

Fall 2016

Oral History: Larry Hanson - SAU Teacher 1966-1999

Olivia DeWitt

Southern Adventist University

Follow this and additional works at: https://knowledge.e.southern.edu/oralhist_sau

Recommended Citation

DeWitt, Olivia, "Oral History: Larry Hanson - SAU Teacher 1966-1999" (2016). *Southern Adventist University*. 1.
https://knowledge.e.southern.edu/oralhist_sau/1

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Oral History at KnowledgeExchange@Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Southern Adventist University by an authorized administrator of KnowledgeExchange@Southern. For more information, please contact jspears@southern.edu.

Student Interviewer's Name: Olivia DeWitt

Interviewee Name: Larry Hanson

Time and Location of Interview:

The interview was conducted in one session on November 3, 2016 and lasted approximately forty-five minutes. It was conducted in the home of Larry Hanson in Chattanooga, TN. Only the interviewer and interviewee were present.

About Larry Hanson:

Larry Hanson was raised in Minnesota and attended school in California before coming to teach at Southern Adventist University from 1966-1999. He was a professor for the mathematics department as well as academic dean for four years. This interview covers topics such as segregation and civil rights, controversy concerning Desmond Ford, and how Southern Adventist University has changed over the years that he taught. This interview was done in-person and was conducted on November 3, 2016.

Interviewer: Olivia DeWitt (OD)

Interviewee: Larry Hanson (LH)

OD: I know you said that you came to Southern in 1966.

LH: That's right, yes.

OD: So why did you come to Southern in the first place? Did you come straight out of college?

LH: No, I had my master's degree in mathematics. I had taught in the California state college system in California, and I came back to Florida State University to get my Ph.D, and there was a Southern graduate in graduate school down there with me. We were Sabbath school leaders together in the Tallahassee church, and he told them that you know there was an Adventist down there, and so they called and asked if I would be interested in looking at the campus. I knew that they had a campus somewhere in the South but I didn't know anything about it, and we came up Christmas of 1965 and looked at the campus and it-we- were pleasantly surprised. Although it was very very different from what you see now. But we had wanted to go back to the west coast, and Walla Walla had offered me a job and La Sierra. And I thanked them and said we want to go back to the west coast. About a month later I got to thinking about how much, well, what a greater need Southern had than either Walla Walla or La Sierra for a math teacher at the time. So I call them and ask if they still were looking for a math teacher, and they said yes, and I said I will help out a couple of years until you can find someone and that was fifty years ago (laughter).

LH: I don't know if you've ever heard of Ronald Numbers or not...

OD: No...

LH: He's a-- he was a history graduate. History and math. Or maybe it's math and physics and history. He was quite a scholar, but anyway, he's a retired distinguished professor at the University of Wisconsin now. He sort left the church. He taught at Andrews and Loma Linda, and his grandfather was president of the General Conference--Branson. But, uh, he began to question—this is back, I don't know if you've heard about the 1980s when Desmond Ford of the Australian theologian...

OD: (shakes head)

LH: uh, okay, this was way back, but anyway, it was very controversial, and he kind of got carried away with that, but Adventists don't think much—he was really a pretty good guy. I mean he just, he just saw things differently and left the church. A lot of good people leave the church, but you know.

We've golfed together. I really liked the guy, but he's kind of a thorn-- he was a thorn in the flesh for the Adventist, uh, Administration and the General Conference. The things he was writing about Ellen White. But anyway, he was responsible for my coming to Southern. And I don't know if that was another bad thing about him, but we've been here fifty years and have enjoyed it. Wouldn't have done it any other way.

OD: Alright, well, what was Collegedale like when you first came? The campus in general?

LH: Wow, what a difference even coming into Collegedale. First of all, the road as it comes in through the pass there. That was not that road. It was one that kinda went up over the hill and wound around and came down where—do you know where old city hall is now?-- that was the entry into Collegedale. Really the only two ways you could get to Collegedale from Chattanooga was either coming in on Apison Pike that wound down through there or, uh, oh goodness, I can't think of the name of the road that—anyway, you go out University Drive. That's what happens when you get old. Words you should know don't come up...

