

## ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

MAIN ENTRY: Marion Hagler  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: December 10, 2009  
LOCATION OF INTERVIEW: Lubbock, Texas, at Dr. Hagler's home  
INTERVIEWER: Andy Wilkinson  
FORMAT: DVD  
IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: ?  
LENGTH OF INTERVIEW: 1:33 hour

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: Dr. Marion Hagler talks about his career and involvement with the Texas Tech Electrical Engineering Department. Much of the interview discusses the structure and political situation within the department in the 1970s through 1980s, how Hagler became chair of the department following the resignation of Russell Seecat, and the Crosbyton Solar Power Project. He also touches upon Texas Tech University's shift towards becoming a research geared university.

ABSTRACT: Marion Otho Hagler was born in Temple, Texas, on September 7, 1939. He received his BA (1962) and BSEE (1963) in electrical engineering from Rice University and his MSEE (1964) and Ph.D. (1967) in electrical engineering from the University of Texas. In 1963, he married Shirlene Bilbrey and together they had three children. Specializing in Plasma Dynamics and Quantum Electronics, Dr. Hagler began working at Texas Technological College in 1967. He was appointed to the rank of Horn Professor, the highest rank granted by the Texas Tech University, in 1981.

### CD ONE

### TIME STAMP

#### Brief mention of Hagler's interest in lasers

Undergraduate degree from Rice and graduate degrees from UT Austin

Family moves to Bell County

When he was two, his parents moved to a farm which was owned by TTU engineering drawing instructor C. C. Perryman

Family moved back to Central Texas in 1951 due to Hagler's dust issues

#### Early Electrical Engineering Program at Texas Tech

Russell Seecat recruits several faculty to the Tech EE program including 4 from UT – Magne Kristiansen, John Craig, David Ferry, and Marion Hagler

Seecat's leadership abilities and idealism is what attracted faculty to come to dept.

Interest in lasers and thermonuclear fusion plasmas

Studied under Professor Arwin Dougal at UT  
Hagler, Kristiansen and Craig's research specialties at UT

#### Russell Seacat

Got first research grant in program but specialized in undergrad teaching  
Replaced faculty in department to meet addition of graduate program  
Father figure to many EE faculty  
Strength of his leadership kept early EE faculty a tight knit group  
Recruiting others under Russell's "Benevolent Dictator" supervision  
Love-hate relationship between Seacat and John Bradford, Dean of Engineering  
Bradford generally hands off unless there was a problem  
Mainly relied on faculty to do fundraising until towards the end of his tenure

#### Recollections on TTU's Electrical Engineering Program

Research grants in the electrical engineering field  
Notes decrease in freedom and flexibility for faculty over the years in the academic system  
Grateful for uniqueness of the Texas Tech's EE department set up  
Rankings of EE departments listing TTU's program as 3<sup>rd</sup> most improved depart.  
Pride in his department  
Despite strong personalities in dept., Seacat had the ability to channel faculty's energy in more or less in the same direction  
Magne Kristiansen, Richard Saeks, John Reichert and Dave Ferry's strong drive  
Failure of outsiders understanding how Seacat's strong leadership held his department and faculty together

#### Crosbyton Solar Power Project (CSPP)

Source of contention that all funds came into EE while much of the work was being done by people in other departments  
Resentment of other departments towards the CSP project  
Seacat misread his range of power as control over the funding when it was actually his leadership skills  
Three Horn Professors in EE and Seacat's over estimation of the power that gave him with the administration  
He sent Walkup, Kristiansen & Hagler to talk to administration  
Seacat overplayed hand  
Cavazos did revocable damage to the department by refusing to talk to them  
Lost about 1/3 of faculty due to Cavazos  
President Cavazos and provost John Darling  
Two kinds of education systems and differences in charges with faculty  
Top Down approach with little reliance on faculty initiative versus bottom up approach which has research faculty initiative is the "heart" of a research geared university

#### Engineering Dean Situation

John Bradford served as dean for 28 years before going to development  
Seacat wanted to be interim dean but not dean  
Jimmy Smith became interim dean and asked for Seacat's resignation at  
behest of President Cavazos  
Departure of Seacat marks when everything started falling apart for dept.

Crosbyton project set up was a causative problem

Should not have been centered in an academic department due to the politics  
Stan Liberty handled the politics and John Reichert did the technical part of the project  
Comments that John Reichert and Richard Saeks are probably the only two geniuses he  
has ever known  
After Liberty left, Reichert took over the politics which was not his strength  
DOE thought it was a pork barrel project  
Recounts how Reichert's comment in paper about senator? Graham ended the day  
with Hagler becoming interim chair following Seacat's forced resignation  
Seacat recommended Hagler as his replacement  
Hagler served as chair for 12 years and considered it "lost years" in his academic  
career because research was his preference  
Cavazos refused to talk with faculty in dept. until over a year later  
Attitudes towards Seacat and Reichert  
Handling of their firings garnered sympathy towards both by university faculty  
Crosbyton situation helped synchronize departure of good faculty in the 1980s

Hagler's career

NSF grant in plasma waves over 16 years working with Kristiansen  
Continued "benevolent dictator" leadership during his time as chair  
Shifted to educational research working with William Marcy and John Walkup  
Balance between the two types of educational systems and state funding  
Tech is now a research institution  
Teaching undergrads versus graduates  
Seacat tried to keep balance between both levels  
Changes in engineering education from WWII, 1980s and 1990s  
Reflections on relationship with Seacat  
Difficulties in dealing with Seacat as a peer following becoming chair  
Could not rehire Seacat in 1980s due to budget crunch  
Could not please his hero, Seacat

Crosbyton Project again

Believed it had a lot of merit due to its simple technical aspects, though impact  
has been small due to politics  
"End User Power Generation"

DATE OF BIRTH OF INFORMANT: September 7, 1939

GENDER OF INFORMANT: Male

ETHNICITY OF INFORMANT: