

**Oral History Interview of
Elizabeth Haley**

**Interviewed by: Lynn Whitfield
February 27, 2019
Lubbock, Texas**

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Transcript Overview:

This interview features Elizabeth Haley as she discusses her education and her path to becoming a dean at Louisiana Tech.

Length of Interview: 01:08:24

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Lynn Whitfield (LW):

It is February 27, 2019. This is Lynn Whitfield, and I am interviewing Dr. Elizabeth Bess Haley. Hi, Dr. Haley. Could we get started with maybe talking about your parents and your family? Where they came from, who they were.

Elizabeth Haley (EH):

Yes. I was born in El Dorado, Arkansas, although my family lived just across into Louisiana. They were living in Summerfield, Louisiana at the time. And then when I was just maybe one year old, we moved into Homer, H-o-m-e-r, Louisiana in north Louisiana, Claiborne Parish. My father and mother were educators, and they were teachers, initially. And I had two older brothers that were about—one of them is five years older and one is about six and a half years older than I am. And so I came along as sort of like a second group of children, although I was the only one in that group. But my older brothers were kind of role models going through.

LW:

What were their names?

EH:

Excuse me. I get emotional about my family.

LW:

Oh, I'm sorry.

EH:

Dr. Robert E. Haley, and Dr. Benjamin P. Haley. H-a-l-e-y. And both of them went on to become M.D.'s [**Doctor of Medicine**] and also anesthesiologists—both of them. And had very distinguished careers in their medical field. When I came along, a little later, my father and mother, who were educators, had, by then, decided that, you know, maybe medicine was a great field for everybody to go into. So my father kept saying, "Don't you want to go to medical school? Don't you want to go to medical school?" And I thought about it. And actually, at that time, there were not too many women going to medical school. And my older brother said, "I don't think you'll like it. They kind of mistreat the women." Which I thought was very unfortunate. But, actually, I felt like that I would rather be an educator, because I couldn't see myself—because I do have a lot of sentimentality and emotion that I thought I would have a difficult time dealing with families and people with severe medical problems. So I decided I would rather be in education. Originally, I was going to be a high school teacher in home economics, because I was very impressed with my own high school teacher. And she was very helpful to me in pulling out my leadership abilities, and providing training for leadership development throughout my high school career. And so I thought, Well, that'll be a good thing to do. Then my father was superintendent of the schools for Claiborne Parish, which was a parish

that are like our counties. And there were about five or six major schools within that area. Not huge schools, but we had, like, about four hundred students in Homer High School, where I went to high school.

LW:

What was your father's name?

EH:

Oh, F.C. Haley. H-a-l-e-y. He went by his initials. And my mother was Gladys Murphy Haley. So she was a teacher. She taught before they married. Then when she had the two sons, who were just about eighteen months apart, she stopped teaching to be more—you know, take care of them. Then, when they moved into Homer, she later thought, perhaps, she would teach. But she was always the mother, the person who would chaperone whatever any of us needed to go to. You know, like, with the band—the high school band or the basketball team or whatever it was. If they needed an adult to go and help, she was always willing to do that. So she really dedicated her time to helping out, even though she wasn't on the payroll or anything. And then after I went to college, she went back to teach again.

LW:

What did she teach?

EH:

She taught a little bit of everything, from American history and English and economics and citizenship. She first taught at a very small school where my—where she and my father started out at Summerfield. It was very small. And those students did not have a lot of breadth in their experience. They were from families that pretty well stayed there. Just going to the—to Shreveport, Louisiana, which is larger than the towns we lived in, was a real treat. And she would take the high school seniors on a field trip to Shreveport, Louisiana. And I still, occasionally, will get letters from some of those students about how impressed they were with her, and what an impression she made on their lives.

LW:

So was she mostly middle school or high school?

EH:

High school. Yes. And some of those women's students went on to be medical doctors and lawyers and all kinds of things, even though they grew up in a very rural community.

LW:

That's wonderful. Yeah. Teachers make such an impact on people's lives. They encourage them to do things that maybe are very difficult at the time—breaking barriers.

EH:

Right.

LW:

So that's wonderful. So did you go to school in Homer?

EH:

Yes, I did go to the elementary school and the high school in Homer. [Clears throat] And it's a—you know, a school where the students participated in everything [laughs], one of those, so that we were all in the high school band and the high school chorus, and ensembles. And then I had the good fortune of being able to take art lessons from a private instructor as well. So while I played the clarinet—and I was a majorette in the marching band. I sang and all of those things, the art was what really attracted my interest the most. And I think I probably had more talent in that. I took piano lessons for many years, but I—it taught me perseverance, I think. And I really tried, and my teacher wanted me to go to the piano festivals and make a high score. But I was always a little disappointed. I couldn't ever get that superior ranking, no matter how hard I tried. But it was a good experience, and I will always be grateful to have had, really, all of those experiences. And they really have, kind of, rounded out my life. And then they've even come back into being a major influence, as I've been working, lately, part-time with the College of Visual and Performing Arts. So everything kind of has a relationship, I think, as we go through our lives.

LW:

So your parents encouraged you to do different things?

HE:

Yes.

LW:

Including the arts and performing?

EH:

Right.

LW:

That's wonderful. So, in high school, did you take home economics courses? Was it required in middle school and high school, at that point?

EH:

I think maybe one or two courses were required, and then you could take them as electives. And I did take those. And I participated in what was called the Future Homemakers of America. They've changed their name, and I'm trying to think what it is now. But it was a very active organization. And I got involved as a freshman student. And that—while I was in a lot of other organizations, that one was the one that I got more involved in, because my teacher, Marjorie DeSordi encouraged me to run for an office when I was, like, a freshman—to run for an office that was at the parish, or county, level. I was elected. So from there, I did other things in various offices with the organization, including becoming the president of the district organization, which included many people that I met at Louisiana Tech University on their annual big meeting with speakers and things. And that—all of the activities that I participated in really helped in learning how to develop a timeline for getting things done and work with other students and adults in accomplishing the goals. You know, togetherness of working on it together, rather than trying to do everything yourself, because it was totally impossible, actually. So that was good. That was very good training. And then when I graduated, I went to Louisiana Tech University, which was about forty-one miles from where I lived in Homer. My father had gone there. And when he grew up in Jonesboro, Louisiana on a little farm, he really did not have many—much encouragement to go onto college. In fact, his father wanted him just to stay on the farm and farm with him. And he really had broader goals for himself. And so—but he had no money to go to college with. So he went to the Louisiana Tech campus and he asked where the administration building was. He always says he took a cardboard suitcase with, like, two pairs of pants and two or three shirts, and that was all he had. So he sat—he tried to get in to see the president. He couldn't get in. Or the Dean of Men. So then he sat on the doorstep, the front steps going into the administration building, and when—maybe it was the Dean of Men came out, or the President—he spoke to them and said—told them who he was, and that he was here to go to school, but he had no money to pay the tuition, and could they get him a job. And he convinced them, and they sent him over to the cafeteria to see the person in charge, and they hired him there. And he later worked in the men's dormitories as advisors or counsellors to the students. So he loved that institution. So we just—you know, today, people go on these tours and try to decide where they're going. We never did that. It was, like, we knew that's where we were going. And we loved the idea. It was great. And it was a lovely school. And it still is a great institution, really.

LW:

What year did you start at Louisiana Tech?

EH:

In 1962. And I graduated in '66. And I was very fortunate there, too. I studied Home Economics Education. My father said, "You can study whatever you want to study. But as a woman, you must take typing, shorthand, and bookkeeping." And so that was part of the requirement. Now, accounting—I wish I had taken more of it, actually, but I wasn't that fond of it, but it was helpful later in life. And then shorthand—I took it the same time I took French, and it was like studying two foreign languages all at once when I hadn't had either one of them before. So that was a little challenging, but it was probably a good endurance experience, anyway. And I already could type, and that was good for turning to computers, when that came along. But I didn't grow up with computers. So I still find myself—well, I've used computers, you know, throughout life, after they became popular. I have always thought I needed to go enroll in a computer course at some point in time, instead of trying to learn it, you know, just by, you know, asking questions of someone else, or adapting myself. So I still find the computerization, at times, can be challenging. We seem to change softwares all the time, and the computers and phones download things for us and I become puzzled again. But anyway, it was—my college experience was really quite helpful. And again, I got into leadership roles that were very helpful, working with what was called then the Associative Women's Students Organization, which was an organization for all the women on the campus. And we had various leadership roles and activities with that. And I served as—well, the dormitories were a bit different, at that time, with more rules. Women could not wear shorts, definitely. We could wear pants on certain occasions. You were not to go out with the rollers in your hair that everybody was using at that time. So there were a lot more rigid rules. You had to be in the dorm at a certain time. Like eight o'clock on weekdays, and then on the weekend it was later, like eleven or midnight. But, unfortunately, I got elected—or maybe it was fortunate—as the Vice President for Administration or something. And so we had a judiciary council where anybody that did anything wrong would appear before this student judiciary board. And I had a chair of that. So that was, again, an experience in trying to work through issues that came up with students who maybe didn't—got in late, you know, or they did one thing or another that was against the rules of community dormitory life at that point. But again, it did teach me a lot about working with people and different—listening to people's different viewpoints and trying to work out a solution. So I attribute all those things to good use. And within the human sciences or home economics area, I worked with their student organizations, too. And I taught—I worked for a couple of the professors, because it was important to me to pay part of my way, while my pay was very low at that time. Student workers did not make very much. But we—I felt that it gave me more insights and more understanding of faculty members than I might've had. And it led to my being elected to a state office with the state student organization in our field. And then from that, I was invited as the student representative for the state when I was the president of the state group. In that role, I got to know professionals from across the state, and, you know, saw what they did in their own roles as teachers, or extension agents, or dieticians, in communications and the many fields that they were working in. And it gave me friendships with these older adults that was very valuable later