OD: you mean Collegeview drive?

LH: No, no no, it's a road that goes on into Chattanooga. Uh, it'll come up. It'll pop into my mind pretty soon, but anyway it was all country. All farms through here. I mean just nothing like coming into Four Corners now. You know cars lined up for half a mile. It was just very very rural round here and there was, I

think there were only two restaurants or three in Chattanooga at the time. Everybody went to the same two or three restaurants. But we enjoyed it greatly. In fact, I long for those days because it wasn't nearly as crowded. You could drive around, and, uh, you never had traffic situations. The campus was almost all wooden buildings. Jones Hall was...well, let's see. They had just built what is now Talge. I don't know if they called it Talge or Thatcher. Anyway, the women were in there, and then they were finishing Thatcher Hall. And so we were here a year or two before they finished Thatcher Hall and moved all the women over there and the men into Talge Hall because men were in wooden buildings up on the hill up there. The type of building is Lynn Wood Hall right now. There were just several buildings like that. Very primitive. They weren't farming anymore. But uh anyway it was just so different so small compared to what it is now. I think when we came there were probably only about eight hundred or maybe nine hundred but anyway. We enjoyed it greatly. After two years I had a chance...well I'd always wanted to go to PUC and teach and after about two or two and a half years I was offered a job at PUC, and we had our roots down. We didn't go. We've never looked back. Never regretted--we built this house two years after we got here. We didn't have any money or imagination or anything (laughs). So this is the best we could do at the time. We've changed it a lot in the intervening years, but it took me ninety seconds to, when I retired, ninety seconds to walk through the woods down to, uh, down to Hickman Science Center. It took a lot longer before because the math department was in Daniel's Hall. It took me five minutes to walk from here to work there.

OD: yeah, a whole five minutes (laughter).

LH: Yeah.

OD: Alright, um, what were some of the challenges that Southern was dealing with when you first came?

LH: Race was a big one. I'd never been in the South before. When we moved to Tallahassee, they still had black and white drinking fountains and restrooms and, uh.... It was quite an interesting place to be. It was during the Civil Rights Era, and when we came up to Southern, the first black boy that ever enrolled in Southern--that was his first year, 1966, the year we came. A black girl had been here the year before, and, uh, the racial attitudes of the people were pretty typical of the South in general. I mean, uh, Tallahassee in the Adventist church down there, and these people were good people, but they had grown up in that culture, uh, which you know. Well just the segregation and looking down on blacks was-- I'm sure if I'd been born in that area and grown up there I'd be the same way. Good people all the way around but not very favorable to blacks. I remember --this is when churches were being integrated, you know, for the first time and lunch counters--the deacons all got together and said, "What are we going to do if a Black Adventist ever tries to come into our

church?" And they, the plan was four deacons would go up, not aggressively, but just surround the black and pick him up and carry him out to the porch of a church. And I remember another time when I was out on the front porch of the church, and there were two deacons standing up, uh, maybe they weren't deacons... anyways, two members, two guys, older men, standing out there discussing, and there's Florida A& M., a black university in Tallahassee, and Florida State University, a State University, and I don't, I never saw any black students when I was at Florida State but there may have, there probably were a few there at that time. But anyway, they were discussing Florida A&M and Florida State and one of them said "you know what I've heard?" he said, "I've heard the dumbest student at Florida State University is smarter than the smartest student at Florida A& M. University." So this is the culture. They just so looked down on black people, but if you took that away from them, they were kind. Just as nice a people as we've ever met there in the Tallahassee church, and the thing I noticed was when, uh, then we came up here and blacks started attending Southern. And the children that I know from Tallahassee came up here to college, and they'd be in the same dormitory--get to know these black kids on kind of a level playing field, and they just--it just turned them around totally They were not anything like their parents in terms of racial attitudes. So integration did work. When people began, I remember, I went to Broadview Academy near Chicago and back in, from '48 to '52, and we did have some Southerners for the fun of it from Memphis come up to Broadview, and I remember one girl, she was from Mississippi, was telling us how down there if she was walking down a sidewalk, and a black person was coming the other way, they would get off the sidewalk while she went by, and she was quite proud of that. But anyway, attitudes have just changed dramatically over the years.

OD: What about the community? I heard that there were some KKK demonstrations around that time?

LH: I'm unaware of them if there were. No, I've never heard anything like that. Uh, they played a lot of Dixie, and you know there is a lot of Southern pride. I grew up Wisconsin and both my wife and I grew up in Wisconsin and we, uh, we were Yankees. You know they didn't trust Yankees. Are you a Southerner? Were you born in the South?

OD: No, Michigan actually.

LH: Oh, you're from Michigan. Okay, that's where my wife and I went to, uh, what was EMC at the time. That's where we met, up there at Berrien. We both grew up in Wisconsin, but you can't, even though I've lived in the South here now for fifty years we have-- our girls were born in California, but they grew up here and went through the schools and Southern and uh, but we're not Southerners. You have to be born in the South to be a Southerner.

OD: True. I had just read that there were some cross burnings so I just wanted to ask about that.

LH: There might have been. Wouldn't surprised me. I don't know... probably within the first three or four years, the first black speaker came with talk at chapel. He was the president, Calvin Rock was his name, he was the president Oakwood College, and at that time we had tabernacle where Hickman Science, what they called "the tab", where Hickman Science now stands. It was a wooden building, and and it was a camp meeting thing because they would have all their camp meetings on campus here. So we're having chapel in the tab, and when the platform people walked out with a the black man coming out to speak, I don't know how many, not too many, but maybe twenty or thirty students got up and walked out. So I mean it was this sort of thing and they played Dixie a lot, and there was a lot of Southern pride, and most of these kids had grown up in segregation, and so I think they did well to change as much as they did.

OD: Okay. What about the faculty and staff? How have they changed- the leadership at Southern- has it changed over the years that you have been here?

LH: Yeah, when I first came it was a very administrative heavy charge--the people in charge -administration. The president and the chief academic financial officers sort of appointed the committee, set a president's council, so everything was sort of top down. Where I had taught in California, they had faculty senate and some other people came in and so... and then we got a new president, Frank Knittel, you've probably heard of him. I don't know if you have or not, but he was a very very charming guy and progressive. He had come down from Andrews. He was, I think he was what they call "dean of students" then or "vice president for student activities" now. And then he became academic dean down here for about three years, and then the president left and moved out to California. Frank became president, and we all liked him. I mean, you know, and he worked with us. In fact, I was chair of the overall committee to restructure faculty governance, and it took us two or three years, but we established a faculty senate. And the thing, the thing I did, the changes I wanted to see were-- we had a lot of departments. Even mathematics had two people in it. Because of that, I was chair of that little two department, two member department, but I was on academic, on the Academic Affairs Committee so chairman, or chair people, it was all chairman at that time, were from little departments and made all the academic decisions whereas a big department, religion or business, or there were a lot of very very capable people that could make a contribution, but they weren't a chair and so they never got involved in anything... So anyway we had elections and so anybody could get on the Academic Affairs Committee, and then they would report to the Senate, and they're still doing that. I don't know. Yeah I haven't been involved. I retired 1999 so I'm really out of the loop.

OD: Okay. I was reading some old Accent newspaper to familiarize myself and you also came up with the idea of Smart Start, though they didn't call it that then. But the idea of a free fourth summer session?

