. We would wash clothes. We would spend a whole day washing clothes out there just so we didn't have to wash them here. We washed them for free. Of course now that I own my own home I realize it's not free [laughter]. It's just that we didn't pay for it—mom and dad did. But, yes we went I would say I was home at least once a week, sometimes twice a week. So no, I didn't get homesick.

00:07:47 **MM: Back to your rooms—did you have room inspections?**

00:07:51 SS: We did not have room inspections.

00:07:56 **MM: How about fire drills?**

00:07:59 SS: We did not have...yes we did have fire drills. We did. I think it might of only been twice a year; one a semester. We almost always knew when it would be.

00:08:13 **MM: In the night?**

00:08:13 SS: Yes, and if it was raining, we still went out. If it was cold, we still went out. I think they did that just twice, but I forgot about that. I think they did it twice, or once a semester, so twice a year.

00:08:26 **MM: Did you have to have lights out at a certain time?**

00:08:29 SS: No ma'am.

¹ See OH-272-Blair Ligon.

- 00:08:31 **MM: You could study all night?**
- 00:08:33 SS: You could study all night. Talk on the phone all night. Play games all night.
- 00:08:38 **MM: But you didn't?**
- 00:08:38 SS: No, I didn't, because I'm early to bed, early to rise right on through college, right on to until now [laughter].
- 00:08:44 **MM: While you were here did you ever look at the annuals from the first students?**
- 00:08:51 SS: Not much. Not my first couple years. I did not. Honestly I did not. It wasn't until I started working in human resources as a student. I started getting involved in Winthrop and cared and really knew I loved Winthrop's history; that's when I started going to the alumni office and looking at uniforms in their curio cabinets and all their displays, and that's when I started being interested in that.
- 00:09:18 **MM: Do you think you would have liked to have been of that group.**
- 00:09:21 SS: Absolutely.
- 00:09:22 **MM: It would have been fun?**
- 00:09:23 SS: I think so. It would have been hard. I know it would have been hard. It would have been a different kind of hard. You know, we wouldn't know what we know now, so it wouldn't be that difficult from that aspect, but it would just be difficult because all times are hard. You make of it what it is at that time and to think that you know you could sneak out at night, you have to worry about crossing Oakland with the toss nets. You know all this stuff we don't think anything about. We just get in our car and drive away. It's exciting.
- 00:09:53 **MM: Did you have to sign in and out?**
- 00:09:55 SS: I did not, but I know there were those—in fact I recently heard—now this is Winthrop history—I recently heard that D.B. Johnson² didn't let them go, or didn't prefer his students to go home over Thanksgiving break and sometimes over Christmas break. They just spent their Christmas here and had Christmas celebrations here on campus, and see I don't know anything about that.

² David Bancroft Johnson was Winthrop's first president, serving from 1886-1928.

- 00:10:19 **MM: I haven't heard anything about that either.**
- 00:10:20 SS: Yes, I read that. I think in a Winthrop history book maybe. I had it. It's on my desk. I just don't remember who wrote it, but it's Winthrop—one of them at least is a Winthrop professor; one of the retired professors. So you'll have to look into that, but I never heard of that before—that he preferred them to stay here for Christmas because it was too much trouble on the parents during that hectic time to come get their daughters [laughter].
- 00:10:50 **MM: Well you can think back and some of those parents probably didn't have cars.**
- 00:10:55 SS: Yes, that's right.
- 00:10:56 **MM: So they prepared for them.**
- 00:10:58 SS: They did.
- 00:10:59 **MM: That was wonderful.**
- 00:11:00 SS: They had the big meals in McBride—Christmas meal in McBride and Thanksgiving and yes, absolutely.
- 00:11:08 **MM: Were you required to go to church or anything like that on the weekends?**
- 00:11:13 SS: I was not required. I did go. I went with my family. You know, just because I grew up in church and we continued to go to church. I joined them while I was in Rock Hill.
- 00:11:23 **MM: Were there any rules or regulations that you remember happening on campus that you might have to know?**
- 00:11:32 SS: Well, different residence halls had different noise policies, so I know there was a time—some started at 9 p.m., some started at 11. Some residence halls closed for holidays. Some you could stay here through the holidays in your residence hall.
- 00:11:56 **MM: That would be good for foreign students.**
- 00:11:57 SS: Absolutely. Yes, and I believe they generally still stay in Roddey, and Roddey is one that stays open all the time. I still stayed in Lee Wicker and because I worked on campus I was able to just keep my same room. Then, alcohol of course

and drugs—you know those policies—but those were more than just Winthrop. That's the law [laughter]. So we didn't want to break the law, the criminal law.