in life, so that when I was later a faculty member myself, I already had a lot of contacts around the state of Louisiana. So I loved my college days. And when I was a freshman, I entered thinking I was going to be a high school teacher, but when I got there I thought, You know, this is really a wonderful environment at the college level. And so I went to see the dean, and I said, "I think I would like to teach at a university." And she said, "Well, that's great. It might be a little soon to apply for graduate school, but you need to think about it early and plan for"—you know, look outside of this area—that I should pick a graduate school where I would have some diverse experiences from just north Louisiana that I should look at, you know, schools and what they were known for, choose the subject area that I really wanted to be in within our field, and work toward that goal. Again, I was involved with the student organizations on the campus, also with the Wesley Foundation, which was, at that time, the name of the student group on the campus for the Methodist church, which I grew up in. And, you know, we all dressed up to go to football games and basketball games. The dress code was a little different then. We wore hats and gloves to teas and various functions on the campus, which is certainly different than now.

LW:

Did you have to wear the freshman beanies the way they did at Tech?

EH:

We did. We wore green beanies when we were freshman. And it was a—when you wore them for—I guess much of the first semester—we had semesters. And then there was a ceremony for taking off your beanie. [Laughs] We had some of the singing festivals where different organizations would practice—would select a song that they liked, and would practice together on it, and then compete in a kind of a music singing festival in the spring. And that was always fun. I did join a sorority, which was Phi Mu, and was active in that. I was the treasurer, which was the one that had to collect the money—the dues and the extra payments that we needed for this or that—and help with the finance of the organization. And that turned out to be valuable in later life as an administrator, having to manage budgets and those kinds of things. So I really feel blessed that it's almost like every opportunity I had—I may not have realized it at the time, but it's turned out to be valuable in shaping the opportunities I had in the future.

LW:

Were there any faculty members or administrators at Louisiana Tech that made an impact on you, or that you want to mention?

EH:

Yes. Dean Alice Graham was the dean who talked to me about graduate school. And Willie Fletcher was an older faculty member who was, I guess, probably sixty-five or so, and she taught in the child development, early childhood area. And even that age would sit on the floor and work with the children, and was really a remarkable woman. Her sister I had for an English

