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FORSYTHE: This tape is part of the Q.M. Smith Collection designated as QMS.1995.66. This is Regina Forsythe, I am interviewing Dr. Edwin Voorhies. Today is Wednesday, August 23, 1995. The interview is being conducted in the Gore Research Center, Room 111 of the Ned McWherter Learning Resources Center. The tape of this interview along with a transcription of the interview will become part of the Quintin Miller Smith Collection and will be available to the public. Future researchers may include portions of this interview in their publications. Is that all right with you Dr. Voorhies?

VOORHIES: Fine.

FORSYTHE: We'll continue on, with the last interview you were traveling 50 miles from Fayetteville when we stopped.

VOORHIES: When my wife and I had to leave Murfreesboro, we didn't like it very much because we enjoyed living and working here. But after our third child came along, we weren't making a living, and I told president Smith, if he ever could afford to pay me a living wage, I'd consider coming back. I went to Redstone Arsenal and worked and immediately doubled my salary. It was exciting working. We were competing with Russians to see who could get the first vehicle in space. Dr. Von Braun and a 100 Germans were down there working, and I was very interested in that. I had a good experience, and got a lot out of it. But, it was difficult driving 53 miles one way. My ambitions were pointed toward working for the federal government the rest of my life. I always wanted to come back to the college campus. After a year and a half down there, President Smith called. Dr. Kirksey, who was dean of the faculty at that time, called and I came back, and he met me about half way in salary between what I was making here and what I was making down there. So I could see we could make a living, so we came back. We were looking for a place to live at that time, with three children. There was an old stucco house now where the agricultural building is, near the old dairy barn. They were milking cows in that old dairy barn. We lived in that old stucco house. Had one bedroom downstairs, and two upstairs and we got along alright. I remember during the night hearing the rats chewing. It wasn't air conditioned but it had a lot of big old trees around it. So we made it for a year and found a place to live out in Ragland Court which is very near to campus. I always said after that 53 miles one way, I was going to get a place where I could walk to work if I needed to. Lived ther for 9 years and moved just on the other side of campus at Park Manor where our back yard now is common fence with the MTSU farm. When I came back from working at Redstone Arsenal, I was chairman of the department of
Industrial Studies, at that time, Department of Industrial Arts and Technology. When I came here in 1949, I taught machine shop, and there were a total of six faculty members. I was talking to the new chairman of Industrial Studies, Dr. Gould, just retired, and the new chairman has come in, Dr. Buchanan. He has, I think 16 faculty members, so that department has grown. At that time, we had just Industrial Arts teacher education. That was it, and we had the courses in woodwork and metal work and drafting. Sheet metal and welding and electricity. And some teacher training courses for industrial arts teachers. That was the only thing in the instructional program. But we began to keep score on where our graduates were going, and nearly all of them were going into the industry. Maybe about three fourths of them going into industry because industry needed young men like that to work with engineers. It really was technology, it wasn't industrial arts in the jobs they were going in. After realizing that, that's one reason president Smith called me back so he recognized that and Dr. Kirksey. They agreed we needed to make some changes so I set out to help make those changes and hired people with more engineering related background. We gradually began to change. We changed the name of the department to the Department of Industrial Arts and Technology. We had a major in Industrial Arts Teacher Education and a major in Industrial Management and a major in Industrial Technology. Most of the students were majoring in Industrial Management because it had a little bit lower math and science requirement. It gave them a background and they had a minor in business or economics. Industrial Technology was close to engineering related. Since then, they've gone from that to Engineering Technology and have it accredited by the National Association Engineering. They are accredited and have several majors under that like electrical and mechanical technology, industrial technology, design technology where they do design on computers and even do computer technology in the design of computers, not just the operation. They have a good program with a good reputation. It started in those days in the 50's. That was 1957 when I came back and over the years its developed to where it is now. It's a very good program. It's turned out graduates who work with engineers, but they're not engineers. It so happens that today engineering has become so highly theoretical and less practical, that the team needs to have young men who are capable of doing and understanding the practical side of the work that's being done. The program in Engineering Technology requires a year of chemistry, a year of physics, math through calculus. It's right rigorous. In fact, it's about the