00:12:22 **MM: How about smoking?**

00:12:23 SS: Yes, smoking is fine. I'm not sure—I think there are designated smoking areas now. Before you just smoked anywhere I guess, and you'd just have people standing in the doorway smoking, but I think now there are certain restricted areas.

00:12:37 **MM: When you were a student here did they have a dress code?**

00:12:40 SS: No ma'am.

00:12:41 **MM: You could wear whatever you wanted?**

00:12:42 SS: Yes ma'am.

00:12:47 **MM: Would you rather of had a dress code?**

00:12:51 SS: If I could put myself right back in the dress code days, yes, but if I'm forced now to wear certain attire I probably wouldn't like it. I do actually feel pretty firmly about that in primary school for structure and that, but to me once you're in college it's more of your here because you want to be. It changes the realm of that structure for me personally. I would rather not in this day and age.

00:13:24 **MM: Do you remember any interesting speakers that came to the campus?**

00:13:29 SS: Well, I didn't know he was going to be interesting at the time, but when Phil Lader came to speak here. I actually was an exchange student in '98, and I went over to England, and I met with him there. At the time I didn't know he was going to be relative to me later in life.

00:13:48 **MM: Isn't that wonderful?**

00:13:48 SS: Yes, so Marty Curran [spelling?] in alumni knew him.

00:13:53 **MM: So you were an exchange student in England for how long?**

00:13:56 SS: For just under three months for the program, for the educational part of it and then I travelled for another month to see—because once you're there the countries are so close and they're so—

00:14:06 **MM: Were you there with other people?**

00:14:08 SS: I was there with other students. There were 11 or so Winthrop students, one or two from Lander, maybe 10 from Coastal Carolina and maybe 10 from College of Charleston, and we all met in Charlotte and went together. I didn't know anyone when I left, even though there were Winthrop students. Now, I'm still in touch with several of them, but I didn't know them at the time.

00:14:31 **MM: That sounds exciting**

[crosstalk]

00:14:33 SS: It was. So I remember Phil Lader. Again, I didn't know he was going to be important at that point, but on the entertainment side of things—Hootie and the Blowfish, Darius Rucker was here. We didn't know they were going to make it so it's like oh yea we'll pay \$2 to go see them, that's a funny name Hootie and the Blowfish, but you know then we find out later that they're going to be really important.

00:15:01 **MM: How about the music department here? Did you go to their programs?**

00:15:05 SS: I did. I actually was going to study music if I had gone to Limestone so that—because I had been a summer camp students for four or five years prior to graduation from high school at Limestone, and I was going to major in music theory there. So I love music and I was very much a part—you know they did lots of things free for music so I did.

00:15:30 **MM: So what was your degree?**

00:15:31 SS: My degree is in sociology.

00:15:33 **MM: Sociology, so you know Dr. Miller**

00:15:36 SS: Um...

00:15:37 **MM: Lee Miller**

00:15:38 SS: Oh yes, see I forget. She didn't have—Yes I know Lee from my first semester here. She was working in human resources and that's how I got my job in human resources. We had a class together. She was taking a class, and I was taking the class, and we started studying together and then she said well, we're hiring in human resources and I said okay! So that's how that all started, but I forget she's gone on to get her PhD so she Dr. Miller. No—yes Lee Miller, I've known her

since 1995.

00:16:06 **MM: She's so great.**

00:16:08 SS: She's one of my favorite people.

00:16:10 **MM: Do you think that Winthrop gave you the academic background that you needed to perform this job that you have now?**

00:16:20 SS: Absolutely. Even though looking back then to now I would have never thought I'd be doing fundraising. It definitely made me. My four and a half—I was here four and a half years—my four and a half years here prepared me for from then until now and into the future. It made me who I am. All my experiences here have made me who I am.

00:16:48 **MM: What was your favorite class?**

00:16:53 SS: Oddly enough, maybe anatomy. It was hard. I love biology. I minored in biology.