class: Francis Fletcher and Willie Fletcher. And they were very different personalities, but sisters, and were—both made great contributions to Louisiana Tech. And then I worked for a faculty member, Ruth Richardson, who was also a delightful person to know. And Dr. Agnes Miller later became the dean, and was also—had a great impact on my life. Some of the faculty members were very tough on us, really, as students. And that was—you know, we felt like they really graded us very hard. [Laughs] One said at the beginning of her class, “Well, for some reason, I haven’t ever had a student who made an A in this class.” Well, I was determined I was going to make an A. And I cannot remember now if I did or not, but I certainly worked on it very hard. But I’m not sure that anybody ever broke her record. So that made me realize that when I was going to teach, you know, be fair with students and everybody should have a chance to excel at whatever level they’re able to do. There was also an English professor that had impacted my father a lot in his life: Dr. Sachs, S-a-c-h-s. And Dr. Sachs was kind of a gruff personality. He taught English Literature. But he was a very outstanding man. And he was determined that he would make us think and consider, you know, not just the perspectives, maybe, that we grew up with, but other perspectives as we made decisions in life. And everybody was somewhat afraid of him. But after I taught a little while in home economics, and I loved that experience, I wanted to also get to know Dr. Sachs. So I went over to see him one day and I said, “I would like to work for you.” [Laughs] And he said, “You would?” And I said, “Yes.” And he said, “Can you type?” And I said, “Oh yes.” Well, I didn’t realize that he had an automatic electric typewriter, and I had always types on the manual. That’s how we had to learn from the beginning in high school. So he said, “Well, sit down there and type about something.” Well, I sat down—and at that time, the electric typewriters—you just barely had to touch the keys and it would type the several of that letter. So I was kind of struggling getting a statement written down—you know, typed up as he requested. But for some reason he hired. So I did learn to type on an electric typewriter, at that point. But I graduated as—at the top of my class. I’m still very fond of Louisiana Tech. Our family has a scholarship in my mother and father’s name there. And my brothers have also been very supportive of Louisiana Tech as their alma maters.

LW:

Did you live in the practice house there?

EH:

Yes, I did. That was an experience either, kind of, at the first of your senior year or the last of your junior year. And there were about eleven of us that lived in what was then the former president’s home. And it was really a lovely place. It had a lot of bedrooms because, at that time, people, guests at the university, would stay at the President’s house, even though the President lived there, too. You know, maybe in the upstairs level or that kind of thing. So we would each, you know, have rooms there. And we learned to manage, on a budget, money that was needed to run the house, and learn to purchase the groceries and prepare the food and manage every aspect of having a home. So while—we usually would not start off or have families as large as this sole

group of students living there. But it was—[clears throat] it was a pretty good experience in learning to extend your dollars, prepare ahead, form a timeline of how you would get things done, and then implement them. And we would invite guests for dinner, on occasion. We would, you know, have a table setting that would be very attractive. And it was a very interesting experience. I enjoyed it. I do think that after a while, as families got smaller and smaller with maybe a husband, wife and two children—living and managing a huge house is not quite the same as you would be using in your own personal life. But it wasn't—I enjoyed the experience. They were later, I think, phased out because of the thought that maybe that wasn't the best way to implement that particular experience. As the enrollments got larger, it would be hard to provide housing for all of those students to have that experience, and that maybe just studying the principles of management and personal time use, as well as budgeting and those things, would suffice for most of the students in the future.

LW:

Did you have a baby in a practice house, or did you use a nursery?

EH:

We did not have a baby in ours, but there were babies, I know, on other campuses where the students would actually take care of the baby, too.

LW:

Okay. Well—so you graduated with a Home Economics degree, undergraduate?

EH:

Yes, Home Economics Education.

LW:

And then what happened after that?

EH:

I looked at all these graduate school bulletins, and I had them from Cornell and Syracuse and North Caro—University of North Carolina, University of Tennessee, Florida State University. Because a couple professors I had known that taught at Louisiana Tech had graduated with PhDs from Florida State University, so I felt like it would be a good place. Let's see. University of Alabama. University of Georgia. But I was kind of remembering the dean saying, you know, "Go out and find a new place with a different environment, a different geography, different heritage and learn from that, as well as your subject matter. But my father saw all of these catalogues coming in and said, "What are you doing?" And his perspective—he loved Louisiana, grew up in Louisiana, and he thought you didn't really have to go outside the state for most things. But he said, "Well, I would think you could find a school—an outstanding school—a