same degree as I had, Mechanical Engineering from Georgia Tech in 1942, it's oriented toward getting the work done. And that's what our students are capable of doing. So they're doing very well. Most of the faculty 2/3rds have engineering degrees. Several of them have doctors degrees in engineering, so they're able to do that level of work and doing very well. That department has grown in the process and achieved what we set out to do in those days. Preparing students for jobs, and improving it. About 10 years ago, I've been retired over 10 years, I have trouble thinking that, but about 12 years ago, one of our graduates of the 50s who was an older students, a GI student. As I said before, the GI students in those days were the best students I've had anything to do with, because they were mature, they had been in the war, had worked and decided that they needed
to come to college and they knew what they were here for, and they had good backgrounds, they were a pleasure to work with. One of those young men went to work for a machine shop company in Nashville and worked for a few years. Decided he wanted to get in business for himself. He built a metal working business and it's in Laverne and hire to work about 200 people and do contract work but they have a lot of modern equipment to do metal working. He decided that he wanted to help us because we'd helped him. He donated the seed money for chair of excellence. That chair of excellence is named after Bob Russell and his wife. He's the one who did the work. The Bob Russell chair of excellence now is in place and been operating a few years. It's unfortunate that the man who has filled that chair has been ill for the last two years, and actually had a heart transplant recently. Whether he'll be able to come back, or its caused a problem, it's the problems you might expect to happen over the years. In any case, we have high hopes that that will bring the industries together in the middle Tennessee area. And we'll give them what they need in the way of students to do the work and also training programs or seminars or whatever other kind of help they need to prosper in the middle Tennessee region. That will take place I'm sure. That will round out the program where it will serve like we had in mind for a long time. Also, that department over the years has spawned several other things, like aerospace. It started out with one person teaching, Miller Lanier had his own flight school and was teaching college credit courses in flying and he was offering it in that department. We decided after Dr. Scarlett came here in 1968, that that program had a lot of potential. We started hiring under the department of Industrial Studies. A young man at that time, who became chairman of the department later, and we hired colonel Jack who taught for many years to help him. In a few years, we got a department of aerospace and majors in aerospace technology and aerospace management. Now they have a mechanic school to certify mechanics, FAA certified mechanics. And additional programs. That department is probably second to Mass Communications in the number of out of state students attracted. They have a good national reputation to students who come there from all over the country. That's one thing that that department has done. Another thing is the printing and photography course taught now that was moved in Mass Communications, originated in the department of Industrial Studies. Harold Baldwin, who was the first photography teacher in Mass Communications, started the program in printing and the program in photography in Industrial Studies. They were moved over into Mass Communications when Mass Communications started. Those were two of the most significant things. That department advises students who take Environmental Science and Technology. Dr. Bill Mathis and his wife, Kathy, are part of the advisors in that program. That program has been on the books for 12 to 15 years, but didn't grow very much but in the later years, with Mathis interested, they now have 125 majors, which is significant. That program is unique, though, in that it was designed by participation in 4 departments. It had representatives from 4 departments working together to plan a curriculum on that. There is an advisor in each of those 4 departments now, and a fifth has been added in geology. It even goes outside the school of Basic & Applied Sciences and gets an advisor from the
department of geology along with agriculture, chemistry, and physics, biology, and industrial studies. It's a cooperative effort which is a little bit unique. Then also, that department had a lot to do with starting the coop program on this campus. It was the center of concentration for the coop program for a number of years. Now it involves the whole campus. There are over a 100 people enrolled formally in the coop program in which they work a semester and go to school a semester. And add an extra year before they graduate, but they get a lot of experience in working in a field of their major. It's very successful.

FORSYTHE: I've got a list of names from a catalog. I want to ask you what you remember about them or any anecdotes? Robert Armburst?

VOORHIES: Dr. Armburst came here, and he didn't have his doctorate degree at the time. He was working on it at Southern Illinois University and came here from Ohio. Moved his family here and ended up teaching courses in how to teach Industrial Arts and woodwork. He served a number of years. A good, very dependable faculty member.