00:17:00 **MM: And you're so well-rounded.**

00:17:01 SS: And I loved—Now it was hard. It was by far one of my hardest. You know, very, very difficult, but I was very interested. It's hard when you're interested and you want to do well, yet in your own major—I took a class, a very high level class that same semester, and got a C. And that was my major. It was like uh-oh. I'm not here because I was in the lab all the time studying. We studied pets so I was studying parts of a cat so it that—

00:17:36 **MM: You think you let your other courses go by because you were so wrapped up in that one?**

00:17:37 SS: Absolutely. Yes ma'am. I do think so, and I told Dr. Solomon the same thing. I was like I can't believe I ended up doing so poorly in here when this is my major, but it—I wasn't that excited about the class. It was social theory and that was a hard class for me at that time because I wasn't interested. I had other interests, but that was probably the most interesting class outside of my major.

00:18:05 **MM: Was Solomon one of your favorite professors?**

00:18:07 SS: She was. I only had her for that one, but she's still here, and I still love her. Yes, she's awesome. Dr. Marx was probably my favorite.

- 00:18:13 **MM: Dr. Marx?**
- 00:18:14 SS: Dr. Marx. Yes.
- 00:18:15 **MM: M-A-R-K-S?**
- 00:18:17 SS: It's X. M-A-R-X. John Marx. He's the chair of the department now.
- 00:18:24 **MM: And what did he teach?**
- 00:18:26 SS: He taught social research, the second part. The first part, was 316, was taught by Dr. Tucker who has since passed away, and I had Dr. Marx for the second half of that which was 516, which was the second part of the social research. It was a requirement for that degree. I think I may of have him for another sociology class—Dr. Marx. I may have had him for another class.
- 00:18:56 **MM: How was your math here?**
- 00:18:58 SS: Hm...I don't really like math. I had math my very first semester—Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8:00 a.m.
- 00:19:16 **MM: And you still got up and got breakfast?**
- 00:19:18 SS: Oh, yes ma'am. That was more important than math [both laugh]. Yes, absolutely. 8:00 a.m. Now, I may have gone after that 8:00-8:50 my very first semester. I learned very quickly don't do that. Don't take an 8:00 a.m. class Monday, Wednesday and Friday because we hung out and had meetings and parties and gatherings on Thursday night in college. I didn't know Thursday night was the cool night for college, so I had class Friday morning. So, sorry I've got to go home. It's 10 o'clock. I have class in the morning, you know, so I learned that the hard way [laughter].
- 00:19:54 **MM: Did you join any kind of clubs?**
- 00:19:58 SS: I did not. I participated a little bit in the Baptist Student Union when I first started. My family and I are really good friends with, at the time, with Mr. Porterfield, Mr. Bob Porterfield, who was here and really active with that; him and Ms. Betty. So they got me into the Baptist Student Union, but I honestly didn't do much. You know, it's unfortunate now, but that might have been something that was bad for me living close by because I left. I went home. I saw friends that I went to school with. You know, they moved onto different universities so on the weekend I'd go to Clemson [University], or I'd go to USC [University of South Carolina] in Columbia, you know, so that might have been a

negative thing from going to an university in the same area as where you're from, but I didn't do that much on campus other than events. I didn't do clubs or organizations as much as now I would like to. I would have liked to have been involved with residence life at the point and maybe even alumni because even though I hadn't graduated they had student workers. I think I would have enjoyed that then.

00:21:09 **MM: Did you take physical ed. [education]?**

00:21:12 SS: I took a martial arts class for one semester, a one hour class. Enjoyed it. I took aerobic walking, a one hour class. Enjoyed it, but I'm really hot natured and it got hot. I took it in the spring. Come April, by then we were training to go all the way out to the coliseum. That's not far at all, but *then* it was, but it's starting to get 80 degrees and 100% humidity. I wouldn't want to do that now either. I believe I took CPR which was a health and P.E. major, you know, course for that program. I think that might be it; just martial arts, aerobic walking, health and P.E. I think that's it.

00:22:00 **MM: Did you go to any of the athletic ball games, things like that on campus?**

00:22:04 SS: I did. My roommate was a student trainer for the basketball team, so I was really involved with basketball. I did not go to um...I don't think we had baseball at that point. If we did, we definitely didn't have that beautiful stadium. I wasn't involved with baseball, but I did go to boys' basketball all the time because we wanted to see her. She gets to wrap up their ankles and their knees and the wrists. You know, she was behind the scenes doing all that, so it was cool to go see her, but I enjoy basketball. I like that sport. We went to see the women's basketball play a lot—the women's basketball players. But that's it. I didn't do—we didn't have lacrosse then. I didn't do golf. I didn't—no, just basketball. But I did. I was very—I really loved the basketball games.