little closer to where we live.” And so I said, “Well, how close does it need to be?” And he said, “Well, I would think you could find one in the southeast,” because we were oriented towards the southeast there. Here it’s the southwest. But anyway—so I applied to University of Georgia, University of Alabama, and Florida State University. And applied for assistantships, because I wanted to pay my way through my master’s degree. So the school that I heard back first from was Florida State University. I also applied to the University of Tennessee. I also had offers from others that came along, but by then I was very impressed with Florida State University, and I thought, Well, that’s far enough away, that’s a unique experience. And as I looked at the faculty backgrounds—they had a lot of faculty members there from Cornell and Iowa State University—which was good in our field—and Virginia Tech and Columbia. A lot of the major schools were represented on the faculty at Florida State; a lot of people from the Midwest and from New York. And so I thought, Well, this would be a good experience because I’ll get to know them. And since they didn’t want me going—applying to Cornell—which I thought was going to be one of the top places—that I would happy at Florida State. So that was the one I picked. And I had a half-time assistantship. It didn’t pay very much money. I think something like 150 dollars a month. But the costs were not as great, either. Another friend who graduated at the same time and I’d—she went there, too, and she and I roomed—got an apartment there. My parents went down to inspect where I was going to live and helped pick this apartment, which was more expensive than I really wanted to pay. But it was right on the edge of the campus. It was—we were in a small apartment where there were a couple other very large apartments; very nice. And so during the time I was there, the—our next door neighbor ended up in the big apartment, being a person who came to start the law school at Florida State University. He had a very distinguished career at University of Iowa, I believe was the correct school. So he and his wife lived next door, and they kind of became like our parents next door, you know, this kind of thing. And we learned a lot. We really enjoyed the association with them, as well as the other faculty that we studied with in the School of Human Sciences at Florida State University.

LW:

So it was called human sciences when you went there?

EH:

Yes. I believe that they had changed their name, at that time.

LW:

Okay. And was that the fall of '66?

EH:

Yes, '66 to '68 I had my assistantship and I worked on a degree. The field I picked, at that time, was actually Clothing and Textiles. And I ended up doing my research in textile science, dealing with the degradation of fabrics from sun rays. It was a very—we did chemical and physical tests

on various kinds of fabrics with cotton and the man-made fibers in polyester, acetate rayon, the things that were kind of new at that time. And as I was standing, working in the lab and monitoring these chemical tests, I thought, You know, I like—I don't object to this, but I think I would rather do things with people. [Laughs] So I took some extra courses in human development and family studies—child development—and in interior design, which all were totally different. But at that point, I decided, well, I would like to stay—I would like to get my PhD as well. So I decided that really I would do—that I would probably continue with taking some of both fields, but that I would end up in human development and family studies in the early childhood area, and then have some early education—early childhood education courses as well. So my plan was to continue on for the PhD at that time. And I was accepted into the program in the child and family area. But I had married a person that I had known in college, after I'd been in graduate school for a year. He was working on his master's—his MBA [**Master of Business Administration**]. He had finished at Louisiana Tech. It took him five years. He was in engineering and also physics. But it—our marriage just did not work out. We had this long distance marriage for a while, and we would both gone back to go to school at Florida State. I worked in the summers, and he had worked in engineering in the summers. And we'd gone back to work on our—or planning to go back and I would start my PhD. But it didn't work out for me to do that. So I thought it was a disaster at the time. Divorce was not popular. [Laughs] But unfortunately it was kind of foisted on me. And so I decided, well, I'll just have to make the best of this. I had done everything I could to make that marriage work. And I felt like if it didn't work out that I would not, you know, have a lot of regret. I would regret it, but I would not feel totally responsible. So anyway, this was in August [clears throat] that this all unfolded. So he was going back to go to graduate school down there again. And my parents thought I maybe needed to go a different direction. So I applied for a teaching position. I had my master's at that point, but not the PhD. And fortunately, I was interviewed by the president of what was then known as Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana. The people that were in charge at Louisiana Tech, where I'd done my undergraduate work were kind of all out of town at this point, and school was about to start. And so the president of Northwestern had known my father, and he invited me to come down for an interview. I was interviewed for a position in the College of Education, which was not exactly my field. But he said, "I want you to go over and talk to the Dean of Education." So I did. And the Dean of Education asked me had I studied educational pedagogy and, you know, was I a certified teacher. And I was. And so he said, "Well"—that he thought I seemed like a creative person. So he hired me to teach five sections of Introduction to Education. And he said it was the course that had very poor ratings in the past, [laughs] and that I would need to figure out how I could teach this course. It was an important course in the education field. Would I teach this course so that the students would like it and be motivated to stay in a professional education program? As well as would I be the faculty advisor to try to organize the student professional organization that no one had been successful with either thing so far? So that was kind of my assignment. I knew no one, really, on the campus. And Natchitoches is a small town on the Cane River. It's very interesting. It's where the *Steel*

