Hello, I am Charmaine Tomczyk, Project Director for the Coastal Carolina University History Project, which includes collecting oral histories from individuals who contributed to the development of Coastal Carolina University. Today I am pleased to interview Dr. Robert W. Squatriglia who served as the first Dean of Student Development beginning November 15, 1977 here at Coastal Carolina when it was Coastal Carolina College. “Dr. Bob”, as he is known, served 33 years in student development.

Transcription of Squatriglia interview, February 9, 2016 by Charmaine Tomczyk

Q1. Welcome. Before we talk about your career, Bob, I’d like to begin by asking you about your time before coming to Coastal. I understand that both you and Dr. E.M. “Dick” Singleton our former Chancellor here attended graduate school together at the Univ. of SC in Columbia. Will you share some things about Dick as a classmate and colleague and how your relationship grew?

Thanks, Charmaine; delighted to be here and delighted to be a part of your archives which is unique to Coastal Carolina University, College as it once was, and I am delighted to be here.

Dick Singleton and I first met in 1967 at the University of SC Columbia campus. In 1967 I had decided to leave my job as Assistant Dean of Men at the College of William and Mary to pursue a doctorate. I already had a master’s degree as well as a bachelor’s and I choose to move to University of South Carolina, Columbia. Dick and I in 1967 met and we shared classes together for a year.

During that period of time Dick had taken a leave of absence from Coastal College at that time in order to establish his residency and qualify for the PhD program. During that year’s time, Dick was living away from home, so we would often meet for lunch. He came to our house, our home, our apartment in Columbia and we developed a strong friendship. It turned out we were the two oldest students in the class. I was much younger of course than Dick but in any case we had experiences that our fellow students didn’t have.

Over that period of time, we shared four courses. The courses centered around the history of higher education, also the development of higher education and student services, etc. We were asked in a project taught by a man named Chuck Whitten, who was the Vice President for Student Affairs at that time at USC, to develop our ideal college. So that was an opportunity for Dick and me to brainstorm in terms of the ideal.

As it turned out most of what I was aspiring to do in terms of an ideal college was to duplicate the experiences that I had at College of William and Mary, my alma mater, a small liberal arts college. Those were the discussions that Dick and I had. Now in our second year we didn’t see each other as frequently because our responsibilities changed but we kept up with each other. And in 1970 when I left with a degree from USC we maintained our contact by phones and cards and so on.

Lo and behold some 10 years later in 1977, I received a phone call from Dick inviting me to come here to the campus to be a candidate for the position of Dean of Student Development. Betty and I were
delighted to return to the South; prayed about it. And Dick was the one who said, “Conway is a great place to raise your family; it’s a great place to make a contribution and put into practice the ideals that you and I had discussed many years ago.” So that in a nutshell is how Betty and I came to Conway, SC in 1977.

Q2. There was a lot to do in 1977 at this small college. You were very involved in the creation of the first residence hall on campus. Will you talk about that time and your experience with that construction?

Sure. When I came to the campus in 1977 one of the first things that I heard from people was the need for residence halls. Students were clamoring for residence halls on the campus. Now the enrollment at that time was about 1,200 students. We had five buildings on the campus. The plan had been underway to establish a student center which we did. But at the same time the greatest need that we had on the campus no doubt was residence halls. At that time, when I came here, a plan had already been put into place by Don Thompson who was the Dean of Business.

We had a three dean concept at that time, a dean of business, a dean of students and a dean of academic affairs. Incidentally, I had known Paul Stanton when I was at USC because while we didn’t work together, he was the one who made me a job offer in terms of a graduate assistantship back in ‘67.

Tomczyk: And Paul Stanton was the Academic Dean at that time to form that triad?