00:22:56 **MM: How do you feel about the boys coming as students?**

00:23:01 SS: I would have like to like seen what it was like before. I don't know any different. You know, this is—I grew up having boys in my class.

00:23:10 **MM: That's not that different.**

00:23:11 SS: Yes, all the way to kindergarten. It's funny to hear my parents talk about it because I love to hear them say, you know, even trying to separate gender, but at the same time bringing together races. So for them, listening to their stories are pretty cool. I don't mind having guys here, but I don't know any different. I grew

up that way.

00:23:33 **MM: You grew up that way and just walked back into it?**

00:23:35 SS: I did. I would like to see how it would be without guys.

00:23:43 **MM: Were there programs planned here on the weekends to keep students entertained?**

00:23:52 SS: There were programs here. I liked—

00:23:55 **MM: Like movies on the weekends or stuff like that?**

00:23:58 SS: Well, not really. We didn't have that many things going on during the weekend. I'm also comparing it to now which I shouldn't. When I think about what all these students can do now, they don't have to leave campus for *anything*. We did. See we have cars. So if there was a movie showing at the basement in Dinkins, we would rather go down the street and pay \$2 to see it at the *movies*, you know, at the cinema. So, I think that's different. We were able to just drive wherever we wanted. We could go wherever we wanted. If there were events that we weren't interested in, you know, Johnson. Johnson the theater. They have *tons* of events. And we had events then, but you know, we just did what we were—we were more picky then because we had so much to choose from off campus. Now there's so much to choose from on campus you don't even have to leave.

00:24:49 **MM: So that's a great asset?**

00:24:49 SS: It is.

00:24:50 **MM: The college has planned.**

00:24:52 SS: Absolutely. They're doing a really good job of that. I don't know what the percentages are for students going home on the weekends as it was when I was here, but I know it surely should be a lot less. They should be here more because—

00:25:08 **MM: Do you think more students today have cars?**

00:25:09 SS: Well, I think you can't have cars as a freshman.

00:25:12 **MM: Oh, you can't?**

00:25:13 SS: I believe currently you cannot have a car as a freshman so that changes that

tremendously because you are basically here. You can't just leave. I think it would benefit the university and the student and the economy right *around* the university by not have a car because you have what you need within walking distance. But we're also getting worse at walking so we're more likely to just jump in the car with somebody who is going to drive because they have a car. I don't know. You know it didn't—it was different for me because I already had a car. I was from here. I knew where everything was. We would just drive to Charlotte [North Carolina]. I knew Charlotte because I was from this area. It might would have been different if I wasn't from here, but they do have a lot more.

00:25:59 **MM: Did you ever go to any of the programs at the colleges in Charlotte?**

00:26:04 SS: Um...

00:26:06 **MM: Queens?**

00:26:12 SS: I didn't. UNC [University of North Carolina], um...I didn't. I'm thinking about the Charlotte Hornets. I went to see the Charlotte Hornets but of course that's not academic. I didn't do anything with other universities—Clemson and USC because that's where my two— my closest friends were there. Winthrop, Lander, USC and Clemson. So that's the only ones I visited.

00:26:33 **MM: How many were in you class in high school?**

00:26:35 SS: 83 in my class.

00:26:40 **MM: Your class was a little bigger than Blair's.**

00:26:43 SS: Yes, we had 83. We had 200, almost 290 in my whole school and it's funny that some people have 5,000 in their school.

00:26:57 **MM: 18 in mine.**

00:26:58 SS: Really? That's awesome. You really—and that's the difference in now and way back long time ago you knew the people that you—because you lived with those same few people and that's the good thing about working in the office that I'm in. You get to see these reunions and some of these women haven't seen each other in decades, and they're coming back together. That bond is so different. We don't have that bond. I graduated in '99. We don't have that same bond.

00:27:24 **MM: But this is from previous [unclear] that you're referring to now?**

00:27:28 SS: Yes ma'am. Yes, I love to sit here when they're here for their thirtieth reunion and they haven't seen each other since whenever. I love it. I love to see them together and "oh I can see how you look the same." It just makes me smile because I'm hoping I'm like that one day, but that's one of the differences and not necessarily disadvantage of being of you know, in my age, my generation. But it is different.