Magnolias movie was made. And it had a lot of unique traditions. Louisiana has the North Louisiana area that is mostly Protestant and very conservative. The South Louisiana area is what we call Cajun and more French-speaking, and a different kind of culture. So it was a great experience after I got used to where I was, and got my apartment and set off to do this. And I really worked hard on that class. Teaching the same class five times is somewhat challenging, even to yourself. You get it prepared the first time you teach it. You're kind of, you know, really trying to master it and get it down. The second time is better. The third time is really good. But the fourth and the fifth time, you're kind of wary of the whole subject matter. So that was a challenge. And the classes would have about fifty—forty-five to fifty in them, I think. And then—but I decided—at the time, the *Peanuts* cartoons were very popular. So I utilized Charlie Brown from *Peanuts* cartoons, adapted these figures—I could draw—and I would look for interesting cartoons, and I work for how to intersperse them into my teaching, and develop slides and things of these and use those to kind of change up the pace and make the students laugh, or at least see some humor. But also remember the point from pedagogy or introduct—history of education that they needed to know. Well, the students, evidently, rated me pretty well. And I would encourage these students to come to the professional meetings. We would have refreshments, and students always liked food. So we would have guest speakers. And the organization grew and became rather popular with all of the Education majors. So—you know, certainly not all of them, but we—you know, it was enough that it did impress the dean. So anyway, I was planning to stay there, if they asked me to continue. I knew it was just a one-year appointment. But when I—and then the department chair in Home Economics wanted me to switch over and teach with them. And so she offered me this course, this assignment, for the next year that was going to be teaching—oh, I don't know—about four different courses, live in the home management house with the students, and also worked with the Child Development Research Center. That was a lot of diversity in one job. [Laughs]

LW:

That's a lot of jobs, yeah.

EH:

And a lot of different responsibilities. But I wanted to prove that I had done a good job and that they would offer this position to me. I thought that would be very helpful, and would speak about my determination.

LW:

Was it a teaching position or like an adjunct position? Or a graduate assistant?

EH:

It was like an instructor.

LW:

Instructor? Okay.

EH:

So elementary—you know, basic instructor. And I knew, at that point, I wanted to go back and get my PhD at some point because I wanted to teach at the university level. And when I was working that first year, everybody I would meet would say, “Well, when are you going to get your PhD?” That was almost like, “Oh yes, here’s your name and here’s what you’re doing now. And when are you going to get your PhD?” So I thought, Well, this seems like it’s going to be required, and that I should go as soon as I could. So I did take a few courses while I was teaching there during that first year as well, which were—proved to be helpful. But it was a lot to do. So when I was offered this position with this huge mixture of assignments that really was more than almost anybody could do, I still wanted to do it. But an interesting thing happened. After I’d been offered the position and I had said that I would accept it, the department chair called me back and she said, “This is very embarrassing to me. But one of the administrators—a new administrator on the campus had asked that they employ his wife,” and that she was going to need to give the position I had, or some part of it, to the wife of one of the university administrators. Well, I was really taken back by this. This was really kind of a blow, because I’d been so excited about it. Even though it wasn’t a position that I would have outlined for myself to have, I was really shocked by this. So I accepted what she said and believed her. But I went back to my apartment and I thought, Well, now, what am I going to do now? It was just kind of devastating. Now I didn’t have a job for the next year. So I thought, What will I do? So I laid down on my sofa to try to figure it out. The phone rang. And when I picked up the phone, it was the dean at Louisiana Tech. And she said, “Have you accepted a job for next year?” [Laughs] And I said, “Oh my goodness.” I said, “I did accept a position, but it’s been withdrawn.” And I told her what had happened. And she said, “Well, how soon can you get up here for an interview?” And I said, “When do you want me?” And so she had me come up there. They were having a—kind of an alumni group together, anyway, for a luncheon. And so I went up there and visited with her. And she offered me a position there that was more in the field I wanted to go into in the child development and family relations area. And I also was going to be working with the Child Development Research Center as director of it. So anyway, she gave me a lot of responsibility. So I accepted it. So then I had my position for the next year, so that was a relief. And I moved back to Ruston for that. And after—when I accepted it, I told her that I wanted to get my PhD, and that if I taught there for a year or so—could—and then if I had an assistantship to work on my PhD—I wanted to go back to Florida State University in a slightly different field, but that was where I had chosen to go. And would they allow me to have a leave without pay? I would not qualify for a leave with pay, but would they hold the position for me at Louisiana Tech? Because they—and they needed faculty members with—more with PhDs. They were trying to build up the graduate faculty and these kinds of things. So it appealed to her. I was kind of a known quantity. They trusted me. When I went back there, though, I thought, Oh my