LH: Yeah, at that time, let's see how did that work...our faculty members and it's hard to make assignments so that everybody's amount of work was rather equal. Some teachers had some subjects... well, in fact at that time we had a lot of teachers from the Southern Union who would go out and start teaching before they graduated and so they'd come in the summer time to take education courses and and so there was a lot of education to be taught. Probably a lot of biology but not much music. So some teachers had a summer off, and others had worked real hard in the summer so we tried to equalize that to the greatest extent. If a teacher didn't have to teach, then we had have recruiting assignments where they go around and visit families in the summer to try to encourage young Adventist students to come on up here to college, and so, uh, so we looked at it, and we saw that we could get four four-week summer sessions in. And we wanted each teacher to be assigned, to have two assignments, so you either taught for eight weeks and had eight weeks off to get ready for the next fall semester or you could, instead of teaching for four weeks, you could recruit for two weeks because usually you had to be away from home with you were recruiting. And then we got to thinking that fourth summer session...First of all we could, a lot of teachers didn't have anything to teach, but if we started offering a lot of classes and letting students come free... We started off by letting them come, uh, we charge them board is all. We didn't charge them any room or tuition. The fun at that time was a lot of kids would come and at least four weeks here. Maybe meet some friends. And it did help. I mean, they have kept it going. That's the purpose of it all now to acquaint some students. There are a few that come in and take advantage of it and go, but in general it worked out, it worked out well enough anyway that we're doing it thirty years later or something like

OD: Yeah, I went to it.

LH: Oh did ya?

OD: I did. First class I took.

LH: Did it have anything to do with you ending up here or had you already decided to come?

OD: I had already decided pretty much, but it was definitely a benefit. Alright so, how has Southern's culture changed over the years? I was reading some of the old rules about dress code and rules about driving...how has things changed in your perspective?

LH: Okay, one is that only freshman could not have cars and parking. You

know, it was a problem. It's a problem now. And so much of space is taken up... you know, I guess what people would like is one car per person ever. I can't imagine anybody in the world that wouldn't like to have a car to get around like we do, but you can imagine what it would do to the resources if everybody had a car, but anyway, we didn't allow freshman... oh, we spent so many faculty meetings talking about dress length and hair length and beards, and things like that. It really, we had some cultural Adventists that that was really important to, and I can understand. You know that's what, I don't think anybody thought that it was, you know, that it was a sin to wear long hair or anything like that. They just...there was a college downtown, Lee College. It folded. But at that time it was a very conservative Christian college, probably Baptist, and especially, well, some people would go down there and just see how plain and simple and modest everybody was dressed because they had hard rules. You wouldn't get in of there unless you...uh, Southern always have a struggle between wanting students but also wanting students to obey the rules, and the rules were set. You know, you set them as democratically as you can. I remember our girls were just in grade school, but I thought, you know, I was a teacher in an Adventist college. Our girls really should obey all of the rules, and they had rules down here at Spaulding School about how the dress had to come down to the knee, and my wife made a lot of the kids' clothes, and So I remember having them stand on a chair, and I'd make sure that the dress came down to the knee. So not only was that the college here but... I'll tell you the problem was nobody wanted to enforce those rules. I didn't want to send girls out of class. You know, some girls that come in with earrings but their hair was over their ears. I never thought or had a problem with earrings, but I was teaching at a school that had a policy against earrings, and I'd tell students... I would never call them out in class but that if I saw somebody was wearing earrings in class, I'd have them stop after class and just say I don't care about the earrings, but you signed an agreement that you're going to abide by the school's rules and that's what they are right now. And so, you know, I don't want to see them in my class anymore. But these are the kinds of issues-- the deans were the ones...teachers would see kids in class and say, "Hey dean, you know, you got to talk to these kids. They're coming to my class with earrings," and the deans would say, "Well, why don't you say something if its so important to you." But these are the kinds of struggles we were going through over over such insignificant issues, now as we look back, but I don't know. It was important to some people, and if you're going to have-whether it's a school or a church--you've got to have some kind of boundaries and I remember somebody once commented that if you broke the, the boundaries at Harvard was such that you go to prison if you broke them. They were so loose; they were looser than society would accept, and so I...it didn't bother me that they had rules that were a little more strict or a little more conservative than I was comfortable with because I could have left anytime I wanted if I didn't want to cooperate and live under those... and some teachers did.

OD: What about the change from being a dorm-only school to having community

students come in?