00:27:52 **MM: But you see that.**

00:27:53 SS: I do. I see it because of my job too. You know when I tell my friends that went here they're like oh, ok. They don't see that connection that students used to bond. That's all they had is each other. They didn't have anybody else. They had each other and that was how it was going to be. We didn't. We had each other. We had our friends that lived somewhere else.

00:28:14 **MM: You knew you could see them whenever.**

00:28:15 SS: We have e-mails. We have phones. We have whatever. It's nothing like that then.

00:28:21 **MM: Did you have a T.V. in your room?**

00:28:23 SS: We did; only because of my roommate. I'm not a T.V. person. You know, I don't have cable. I don't have any of that, and I may not have had it if not been for my roommate. She was a T.V. junkie so she watched T.V. She knew all the cool stuff to watch.

00:28:42 **MM: Tell me about the president that was here when you were here.**

00:28:46 SS: Well, it was Dr. DiGiorgio.³

00:28:48 **MM: The same one that just retired.**

00:28:49 SS: Absolutely.

00:28:50 **MM: Did you ever meet him?**

00:28:52 SS: I did meet him. I worked with him because of where I was working on campus. I don't know if traditionally students get a chance to work with him like I did as a student, but I worked in human resources and I worked at campus police so I met him from those aspects. If he was getting transported somewhere, you

³ Anthony Joseph DiGiorgio was president of Winthrop from 1989-2013.

know, he may come in to where I was working and you know, “hi Dr. DiGorgio” and that would be it, and in human resources if he had stuff to do there in human resources, you know we may—

00:29:35 **MM: He was here a long time.**

00:29:25 SS: Absolutely.

00:29:26 **MM: Twenty...**

00:29:27 SS: Four, twenty-four years. Yes. This next year would be 25, but 24 years. That’s a long time.

00:29:34 **MM: You see a lot that was accomplished while he was here?**

00:29:37 SS: *Absolutely*, and I can see a lot from now, you know, to now from when I was here. Just in the past 10 years even. It is amazing. I mean we are bigger. We’re more modern. Our classrooms, um...

00:29:55 **MM: Did he ever visit your classrooms?**

00:29:55 SS: No ma’am. I never had him in my classes. I’ve never even heard that he did at that time. Do you know if he did previously?

00:30:04 **MM: I don’t know. I haven’t heard, but when I was here, Dr. Vail⁴—he came to classes.**

00:30:11 SS: Yes. I think that would be—that would really be impressionable. But I know there are other ways he could be impressive. He’s done a really good job in 24 years [laughter].

00:30:22 **MM: You can really see it can’t you.**

00:30:24 SS: Not to imply that he hasn’t been impressive, but you know it’s just—that would be shocking. I think I would be like “oh wow” and I wouldn’t hear anything else that the professor said if Dr. DiGorgio walked into the class [laughter].

00:30:48 **MM: Do you think that your academic degree you earned set you up with the skills you need in your job?**

⁴ Charles Brooks Vail was president of Winthrop from 1973-1982

- 00:30:57 SS: Yes. I do, especially more so than now as far as specifics go. I was a sociology major and I minored in biology and criminal justice and I ended up becoming a police officer first [laughter], and then I came back to HR [human resources], so...
- 00:31:13 **MM: So when you were in Charleston [South Carolina] you were a police officer?**
- 00:31:16 SS: No, when I was here. I was still here. Yes, I graduated in '99, went to December of '99 and went to the police academy in January of 2000 and did that for about four and a half years here. So, I just recently got back from Charleston.
- 00:31:32 **MM: Did you like that?**
- 00:31:34 SS: I liked it while I was doing it for a short time. I worked with victims as well and it was just a conflict of interest to do victim services and the bad guys, because it's hard to go to court and face the bad guy...and the victims are there and...
- 00:31:57 **MM: And contradict the story.**
- 00:31:58 SS: Yes and it's just—it was very difficult.
- 00:31:59 **MM: And you saw innocent children?**
- 00:32:01 SS: All the time, yes. Which not so many, you know, not so many but we only have Roddey on our campus—Roddey Hall—that would have kids but it was just—since I did do victims' services I had got a lot of training so I'd be prepared when I did see the bad stuff. I enjoyed that part of it but it just—you know I—it just wasn't for me after a while. I thought this isn't what I want to do and a job came open in HR so when the lady retired I thought oh—
- 00:32:38 **MM: And what does HR stand for?**
- 00:32:39 SS: Human resources. It's the personnel department here at Winthrop. Yes ma'am.
- 00:32:47 **MM: Do you see Winthrop changing any since you were a student here in the '90s?**
- 00:32:53 SS: Absolutely. There are tons of changes. Buildings—not only have we erected new buildings but we've renovated buildings. You know we're sitting in one now; just lots of changes, good changes. I don't, other than funding which is not