Right. So that was one of the attractions, the fact that I knew two of the three principal players here at Coastal was very attractive. I worked very closely with Don Thompson. Essentially Don had made a proposal to the Faculty Senate as well as the [Horry County] Higher Education Commission as far as residence halls were concerned. I met with students who had developed a survey. We expanded the survey and I began to realize that what we needed to do: was my responsibility was to listen, to learn, and to lead. My experience prior to coming to Coastal had been fourteen years on four different campuses, all residential. So a non-residential campus, Charmaine, was a new experience for me.

We would laugh about the fact that at noon on Friday we could see nothing but pigeons. Cars were gone; students were gone. This was basically a four and a half-day campus.

The goal, the idea, of a residential campus to impact the total development of the student was really an ideal that attractive to me. My experience before coming to Coastal immediately prior to that was at the State University of New York [SUNY] where I was involved with the building of a field house and also a campus radio station. Before that on SUNY, Brockport I had built residence halls. So I had the experience. In fact my colleagues would call me “Bob the Builder” which was amusing. In fact I have one of those little critters right here that was given to me some time ago by a colleague.

In 1978 we developed a survey and at the same time recognized, in addition to that, to develop a service because we had a great interest on the part of students in residence life. So in the process I built a program called OCUS, off-campus information service, that was a service that collected information for students as far as residence halls, actually apartment living and also motel living was basically what it was.

Tomczyk: So the design was really not the traditional residence style floor by floor; it really was apartment style back then?
Well, it was interesting because initially Don had been a White House Fellow and had contacts with HUD, Housing and Urban Development in Washington. We put together a package. We knew we could get HUD money. The HUD money that was eventually awarded to us was $3M at 3% over a 40 year payback period.

My responsibility in terms of putting that HUD program together was to visit UNC-Charlotte and UNC-Wilmington, both of which had originally started their residence program off of HUD. We put together a traditional plan that was called a double-loaded corridor residence hall. Bill Baxley had contacts in Washington and Bill, you might say saddled up, as Director of Development, and delivered that grant application personally to HUD with copies to our senators.

Lo and behold we received a telegram, miraculously we thought, that we were awarded the grant. Now one thing that hadn’t been done, we hadn’t notified then President of the USC system, Jim Holderman. Jim, in his own inimitable fashion who was so concerned about control and process, was basically quite upset. What he did was to then establish a campus system residence hall study committee and I was a part of that. We put our package together and brought it forward and that package unfortunately, although it was passed and recommended to the legislature where the master plan was changed in order that we could become a residential campus; that whole bill was then vetoed by then governor Dick Riley.

So in 1980 suddenly we were back where we started, in other words, no residence halls. It wasn’t until 1986 when Ron Eaglin came to the campus that we were able to pursue the residence halls program again.

Tomczyk: So that original grant to HUD had to be declined?

It was the first time in the history of HUD that a housing grant awarded to one of ten campuses in the nation was refused. Ironically my good friend John Jones at the University of Alabama, Birmingham called me because they had finished eleventh in the competition. He called and he said “Is it right? is it accurate that your campus has turned back the grant? Because Bob we are next in line.” [I said,] “John you are exactly right; it is. Now I hope you will name your residence hall Coastal or Coastal Carolína in our honor.” Well, we laughed about that and laughed about that for years to come. Sadly we lost out on that opportunity. It was a sharp amount of disappointment on the campus at that time. Careers changed at that time. This was a major disappointment on the campus at the time, a setback.

Then, however, in 1985 when Ron Eaglin came to the campus we put together another package and this time it was approved. And then we moved ahead with residence halls.

This was a breakthrough for the campus because as Dick would say there was nothing on the other side of the big ditch. The big ditch was simply an open ditch without a drainage pipe or whatever that separated the back side of the campus. There was nothing on the back side of the campus until we built what we now call The Woods, six apartment buildings housing 600 students and Georgian architecture. That was a breakthrough for the campus because residence halls on the other side of the campus, in what’s called modified Georgian architecture, was really the lynch pin for that side of the campus and dictated the architecture for the Wall building and all the other parts of the campus. Over the years Dick thanked me for holding out. By that time he had retired. He said “Bob, thanks for holding out for Georgian architectural on the other side of the campus”.