LH: Well that was, I mean, just so many people that lived in small areas where there were not many church schools or not many Adventists around that wanted their kids in school. I mean this is a magnet. Of course, Andrews is the same thing and La Sierra when we were out there. And I don't blame them. I mean parents move in here, and it's—I grew up in a little church in Wisconsin. And I mean there are hardly any Adventists around and to get into a mecca like this where there are so many Adventists, and it just attracts people and so gradually more and more Collegedale became bigger and bigger. When I first came it was mainly dormitory students. Not many community students, but goodness, I don't know what the situation is now. There are probably about as many community as dormitory students, but that's just a natural phenomena that we have no control over. So, uh, that was a big difference.

OD: Did you feel like it had a detrimental effect?

LH: Well in the following sense that when we first came, we were a big family. We had programs on Saturday night down in the gym. And they'd have travel logs that they'd bring in. I remember this Purdue University, or Indiana University I guess it was, had a wonderful male chorus. I mean, first class. They came down here a couple times and just were really good. They had some good Saturday night programs but gradually as more and more cars came on the scene and more and more of the students were village students, attendance just kept dropping off and dropping off until they just quit those. I mean, I don't know what they do on Saturday night now, but it used to be fun. Saturday nights used to be fun. We had a school picnic; there was a park on the Tennessee River that the whole school would go out there for a picnic and that went on for several years. But then gradually fewer and fewer students came, and so it's not nearly as cohesive as a large school as it was when it was smaller. And all of the faculty knew each other, and it was easier to know the students. We wouldn't have, you know, I went from about thirty students in the class, and later on my career I'd get up to about ninety students in a class. It's hard to get to know ninety students. Plus it's a lot of work grading tests (laughs).

OD: True! How was the transition from being a teacher to being academic dean?

LH: You know, I observed administrators, and I'm kind of a take-charge person, or I was always involved in things, and you know coming up with ideas. "Let's try this or let's try that out." And so I thought that I was chair of a two-person department and when Dr. Knittel came, he liked me. I mean this was not-- I was not voted in by faculty or anything. That's how they operated in those days. He just appointed me as an Academic Dean. The faculty were not unhappy. They liked me well enough, but you know I wasn't in...it was a big jump to go from chairing a two person department to being chief academic

officer for the whole college, and I wasn't, uh, as I look back, I pushed things a little too fast. I mean, I got along fine. I stayed four years. Within a month or two, I thought, you know this is not what I want to do the rest of my career. I was, let's see, it was 1978. So I was forty-four years old when I became dean. So I had a lot of my career ahead of me, and you know, I just wanted to serve a respectable period of time and then go back into teaching math. At the end of those four years, we got into this very controversial time. This was the time-- several things happened. The Republicans-- Reagan became president in 1980, and Republicans cut back on scholarships and loans and things like that. We had the Ford controversy, which was a big thing in the church. A lot of ministers left the church over this. Desmond Ford-- ever heard of him?—he was a Adventist Australian Theologian. He talked at PUC, Pacific Union College. And he raised questions about the sanctuary position of the church. You know: the heavenly sanctuary, the 1844 disappointment... and everybody else just decided, you know, we just can't figure this out in the Bible. But Adventists, Hiram Edson was going across a field, and he got up some kind of an inspiration that something did happen in 1844. Christ went to the heavenly sanctuary, and Ford questioned this. And a lot of theologians and Adventists have questions about that. It's a tough situation, that sanctuary question, but so anyway they had big meetings out in Colorado and so some of our theology students were very sympathetic and—not students, some of our faculty were very sympathetic to Ford, and some of them didn't have real good judgment. They were good teachers, they were good people, but they were kind of critical of the church. They didn't like the way Ford was handled, and one of them was putting bulletin board notices on the outside of his office-- everything critical of the church. When articles were written that were critical of the church or challenging Ellen White and people sacrificed to send their kids here to be...to have their religious views supported, not challenged, and some of these people in the theology department, the religion department, didn't use good judgment. I even agreed with some of their positions, but it's was not what was being taught in all small local churches, and so the kids would go back and start challenging their parents, and then the parents think “well why am I spending that money to send them up there to have them come back and challenge my theology?” and it was this sort of thing. And so our enrollment was going down. We had these theological issues and anyway. All of this stuff... some of the teachers-- we had a couple outstanding teachers but they just didn't use good judgment. They're were outspoken, and they brought all of the most conservative Adventists out of the woodwork. We had people going to religion classes with recorders (laughs). I mean, there was a lady around here; I think she is still around her name. Her name was Mrs Wilcock, and I had had her, both of her children, in my class. Nice kids in class, but she just was, uh, so concerned about this, and I remember during registration--We used to register in the fall in the gym. I mean, everybody came and went to the gym, and we all sat around the tables and registered students in our classes and went up went to other departments and said, “Can you work this kid in? They need to graduate in the spring and your class is closed.” That sort of