necessarily a Winthrop issue; I don't have anything negative to say about the changes that have occurred over the past 15 or 20 years. Everything is good. It's hard to explain to those from the outside, you know, we don't have money. We're raising tuition, but yet we're getting a new fence around campus. Well obviously it's different funds of allocations. I understand that. I didn't then. As a student—why are you charging me \$25 to park and yet we get a new baseball stadium or whatever. Whatever the case is, so it's you know, as an adult and understanding how that understand how it works.

00:33:53 **MM: Living in it now.**

00:33:54 SS: Living in it now. Absolutely, but at the time you know, and why it costs so much to go here, and why you need a meal plan and those things were—are still here and—

00:34:07 **MM: And you stated the history of the beginning students. You were talking about money paying to come be a student.**

00:34:13 SS: I don't know as much as I'd like to. I need to come visit over here.

00:34:17 **MM: There's a book here that I took home and read. The first students here paid \$139 a semester.**

00:34:25 SS: Nice, but that was a lot.

00:34:27 **MM: It was in their time.**

00:34:29 SS: But still a lot, yes. It's so rewarding, you know student loans seem not rewarding [laughter], you know when you—well because I had student loans. I didn't have scholarships and I didn't have people—parents to help me, so I financed my whole degree and it's one of those things you just do and it was well worth it. I would do it all over again. It was well worth it, and I wouldn't change it.

00:35:02 **MM: I was just reading a story in this month in *Reader's Digest* about a student who was determined and went and did it.**

00:35:10 SS: Well, I was the only one of us kids that went to college, and again they stayed at home—my brother and sister stayed at home. My sister was 27 or 28 when she moved out. My brother was 24. Both of when they got married. I moved out at 18 chomping at the bits trying to get out before then [laughter]. So you know I came to college, graduated from college with all this debt and bought a house at 20 years old. You know you think it's the right thing. I should have not. I should

have gotten an apartment. At the time I didn't know. I should have gotten an apartment and got a roommate, and then I could pay my student loans off faster, but I don't regret it. I would do it all the same. I would do it all over again. It was well worth it.

00:35:54 **MM: Don't backtrack.**

00:35:55 SS: No ma'am. I can't. I could dwell on it but won't do a bit of good, so I'm back at Winthrop and I'm going to start taking classes for my master's this fall. Well, one class, I shouldn't say classes.

00:36:08 **MM: What are you going to take?**

00:36:10 SS: Master's in liberal arts. So it will be up there first one that's offered this semester, um...I'm not even really sure what it is but it's a liberal arts specific class and then maybe sociology in the spring. I'm excited, a little bit nervous. It's going to take a lot of discipline—

00:36:30 **MM: To study at night.**

00:36:31 SS: Study and help my parents, but I can do it. If not, then I just won't do it anymore [laughter]. So, see I'm still at Winthrop.

00:36:41 **MM: You seem so excited.**

00:36:43 SS: I am. Well, I'm glad to be here.

00:36:45 **MM: Would you recommend this school to any other person?**

00:36:48 SS: Absolutely. We can prepare you for—

[crosstalk]

00:36:54 **MM: Anything.**

00:36:55 SS: Yes, we can prepare you for almost anything. We've got pre-med for any type of medicine you would like to do. We have history and obviously we have an awesome education college—you know college of education. It's often nationally recognized. That's pretty valuable. You know, liberal arts college—they're doing great. Yes, I would recommend it. I do all the time. I have a nephew who worships the ground I walk so I keep Winthrop in his mind at all times.

00:37:28 **MM: How old is he?**

00:37:29 SS: He's eight [laughter].

00:37:30 **MM: He'll be here one day.**

00:37:32 SS: But I do. I talk about I'm going to work where I'm going to see you one day. You know he doesn't have a choice. I make it like I'm his parent. You don't have a choice. You're going there, or somewhere, but I always say he's going here. That's the mindset. It works so far.