Page 3
Tomczyk: Just so that we can get a logistically feel for this, Bob - When you talk about the big ditch, remnants of that still remain on campus today in 2016, don’t they? Between the Cathcart Smith Science building and the student center; it ran all the way across?

It ran from [Hwy] 544 to 501 and down toward the ocean. Now what was interesting was that behind the baseball stadium there was a big ditch. A lot of water snakes were down there. I would hold my breath because we had youngsters chasing foul balls down there. Our baseball players never chased the balls; they knew what was down there. But thank the Lord, no one was ever bitten. But that was a big, big ditch and with erosion over the years it became even larger.

Tomczyk; Well I think it’s hard to imagine -- now that we have an idea of where that ditch is -- that everything on one side of that was really forest and undeveloped area.

Totally undeveloped and in fact Dick and I would ride the campus and it was a dirt road in those days. I recall that Dick, in his Caprice Classic leased from Palmetto Chevrolet; his brother-in-law, Cater Floyd of course. Dick and I would ride and all of a sudden he would break the car and back up and throw it in forward gear again and I would say, “Dick, what was that?” “Copperhead,” he’d say. There were a lot of critters you might say on that side of campus. It was interesting when we did get into clearing the construction site for residence halls, there were a lot of varmints that had to be flushed out.

That particular, original complex included the dining hall. We put together a $6.5 M package for residence halls that included six building plus a dining hall. The dining hall was not a reality, because we ran out of money. Now the Columbia campus did dictate that we have apartments. Because we thought that what we could do in the process of building residence halls would also be to justify a dining hall. Well that didn’t happen. Instead what we had were self-contained apartments with appliances, etc. But they were brick and they were modified Georgian architecture.

Tomczyk: There were five of them?

Six buildings. They were lettered A – F and we changed that. We had a contest in which we re-named those buildings.

Tomczyk: The contest was among the students?

Yes, the contest was among the students. We renamed them The Woods and they of course are all varieties of trees, oak, elm, dogwood, etc.

Tomczyk: Do you recall any of the other names that were suggested for those buildings?

Well, there were some bizarre names. It was a challenge at the time to quell, you might say (smile), the creativity of the students. But eventually through a series of discussions and negotiations we came to The Woods.

Tomczyk: Thank you, Bob. Is there anything else about the construction of those? So went back to HUD, we got a HUD for less money?
Well, it was a bond. No, it was a bond that came from the State backed by the Higher Education Commission; Paul Malone and others. I worked with them. First we had to select an architect and a design. It was really a challenge. One of the things in working with the Higher Education Commission, I recall having to negotiate was - they didn’t understand that we needed a window per bedroom. They thought and they gave me a choice one day in a meeting. They said “Bob, do you want an extra foot of a building or do you want windows in every bedroom?” Well as a Dean of Students, knowing that this was not a monastery, but instead a residence hall, we wanted windows.

Tomczyk: I’m sure the students thanked you for that recommendation.

(Laugh) They never knew.

Tomczyk: So how long did it take for the construction of those dorms and when did they open?

We had ground breaking in 1986 and the buildings came on line in 1987. Now it was a true challenge because this was a campus that didn’t know what it didn’t know in terms of residence halls. Remember I said we were going from a four and half day a week campus to suddenly 24/7. I would use the analogy of lining up two hundred students in double line intervals over by the Wheelwright and suggesting that those students as they came across the campus, everything that they touched beginning with the student center that had been built online in 1978, would change. We needed food service. We needed health service. We needed expanded security. The library, as you know, had to go to expanded hours because that was the study site for campus. Intramurals and recreation; all of those services that we had either minimal or not at all had to be expanded.

Tomczyk: Did we have a shuttle service at that time?

No shuttle service.