FORSYTHE: Harold Baldwin?

VOORHIES: Harold Baldwin was from Colorado. We hired him and he had a very good background in crafts and photography and metal work and other areas. He fit in with our needs in those areas. He was an Industrial Arts teacher in Colorado. He stayed with us until he retired. He began the photography and printing courses. And moved, at his request, he wanted to go with them, and help the Mass Communication program get started. We agreed to that, and he ended up teaching photography courses and made a reputation in this area for teaching photography.

FORSYTHE: Mr. J. H. Bailey?

VOORHIES: Mr. Bailey just stayed with us a short time. About 2 or 3 years only. He was an industrial arts teacher and worked with students who were in there training to become industrial arts teachers. Don't remember a whole lot about him.

FORSYTHE: Mr. J. B. Booth?

VOORHIES: Mr. Tim Booth ran the campus printing office and was the campus printer. He just taught the course in printing under Harold Baldwin's direction. At the same time, I'd say that department spawned the central printing office for the campus. Mr. Booth started those courses and teaching a little printing and ended up running the printing office for the whole campus. Doing all the printing for the whole campus.

FORSYTHE: Clifford Brothers?
VOORHIES: Clifford Brothers was hired full-time on a temporary basis. He had a master's degree. He was a former student who worked for me at the time when I was in charge of maintenance and teaching machine shop. He worked as a draftsman. Actually, he drew the plans for Forrest Hall just the way it stands now, when he was a student here. We got permission to go ahead and build it from state government without going through an architect and a contractor. We saved a lot of money that way. Clifford stayed with us a couple of years temporarily. Mostly while he was working on a master's degree. When he left, he went to work for an architect and did full-time work as an architect. Later on, he came back and taught in the Rutherford County school system. And became superintendent of Rutherford County schools. He served for a term there and ended up being a principal of Holloway High School here in Murfreesboro. A county high school that is a special school for training in technology. For all kinds of vocational training courses.

FORSYTHE: Charles Chapman?

VOORHIES: He was temporary and for such a short time I don't remember anything much about him.

FORSYTHE: Phillip Dalton?

VOORHIES: Phillip Dalton was, to those who were here in the GI years, he was one of the best liked instructors we ever had. He was one of the few who were here when I came. He taught until he was 70 when the Board of Regents said you had to retire at 70. He retired and lived less than a year after he retired. He taught woodwork. He had a unique approach. He came from Salina, TN. In personality he seemed to be slow and thoughtful about everything he did, but he was an outstanding woodworker. His glory days were when the GIs were over there and they were all together. He taught more by just working and having the students around him working with him and watching him and asking him questions than he did by lecturing. But he always would have enough lecture to give them some understanding about what they were doing and why they were doing it. He was probably the best liked instructor of that time. Many of those students who were GIs and came back for their degrees were able to furnish their whole home with furniture they built in that shop. He would buy the wood and it would be the kind of wood from which they could build their furniture. And then by working in there together, including Mr. Dalton, that was their project and built a nice household of furniture. He had a droll sense of humor. I remember hearing him say one time when I was walking into his class one morning and students were a little slow coming in, what I remember hearing him say was: Now some of you came from Lawrenceburg, Columbia, and Franklin and you always get here on time. But some of you live way over there at Jones Hall just can't make it can you? That's why they liked him so much, I guess that's one reason. But they respected the craftsmanship as much as anything else. And he was a great one.
VOORHIES: Calvin Duggan was one of those GIs that came back after WWII and he was very good in machine shop. I taught machine shop and had him in class and I saw how good he was and hired him to work for us on the campus to make things out of metal that we needed. He went on and got a master's degree and ended up teaching in the engineering department. Teaching machine shop in the engineering department at Auburn. He came from Centertown, which is between here and McMinnville and we were able to hire him back when we had a vacancy and he came back and taught until he retired. He was very good in machine shop. There was one person in between us, but he taught my job teaching machine shop courses eventually.

VOORHIES: Delbert Dyke was here when I came, to. He taught crafts and industrial arts teacher education courses in sheet metal and welding. He was from Oklahoma State University. Was an industrial arts teacher there and he taught here for about 10 years, I guess. Went to Texas and became chairman of a state college in Texas in the department of industrial studies. He was a very good teacher and highly respected by the students.