00:37:46 **MM: It worked for you.**

00:37:47 SS: It worked for me. Mom tried a thing or two but it was one of those things. I think she realize I was the first to—uh oh I've got to do this one differently. So I was raised knowing I was going to go to college. I didn't have a choice, you know. Here I am still here.

00:38:05 **MM: And it's a delight.**

00:38:06 SS: It is. Yes, I actually regret leaving for a couple of years. Because it was you know—

00:38:14 **MM: I think it was good. You came to appreciate it.**

00:38:15 SS: Absolutely. Yes. I mean, not that I didn't appreciate my four years in Charleston. I worked for the medical university, and that was a great job. I loved the bridges and the water and the seagulls and all these beautiful cranes that we don't have here, and I loved all that. I appreciated it all the time, but when I got back here I, you know, really, really appreciated being here.

00:38:39 **MM: Do you have anything else that you'd like to offer concerning your time here at Winthrop?**

00:38:47 SS: I would say my study abroad program. I know it's not for everybody. I didn't know it was for me.

00:38:56 **MM: And it was sponsored through Winthrop?**

00:38:58 SS: It was. I paid Winthrop's room and board and tuition to literally exchange with a university in England, and they sent around the equal number. I know that's hard, but they send students here during that same time.

00:39:15 **MM: What classes did you take in England?**

00:39:16 SS: I took two very, very easy classes. I took basic sociology; I was a sociology major. That was easy. I took basic psychology. I was a psychology—I started out as a psychology minor so at the time I had already had a couple of psychology classes. So that was easy. Then I took a British studies class which was mandatory. The students that come here from there took American Studies. So we had to take the British Studies and that was difficult. I mean, the other classes I showed up and I was listening and I took my tests and I was fine. But the British Studies, every Wednesday we went somewhere on a field trip. That was fun, but Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday we worked hard, because I did not know British history. I did not know, you know, on that degree—on that scale. You know, so I had to learn all that. It was awesome—a great experience. I would recommend that for students.

00:40:12 **MM: What year were you here when you went?**

00:40:14 SS: I was a junior. Junior freshman year so I was getting ready to go into my senior year.

00:40:20 **MM: That would be a good time wouldn't it?**

00:40:22 SS: Yes. It was good for me. Now, unfortunately because I did not take classes equivalent to what I needed to take it held me back a semester. I could have taken classes that would have equally transferred credit wise, but I would have had to study [laughter] and I wanted to travel.

00:40:46 **MM: You wanted to see everything?**

00:40:46 SS: Yes. So you know that was a disadvantage once I returned to find out that either you're going to take like 21 hours two semesters or you may have to graduate a year—a half, you know, a semester later and I was like well I'm here. My full time job is basically promised. I knew I was going to get that so I was like I don't care if I'm here another semester. You know I should have, but I didn't so I took—and my last semester was easy. I walked. I graduated in December at the coliseum and I only took two classes, so it wasn't that hard my last semester. We had, you know, the last graduating class of the century so that was cool. You know it had its advantages. I paid another semester of tuition which had its disadvantages, but it was good. I would recommend that. I know it's not for everybody, but if it's something you can do financially.

My parents came over to see me. Yes, absolutely. My mom had never flown. Now, my dad was in the army for 2 years and had flown. But my mom took her first and last—she says last time, but I still say one day I'm going to take her

somewhere—but she took her first and at this point last flight. It was seven hours to England and seven hours back. She got to go in the cockpit, which all that was pre-September 11 so she was nervous—she was flying—she was nervous so they let her go up there and see the pilot and all his controls. You know stuff they would *never* be allowed to now. So I'm glad and very fortunate that they were able to come visit me and glad for them that they were able to come visit me. So yes, I would recommend it.

00:42:33 **MM: That sounds great.**

00:42:35 SS: It was.

00:42:36 **MM: I appreciate everything you told me. It feels like I was there with you in England.**

00:42:45 SS: Yes. It's nice. I learned a lot.

00:42:47 **MM: And you would do the same things over again?**

00:42:50 SS: Yes ma'am, absolutely.

00:42:54 **MM: Well, it's been a real joy meeting you and talking to you.**

00:42:58 SS: Thank you, you too! Nice to meet you.

00:43:00 **MM: I appreciate you sharing this part of your life with us.**

00:43:03 SS: Thank you. Thank you for inviting me and having me.

00:46:58 *End of interview*