We did have in the student center the first professional food service that was PFM as it was called; an organization from Boston that was willing to come online a year in advance of our residence halls with the hope that one day they would get that food contract.

Tomczyk: But prior to that we did have food on campus. There was the CINO grill, right?

We had CINO Grill located in what’s called Atheneum Hall now, the alumni center and basically that was contract service with Oliver restaurant; still in operation [locally] today.

Q3. One of the difficult responsibilities of Dean of Students must be handling students’ deaths. You seemed to do more than notify the family when you were Dean of Students. You really established memorial services and commemoratives. Can you explain a little more about that and tell me why you believed that was so important to establish?

First as an undergraduate at William and Mary my senior year I had responsibility for two hundred plus students because I assumed the responsibility of a professional full time who had some medical problems. So I had responsibility as a senior to be working with two hundred freshmen as it turned out. Sadly in mid-year there was a death; one of those students died. As a result of that my responsibility was to go in and inventory his personal property, etc.
But it then struck me with trying to deal with his friends at that time. So I was sensitized through my own experiences as an undergraduate about the importance of providing an opportunity for students, friends, family, and so on, to grieve.

Fast forward to 1973 (sic 1963) at William and Mary when JFK was assassinated I was Assistant Dean of Men at that time. I remember coming off the campus with my boss and suddenly seeing that Kennedy had been assassinated, etc, etc and how we really winged it at that time in terms of providing opportunities for the campus to grieve.

When I came to this campus the first death that we had was a basketball player who had a congenital heart disease. And I did go to his funeral. The second death was a very popular student, who was Vice President of Student Government and he died in a motorcycle accident. His family was in California and I realized that we needed to have some type of a memorial service for him. The Wheelwright Auditorium was used. It was a powerful moment. We did videotape it; the opportunity for the campus to grieve, for counselors to work with the grieving, as well as the family when they came onto campus. Subsequently, sadly we had a variety of deaths that would occur. By that time we had a protocol we would offer friends and family to provide a memorial service on campus. I also represented the university to the actual burial site of the individual. Later we started an annual memorial service on the campus in Spadoni Park for individuals to be recognized who had died in the previous year.

Tomczyk; I think now we have so many occasions on college campuses to mourn the deaths of students for various reasons and I think your handling of this service early on was really forward-thinking to assist others to help come to terms with those tragic instances -- I think a lot better than they would otherwise without that support. I thank you for that.

You’re welcome. It was a responsibility that I felt I had. Betty and I, being the parents of four children, we recognize how important it was for the family to have an opportunity to grieve with friends; for community to gather and be mutually supported…and celebrate the life of that student.

Q4. Coastal experienced tremendous growth in the 70s when you were here and hired and into the 2000s with about 9,000 students. You said earlier we had about 1200 students when you came and now we are close to 10,000 students at Coastal. Can you describe for me how this growth affected your job over those 33 years that you were in that position?

Well, thank you. I was Dean of Students / Vice President for Student Affairs over the period 1977 – 2003. Afterwards I was on board seven years as special consultant to Advancement working with alumni, with the various students that I had served as Dean of Students previously. I realized when I came to the campus that what I had to do was listen, learn, and lead. In fact I came to understand that the campus didn’t know what it didn’t know. That was a conclusion that I had and I had talked to Dick about it because in essence most of the folks who were here were young faculty. This was in many cases their first college experience as a full time faculty member. Then when you bring in residential, and our aspirations for residential, in essence I established a research program of determining what the needs of the students
were. CIRP which is a Collegiate Information Research Project out of UCLA was nationally recognized and I recommended and we did start that program in our summer orientation which I started as well.

Tomczyk: I believe that’s still used today.

Yes, it is because it measures what the expectations of students are and compares them to national norms. Ironically in the first year in national norms, the norms, when they came back, labelled us as a junior college. So I went to Dick and I said, “Dick, they’ve done it again.” We had to educate UCLA that we were Coastal Carolina College, not community college. There happens to be a community college in N.C. by the same name.