thing. Those are kind of fun days; I liked those. But, um, as the kids were going to register, she would stand outside with some papers, handing each one a paper, saying, "You would be better off going to UTC than the Southern here. It's not safe. The theology here is not correct." She had it all written up. Those were, those were very interesting days. But anyway. You know, things did come to a head, and uh, the school went through a very trying period. That was that was just after I resigned and went back into teaching. I mean it was happening during, while I was Academic Dean but... so 1982, 1983. Those were very trying years here at Southern. But I was so glad to get back into teaching. I am glad I was academic dean. I was the city commissioner for eight years after I retired, and I'm glad I was a city commissioner. It was a good experience. Being dean for four years was a good experience, but it was... neither one...I'm not a good politician. I'm not a glad hander, and, uh, you know, I enjoyed my four years, eight years, on on the commission, but I'm glad it's over with. I enjoyed being dean. I'm glad I was dean for four years; it was a good experience. I was so glad to get back into math class, back teaching mathematics.

OD: And then for how much longer did you teach?

LH: Well that was in 19....I was dean from '78 to '82, and I didn't retired until '99 so I didn't retire for a long time after that. Yeah.

OD: So since you retired in '99, were you involved at Southern at all after that or having you just been enjoying your retirement?

LH: Well I taught--when they needed an extra teacher down there--I taught a few classes for two or three years, but I started teaching when I graduated from college. La Sierra, well, I met my wife-- it was AMC then-- she was a nursing student, and most nursing students that Andrews went to Hinsdale for nursing, but I lived in California. I had gone back there to school because they had a math major; La Sierra didn't have a math major. And she liked the idea of going California since she hadn't been. She grew up on a farm in Wisconsin and that was...so she went out to Glendale hospital for her nurses' training and so I went back to California. I graduated from a state college, California State College, which is now Cal State at Los Angeles. Anyway, and I wanted to be an academy teacher; I wrote to about twenty different schools and conferences and only one ever responded, and they saw they didn't have a job so I went to the University of California at Davis, and I was getting a master's degree in math, and it was a agricultural campus, and it was relatively small, and we decided to be a nice place in California to get my master's degree, and they wrote back and said, "yes we do have a masters degree. Would you like a teaching assistantship?" And I didn't even know what a teaching assistantship was, and I checked into it and applied and qualified so what they sent me two books- a trigonometry book and a college algebra book- and said, "you're going to be teaching two classes of about thirty students"--not assisting any

other teacher—just... so I got out of college and that fall I had two classes of thirty students each, and I loved it. I loved it. I mean I could tell right off the bat I was so glad that I didn't get an academy teaching job because I just loved it, and when I finished--it took me two years because I was teaching half time--and when I finish, I wasn't certified to teach high school. I wasn't a certified to teach community college, but Sputnik had gone up and United States discovered we were way behind in math and science. So there were lots of four-year jobs, and I started teaching four-year college and that's all I've done ever since, but then I didn't have a Ph D. at the time so I have to take time out to finished my Ph D. and that's how I ended up here at Southern, but I've forgotten the question you asked. I think I got off topic.

OD: Oh I just asked if you have been involved with Southern since your retirement?

LH: Oh well, what I was going to say then was that when I started teaching, I was only two or three years older than seniors anyway, and uh, but every year the distance between the students and the teacher--not the students change. They're always 18 to 22 years olds--but every year I got older, and by the time I retired, I was far enough away, and when I was sixty five and students 18 or 19 were in my classes... I just felt it was time for younger people to come in, but when they needed a teacher, I taught. But actually living as close to the campus, I've kind of stayed away from... I didn't have gotten involved... and students I had is teaching down there, a couple of them, and it was very rewarding. I mean, I would do it all over again. I had a good life and, uh, but it was time to move on... So I really haven't had a whole lot to do with the college...

OD: I just wondered because you live so close

LH: I know I know. We take walks through the campus of the crown but that's about all. I've gone to a couple programs, but I'm glad to live here. Close by.

OD: Well what do you consider some of your finest memories of Southern?

LH: Well, my fondest is the people I worked with in the math department. There were four of us. I mean it changed over the years, but I don't, uh, Dr James, Barbara James, is the head of the--dean of the school of nursing. She was an eighth grader or something, and her dad was a teacher here, was a math teacher. So when I first-- he was all by himself! That's why they so desperately needed a math teacher. So it was Cecil Davis and me, the two of us, and then Dr. Richard-- do you know him?--Well I think he retired two or three years ago, and he was working on a Ph D. in history at the University of Texas, and Mr. Davis said, "this is a good student, we ought to get him back." And so we got him after he finished his Ph.D. He came and started teaching, and then before I became academic dean, I had an excellent student, Dr. Moore, Bob Morris, Dr. Moore now but an eager freshman, and it was just an excellent

student, came from a medical family, his father was a physician, and two of his brothers were physicians or were heading in that direction. One was a dentist, and his sister was a nurse anesthetist. So a medical family, and he was a math major, pre-med, and straight A student—nothing but A's. An excellent student and was accepted at Loma Linda-- that's where he wanted to go to. He would have been accepted any place he wanted to go. And the fall he left, the summer he graduated, Fletcher Academy, where he had gone to school, lost their math teacher. And they said, "Bob, we need a math teacher; you are a math major. Would you postpone medicine for a year and be able to sub out?" and he said he would-- he was a nice guy-- but he liked it, and he stayed a second year, and they didn't get somebody and then a third year and then finally I could tell I was going to be academic dean, and I said, "Bob you've got to go and get your master's degree and come over and take my place when I'm going to into administration." And he did, and then when I went back into teaching. So I was teaching--Cecil Davis a retired by that time--so I had Dr. Richard, Bob Moore, and I taught together for so many years, and it was wonderful. I mean what what makes a good career is two things: One, you like what you're doing, and the second one, you like the people you're working with. If either one of those are bad, you know, it's not a good career, and I had both of them. I enjoyed teaching very much. I just loved going to my classes and getting acquainted with students. I--teaching appealed to me more than mathematics. Mathematics was just the means by which I could teach. I like teaching mathematics, but I was not a great mathematician, but I was a good math student but not-- in graduate school, I met lots of students who were much much better mathematicians than I but, uh, working with those three people and teaching mathematics--that's my finest memory, but early on I liked, I missed the family atmosphere where everybody know each other, and as it got bigger and bigger and bigger faculty, you know, you know the people in the sciences pretty well, but the humanities, religion those people down there...uh. So lets see, what else was... I mean I have so many good memories. I'm just trying to think of which ones really stand out. I guess my fellow colleagues and the math department and others. We had good friends... early on, the picnics, the comradely, that sort of thing, which changed as time went on. I don't know... Mathematics. Teaching. Is sort of like golf. The ideal is eighteen holes in eighteen strokes, isn't it? That's the ideal. If they ever hit that then, you can't do any better and never get close. Never get close, but they keep trying to improve. Teaching is kind of the same. And you golf a game and you think, "oh here's what I did wrong. I can hardly wait until next time. I'm gonna try to correct that." Teaching is this, teaching math anyways, and I think all teaching is the same way. Every year is a new year, and you have certain goals, and of course the ideal is to convey your subject fully to every student in the class so that every student understands everything you're trying to teach them. Well that's as unrealistic an ideal, I mean, it's as difficult to reach that as it is as eighteen holes in eighteen strokes, but every year is new, and every semester and every—even every semester is new, you know, "wow I've really blew it this semester. I should not approach the subject this way. Next

semester I'm gonna do better," and it's always there. So I'm going to improve like a golfer. I'm going to improve, I'm going to improve and that, that just made life interesting and you always always trying, never, you know, never really getting any closer to the perfection than eighteen holes in eighteen strokes, but so you know, I mean, my memories...I like a students here, they were good kids. Umm, I taught several years in public colleges in California, and they were good kids too. I guess I just like young people.

Bibliography

Gardner, Elva B. *Southern Missionary College: A School of His Planning*. Chattanooga, TN: Starkey Printing Company, 1962.

"History" *Southern Adventist University*. Accessed November 3, 2016. Retrieved from <http://www.southern.edu/about/history-and-mission/history.html>

"Mathematics Professor Receives Doctorate" *Southern Tidings* 61, no. 15 (1976): 21, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Periodicals/SUW/SUW19670818-V61-15.pdf>

Pettibone, Dennis. *A Century of Challenge: The Story of Southern College 1892-1992*. Collegedale, TN: College Press, 1992.

"SMC Southern Columns" Internet Archive. Spring 1978. Retrieved from https://archive.org/stream/smcsoutherncolum282coll/smcsoutherncolum282coll_djvu.txt

The Southern Accent 23, no 1. September 28, 1967. Retrieved from http://knowledge.e.southern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1044&context=southern_accent

The Southern Accent 25, no. 1. August 7, 1969. Retrieved from http://knowledge.e.southern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1046&context=southern_accent

The Southern Accent 25, no. 9. January 16, 1970. Retrieved from http://knowledge.e.southern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1046&context=southern_accent

The Southern Accent 54, no. 4. September 24, 1998. Retrieved from http://knowledge.e.southern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1074&context=southern_accent

The Southern Accent 54, no. 23. April 22, 1999. Retrieved from http://knowledge.e.southern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1074&context=southern_accent

1. I know that you said you retired in 1999. Are you still involved in any extent with Southern?
2. Do you recall what Collegedale was like when you arrived? What has changed since then?
3. What motivated you to come and serve at Southern?
4. Was it what you expected? In not, what did you expect?
5. If much, what are the major changes you've noticed with regards to the student population growth?
6. Could you describe the environment on campus when you began working there in the late 60's? Has it changed at all?
7. What are some of the challenges Southern was encountered when you first began your career in the late 60'?
8. Did Southern overcome those challenges by the end of your career? If not, why?
9. Do you recall how the students reacted in 1967 when the first black student enrolled in Southern?
10. How did the community react?
11. What drove you to start the Smart Start Program?
12. How did southern initially react to your idea of Smart Start?
13. Would you say that the Smart Start program is running the way you envisioned it?
14. Has the faculty and staff changed over the years that you worked at Southern?
15. Southern has changed a lot over the years. Are there any changes you wished had not been made?
16. What major academic differences did you notice between Southern and the Middle Eastern college that you taught in?
17. You arrived at southern during a time of great expansion. Iles, Talge, and Wright Hall were built. Since then there has been many more changes. What do you think were the most significant?
18. Did you agree with the dress code for women back in those days?
19. In those days, women weren't allowed to wear pants, students weren't allowed to drive their own car unless they were seniors, and students of the opposite sex were not allowed to sit together. Did you agree with these norms? Do you this Southern should have continued enforcing these norms?
20. What do you miss the most about teaching at Southern?
21. What are some of your fondest memories of Southern?

I plan to give a hard copy of my oral history to Larry Hanson on November 9, 2016.