VOORHIES: Glen Emery moved to Murfreesboro as a major in the army to teach courses in ROTC. But, he had a good background in drafting and we hired him as a part-time teacher on a temporary only to teach some courses. On Memorial Blvd. here in Murfreesboro, he has an art shop where he sells paintings and does framing.

VOORHIES: Neal Ellis was another one of the GIs we hired back. He was hired to teach drafting. He went on to go to University of Missouri and got his doctor's degree and came back and taught full-time for a long time. In 1971, when we organized the school of basic and applied sciences, and I was the dean of that school at that time, Neal Ellis became chairman of the department of industrial studies. He was there for three or four years and never did like that administrative work, he liked to teach. Dr. Gould took over from him. That was about 1974. Dr. Ellis stayed until he retired.

VOORHIES: Fesmeyer was the teacher of electricity. He had a master's degree in electrical engineering from Vanderbilt and had worked around in industry. We had a vacancy, we needed an electronics teacher and we hired him to do it. He was a
good one, but he wasn't satisfied teaching and went back to industry after awhile, and he moved to Florida. He only worked here for about 3 years.

FORSYTHER: Newby Freedman

VOORHIES: Mr. Freedman was the department chairman. When I came here in 1949, taught machine shop, he was chairman of the department of liberal arts. He was a graduate of MTSU. Came from Lewisburg. He went to Howell State and got his master's degree and came back. He was assistant football coach and basketball coach for a while, but, at the same time, Mr. Midgett was head football coach and had started the department of business at that time and Mr. Freedman ended up teaching full-time later. He became chairman of the industrial arts department and taught drafting. Quite a reputation among students because he was unique in his approach to teaching drafting. It was successful. At that time, they had to ink all their drawings. That would be unheard of today, they don't even make drawings anymore. They let the computer do all that work. He made them ink all their drawings and they'd have to walk up to his desk and get it checked. He had a red pencil and he'd mark it all up and send them back to start all over again. He was chairman of the department for a long time.

FORSYTHER: Richard Gould

VOORHIES: Dr. Gould came to Murfreesboro as an industrial engineer with General Electric plant and worked out there. He and I were members of the same church, St. Mark's United Methodist Church, which is on the campus, for all practical purposes. I became acquainted with him there, and we worked pretty closely with the industries around. Took students through the plants for field trips, and so forth. He was interested in teaching and talked about teaching some night courses, and so forth. I think did, maybe teach a night course or two. General Electric corporation sent him to DeKalb Illinois to another plant from here. Dr. Gould had been in the navy and had taken a course paid for by the navy at Old Miss and met his wife and married her. She didn't like it much in Illinois and wanted to move back to Murfreesboro, so I tried to talk him into coming to teach for us while he was here, and didn't have much luck. But after he moved up there, why, the next time I called him, he said, I'll be down to talk to you. We hired him. I don't know exactly when it was, but he just retired this July, 1995. He'd had over 20 years by that time. I guess it was in the early 70's that we hired him. He became chairman of the department, he succeeded Dr. Ellis in about 1974. Was department chairman ever since. Built the department. As I said, industrial engineering was his background and he went to the University of Tennessee and got his doctorate degree. He was more a specialist in quality control. And he taught quality control courses around the middle Tennessee area and the Nissan plant and Saturn plant and other places. He helped build the department and strengthen the background in preparing students better to work in the technical jobs in the industry. Built the program and hired the faculty. Is largely responsible for the success it has today.
FORSYTHE: Kathy Mathis

VOORHIES: Kathy Mathis is the wife of Bill Mathis. Bill and Kathy both had engineering degrees from Tennessee Tech and we hired Bill he was working on his Ph.D. in civil engineering. A few years after he came to work here, he did get his degree. Kathy had worked on her master's degree in engineering. We hired her just to teach night courses on just an adjunct basis. She did such a good job, later on she was put on a tenure track position and has achieved tenure now, I'm sure. She went to Tennessee State and got her Doctor of Education degree and is well qualified and a good teacher. The two of them have taught courses in, and advised students in environmental science and technology. That's not the only thing they've done but they've done that and done it very well. Largely responsible for that program's success.

FORSYTHE: James Howard Gontz

VOORHIES: Dr. Gontz, we hired him when Delbert Dyke left, to teach crafts and sheet metal and welding courses. That was, I guess, sometime about 1960 or shortly thereafter. It could have been the late 50's. He stayed to retire. Still lives nearby. Was a good teacher, had his doctor's degree from the University of Alabama. Was a good strong teacher who would like to argue well enough, he taught me a lot everytime I argued with, I learned something. He was interested in doing a good job and would question everything he thought was not driven to that end. So he made a major contribution to the department.

FORSYTHE: Carol Harding

VOORHIES: Carol Harding was an art teacher. That's another thing I forgot to mention a while ago. The art department was spawned in the department of industrial arts. The art courses that were taught, there was only one lady teacher, Miss Hester Rogers, was here for a long time. And Carol Harding was hired to replace Hester Rogers. Then it was decided that we should have a separate department of art. So we hired Fred Rubens, who later became the first chairman of the art department, I think. We hired some of the other teachers. We had 3 or 4 art teachers and pulled it out of that department and established a department of art on its own.

FORSYTHE: Harold Jewel

VOORHIES: Harold Jewel was another one of the GIs that came here that was hired to teach machine shop. When I quit teaching machining shop, he took over and Calvin Dugan took over from him. He succeeded me in teaching machine shop when I ceased to be the superintendent of buildings and grounds or director of maintenance, he took over from that job for me too. He always insisted he wanted to teach at least one course. So all the years, 20 years, I guess, he was superintendent of buildings and grounds and in charge of the maintenance
program, but always kept teaching that one course. He ended up teaching drafting only. But he taught machine shop for several years and Calvin Dugan took his place when he moved into maintenance. Later on, he changed back to teaching full-time and taught drafting full-time until he retired, just a few years ago. Very good, loyal, hard working person.

**FORSYTHE: J. Thomas Helm III**

**VOORHIES: Tom Helm's still teaching in the department of industrial studies. He was a graduate of Vanderbilt in mechanical engineering. Had worked in several jobs around Middle Tennessee. He and Dr. Gould were both naval officers. They were in naval reserve together. So, when Dr. Gould had a vacancy after he became department chairman, he hired Tom Helm for the job. Tom Helm is an excellent instructor. Has a very good engineering background and likes to teach. He taught for a few years and went into consulting work around the middle Tennessee area. In industrial engineering. And really became a specialist in sound. He joined in with another teacher in the department of speech at MTSU and they did consulting work for industries. They had the equipment to measure sound and went around to industries doing that. All the time he kept teaching night courses, and he kept in touch, and now he's back full-time teaching. He's a very good teacher.**

**FORSYTHE: George Johnson**

**VOORHIES: George Johnson had an electrical engineering degree from the University of Tennessee and was interested in teaching. He was working on a doctor of education degree at the University of Tennessee. When I went up there to work on my doctor's degree, I became acquainted with him. He started about the same time as I did. We had a vacancy in electricity. I talked him into coming here. He said it would be temporary because he was still working on his dissertation, hadn't finished his degree, but came here and taught electricity for us for 2 years. Until he got his doctor's degree. He ended up teaching in Knoxville College, I believe, which is a black institution in Knoxville last time I heard from him. He was of short duration, but an excellent teacher, and an excellent young man. Did a good job of teaching for the time he was here.**

**FORSYTHE: William Mullins**

**VOORHIES: Bill Mullins is still, he retired a year ago, I guess, but he's a teacher of electricity. He'd been in the navy for a number of years, and retired from the navy and had a good background and came here and taught electricity for several years.**

**FORSYTHE: Miller Lanier**

**VOORHIES: Miller Lanier was the one I was talking about earlier who was not ever just a college teacher. He had his own flight school here. When I came here in 1949**
and taught courses for college credit, he had his flight school and he taught the
ground school courses himself. Therefore, he was listed as a faculty member for
that purpose. That was under the department of industrial arts. At that time, the
airport was about where the eastern most high rise dormitories, that's Cummings
Hall, where the infirmary is now, there was a little small hangar and a small office
where he conducted his flight courses. 60 horsepower airplanes, Cub planes
flying in and out and landing over there. Had some hangars across the ditch down
at the other end near where the Wesley Foundation is now for some private
planes. Several people kept his private planes there, took lessons from him,
brought planes, and flew around in their own small planes. But he'd taught a lot
of students how to fly out of that place there. That was the beginning of
aerospace. He did that for a number of years. President Smith was far-sighted
enough to understand what was going to happen in aviation in this country and
insisted that MTSC have its program in aviation. That was it. The best he could
do was offer the flight training, ground school course requirement for a flight
certificate was the only college courses at that time, and for a number of years
later. Now, the facility that was built by federal government, FAA, on the
Murfreesboro Airport, is only for MTSU students in aerospace to take training in
aircraft mechanics. That's why that facilities been able to get accredited for that
purpose. That building's named after Miller Lanier. Miller Lanier then went on
from teaching those courses, and after we established the department of aerspace,
and moved, he was instrumental in talking the city of Murfreesboro into building
the airport that is now off Highway 231 toward Lebanon. Moved the flight school
there, and he managed that airport and that flight school. He later became the
commissioner of aviation for the state of Tennessee. He was the head man in
aeronautics and aviation for the state. All the time helping us with our program
here. But he's no longer was in that job, I guess it was called director, its director
of aeronautics, I think. When he ceased to do that anymore, he came back here
and was hired by the MTSU Foundation to help us with our program in aerospace
as a consultant and then he became ill and later died. Until then, he was
employed as a consultant by the MTSU Foundation. He raised the money for his
own salary from former students. Several of them, by the way, fly for airlines.
Well, John Ellington is one of them. well, he's Governor Ellington's son. He got
his bachelor's degree here with an industrial arts major, and learned to fly from
Miller Lanier. He ended up being the chief pilot for Delta Airlines and retired.
But he's back working at the Smyrna airport after retirement from that job now.
Several other of those who started out at the Miller Lanier flight school have held
important jobs with the FAA and airlines. Several of them still flying for the
airlines.

FORSYTHE: You mentioned Colonel Jack

VOORHIES: Jean Jack, a very unusual fellow. We did well when we hired Colonel Jack. He's
been one of the outstanding instructors in aerospace without any doubt. Students
have probably as much respect for him as anybody. Colonel Jack was a retired
airforce, was a colonel and was working as a civilian in ADC. We hired Randall
Wood who was an air force pilot, and one of our graduates with a master's degree, as the first, after Miller Lanier, aerospace instructor. The second one was colonel Jack. We heard about him and called him and he came for an interview. Randy Wood and I talked about it and we said he's very much interested and has an excellent background. He was doing research over at ADC where they have a wind tunnel and measure the effect of velocity of wind on airplane wings, and whatnot. It's highly technical. He understood what they were doing over there. We said, he looks like a good person, he's interested in it, looks like he wants to do a good job, but will he shoot over their heads? Well, that was a problem. But, the beauty of it was that Colonel Jack understood that problem better than anybody else did. He worked and worked and worked. He even bought and airplane to take the students up and demonstrate to them the theory of flight. He taught the course in the theory of flight. I mean out of his own money, and without extra charge, he'd fly them and discuss these points. He stayed over here day and night. Ended up with a simulation lab where we're able to get some federal funds to have flight simulation on campus. He ended up so interested in that, even after he retired, he stayed over here a lot of time, without any pay, just to help students understand what was going on in the lab. That's the kind of teacher he was. We didn't really have any trouble with him shooting over students' heads because he was more aware of it that we, therefore, he would stay with them and keep talking about it and keep demonstrating until they learned it. He was highly respected. He helped a whole lot of them to understand what he was talking about instead of just lecturing to them in the classroom. Became an outstanding teacher, and is still coming on the campus after all, he's been retired longer than I have, more than 10 years, now, because of his age. But he's still coming back and helping students in flight simulation