goodness, how is this going to be when I'm a faculty member here with faculty who taught me? But it was never a problem. They just accepted me like I knew what I was doing, [laughs] and treated me like a professional. It was really amazing. So that's what I did. I actually taught a year there. I went back in the summer. I came back. I taught another year. And then I went back to finish my doctorate. I had taken courses in the summer and different things. But it was really—and they held my position. In fact, they hired a friend of mine, who was a great friend, to be a temporary instructor at the time, and to teach the course. And we were very close friends and had a lot of fun, you know, sharing notes on the classes and this kind of thing. And she was outstanding, and did a really great job on those classes. But as it turned out, they wanted both of us to continue on, so it wasn't that we were ever really rivals. We were always trying to help each other, and that was great.

LW:

What was her name?

EH:

Mary Belle Tuten. T-u-t-e-n. And Mary Belle—she spells it as two words, with B-e-l-l-e, I believe it is. But we were good friends. I had known her when I was at Louisiana Tech as a student, but we became very close friends and colleagues, and that was a good experience.

LW:

And was it Dr. Miller who brought you back to Louisiana Tech? Or was it Dr.—

EH:

Alice Graham was the dean at that time. [Pause] And then Dean Graham retired after a couple of years. And they asked me to be Associate Dean. And Dr. Miller—Agnes Miller became the dean. And she was also very supportive. She had gotten her PhD in Food & Nutrition at Florida State. So we knew a lot of the same people. Another colleague that taught with me at Louisiana Tech that was a few years older and had achieved her PhD was Dr. Jeanne, J-e-a-n-n-e, Gilley. Mac was her maiden name, and then she married another faculty member named Gilley. And she and I, in addition to teaching the regular college students, would plan workshops. We got some grants from the Department of Health and Human Services—I think, was approximately the name of it at that time—to do training of childcare workers and teachers who were working with preschool children. We really enjoyed that challenge. They were trying to take people who were unemployed, giving them a skillset that would allow them to have jobs and possibly a career that related to working with children. So we would do these workshops—a series of workshops that they had to complete and then they would get some sort of certificate from us and from the state. So these were individuals who were not used to going to school. [Laughs] So we—again, I had the challenge of trying to figure out how to attract their attention. So we would make these poster boards that you might use in teaching children in preschool class. But we would use them to talk

to the class, and kind of entertain them while we were teaching them. So that was a very interesting experience. We had these cutouts of a squirrel and a rabbit and different things like that with the opening where you could put your face through it. And we would demonstrate different things to interest children and, you know, how to work with them. How to prepare the environment of a preschool group or a daycare setting. To have teaching settings or activities that students could work on individually and together. And it was—the people were very gracious. They were really—they didn't all follow through and get jobs like they were supposed to, unfortunately. We did all we could to inspire them to do that. But many of them did. And they liked us. And so it was very rewarding to work with, you know, individuals that were at a different economic level, having trouble with, you know, having a job, a career, or anything. Then, as well, working with the college students who were more motivated and academically prepared. But it was a good experience for us to work on this project together. We got these grants every year, for several years, to do that with. So that was an interesting challenge along the way, too.

LW:

Is this a rural kind of setting? Or was it more of a city kind of setting?

EH:

Well, it was small town. Well, let's see. Ruston is bigger than where I grew up. But there were about sixty thousand, I think, in Ruston. But somewhat rural, outside the city.

LW:

Is it still a big push trying to get education and opportunities to [crosstalk][0:57:23] now?

EH:

Right. And we also worked for settings standards for childcare workers. We worked for the state level on these things. And also for ratios of children to adults, and health and safety requirements. We were involved in all of those kinds of things as well. We also worked with—we kind of got into a discussion on where the early childhood certification would be. Would it be in the College of Education? Would it be with us? And we had a number of lively discussions over that topic. It became kind of a—later, as I was working there, it became kind of a bone of contention in the College of Education that we were doing so well, actually. [Laughs] And attracting, you know, some competition for students. But we did get the program certified, and it was very successful. So, as we worked with the College of Education to try to work out whose territory was what and how would this be, we ended up in a—kind of a heated discussion with the council there that was in charge of approving curricular changes and those kinds of things. So I couldn't figure out how we were going to achieve our goal. But I kind of grew up with the challenge that—you know, be nice to everybody, I guess, is a good word. You know, be nice, that—work to kind of try to collaborate, but be firm. And so it was through that that—our side

actually won in the vote of this council. I had told the story to kind of open up the discussion that was kind of clever, and go everybody's attention so that they would listen to my points. And the—one of the professors was kind of really agitated about the outcome. But later, we became good friends, and he was very complimentary to me later on. But it did—all of the experiences I've had like that have kind of prepared me for the next level of what I would be doing. So after I served as Director of the Child Development Research Center and taught there at Louisiana Tech, I was asked to be associate dean. And then after a few years, Dean Miller decided to retire. She had married and was kind of living in two places. You could commute, but not every day. So she decided to retire, and I was appointed to be the interim dean. Well, I was quite young at the time. [Laughs] The person that was the administrative assistant in the office [clears throat] had been in that brawl for many years, even when I was a student. So we already knew one another, and were already working together anyway. But I became dean there at twenty-nine, as interim dean. And, again, I wondered, Well, how will these faculty members, who are much older than I am, how are they going to relate to this? But they were great. I mean, no one ever questioned whether I could do the job or not. So I served as interim dean for about eight months. And then the Vice President for Academic Affairs called me in and said, "We would like to change your title to be the dean." So, I was willing and eager to do that, to give that a try. It was a great opportunity. Some of the interesting stories from that part of my career were that because my administrative assistant knew many people and she was older, and looked old—I mean, she was beautiful, but she looked older than I did. Bette Wallace was her name. B-e-t-t-e Wallace. When parents and potential students would come in, they would walk in. She'd be the first one they would see. And if we were standing side by side, they would turn to her and start asking her if the student or the parent could do a certain thing and they needed to get permission. And then she would say, "Well, why don't you ask the dean? Here's Dean Haley right here." And they would be a gasp that I would be the dean, because I still looked pretty young at that time. So we always had a lot of fun teasing each other and noticing the way people looked, you know, when they realized they were talking to the wrong person. But she was a great guide, and all the faculty were very supportive. And we worked very hard to increase our enrollment and to do things that were needed to promote the college. So I—and I was involved at the national level with organizations of other deans from other places. And those deans, I think, were also very surprised that someone at my age would become dean. I was thirty by the time I was made the permanent dean. But that was kind of a surprise. So I guess it kind of appealed to them. And I, you know, had always wanted to kind of wanted to go to Cornell, so I got to know the dean at Cornell and asked her advice for things, and kind of used them as a model for what we wanted to try to achieve. As well as the dean at Virginia Tech and other places. And I met people who worked in various business areas related to the home economics area. And I was later, after serving a few years, I was invited to apply for other positions as dean. Well, I always turned them down. I felt like I didn't want to move. I wanted to—I was not through with my goals at Louisiana Tech. I wanted to stay there. My parents, who were retired, had moved to Ruston to live. My older brother [clears throat] and his family were living in Ruston. And it was like, You

know, this is pretty good here. I've got friends and I've got family right here. Why would I want to move? And the dean at Virginia Tech called me aside at a national meeting, and she said, "Why did not you apply for my position when I announced my retirement and there was a search for dean?" And I said, "Well, I wasn't planning to leave Louisiana Tech. Plus, you hired your associate dean, and I thought that was probably who you wanted. You had appointed him to that role and he had served in that role." And he was a good person. And she said, "You cannot stay there forever." [Laughs] I mean, I'd only been there, by then, about five years. "You cannot stay there forever." You've got to move on. You've got to go to a bigger place. Well, I was kind of shocked by this news from her. And so after that, I did think, Well, maybe I should think about these things a little bit more and not just dismiss them. But I knew that my family would not want me to leave. They had already moved there. I mean, my goodness. How could I go off and leave them? But I got a letter from Texas Tech [laughs] about their search for a dean. And I had—I had finished my PhD, by the time, at Florida State. And there were some other people there that were working on their PhDs, like Dr. Carl Anderson and Dr. Helen Brittain. They got their PhDs there, too, and a couple others. Bill—Dr. Pinder, who is here at Texas Tech. So I knew I knew a few people out here, but I still didn't think that much about it. But I took the letter I had inviting me to apply to the Christmas dinner with my family and I showed it to my parents. And they said, We ought to talk about this. So anyway, they all said, Go for it. Go see what it's like. So I did. Let's stop for just a minute and let me—

LW:

Okay. Let me pause.

EH:

My sinuses—

[Pause in recording]

LW:

Did it stop?

End of Recording