What we didn’t have was essentially a code of conduct, we didn’t have student handbooks. I established committees working jointly with faculty in terms of establishing various committees and groups. Faculty collaboration was a very important thing. When I came to the campus we had a director of student activities and he had a secretary. We had and I was responsible for athletics at that time. Walt Hambrick was the AD and he had a secretary, Jeanne Casey. Then we had Sarah McDonald responsible for financial aid and Johnny Grant was also part of the program. That was basically it; we had no counseling, no placement; no intramurals of any impact; No career services. No internships, none of those. We didn’t have a student handbook, we didn’t have student policies; we didn’t have a student media committee.

My predecessor who was a good friend of mine and I know of yours as well an esteemed colleague, Ron Lackey became the university chaplain. I would meet with Ron and I’d say to him “Ron, we don’t have X, tell me why?” and his response - God bless him - was always be the same “that’s why you’re here, big guy.” (smile). I realized as I said to others, including Dick, that I felt like I was in the back field and the quarterback and I would identify a need and get the ball and try to hand it off to someone. That someone was not in existence. So basically we established a process of hiring work study students.

When we started the off campus housing information service I hired a student at twenty hours a week, put her in a State car and she drove up and down the Grand Strand visiting with and interviewing hotels to see if we could establish a relationship with them for students from outside the area who wanted to live closer to the campus.

Likewise with health service; the first person we had for health services on the campus was an emergency medical technical who was coming back to school in order to get his degree. He had been an army medic and Whimkin was his name and today he is physician’s assistant. We hired Tom twenty hours a week to have an office to give students information. Then we had liaison with family physicians as well. The first relationship we had was with a Dr. John Dieter. John became the family physician. We had a committee composed of Dr. John Wilson and others in order to establish the service.

Tomczyk: Those services were off campus, right? We partnered with them to provide services when needed. Students would go to their offices. Tell me Bob, how did the student you said who drove along the Strand for partnerships succeed? Did it work out?

Yes, it did. Basically we had an information desk set up at the student center. And we had a call in number. A student was there with a three-ring binder with all of the information regarding apartment living, and apartment houses/rooms and hotel rooms as well. The rates were there and agreement was
struck with those renters as for what our students could and couldn’t do. We provided that information to the students with the understanding that we could not be responsible. But we wanted to educate the student as a consumer as to what he or she could expect.

Tomczyk: so it was a referral service. The university did not contract with those entities; the students did that on their own.

By definition it was called off campus information services. I was very conscious about the fact that the choice has to be the students and the parents. We could not be a collection agency for the landlord. We were at arm’s length regarding that.

Tomczyk: I suspect those numbers helped you when it came time to have residence halls on campus because the need was so great.

That was what we were able to establish was the need; easily through CIRP research in which students wanted housing through the on campus surveys that we had through student newspaper, the Chanticleer, as well as through OCUS. We could demonstrate upward trend each year that the need was increasing and if we were to serve students in safe compatible housing. We could push forward the argument we needed campus housing.

Tomczyk: When you talk about student services, were there any other services you had to create from scratch; what about multicultural services we have now?

We did not have minority student services on the campus. I was able to prevail upon a good friend, George Williams, a retired high school principal and a member of my church. Our children were very close. He’s a minority; great guy, the first Afro-American faculty member on the campus, to come out of retirement and serve as our Director of Minority Student Relations. His office was adjacent to mine. He was very effective in that role. I wanted a role model who was articulate and who was recognized in the community. We did a variety of things together to include the establishment and recognition of Afro-American teachers. We had Rubin Greenberg, a minority police chief from Charleston, to speak. We had some other speakers who came and at that time we established other programs as well. We established the Challenge program, the Leadership Challenge program that continues with that name today.

Tomczyk: Pat Singleton-Young served in that position.

I hired Pat in 1978; she was my first hire. I recognized that we needed to have a minority staff member. She was the first. Mary Williams was a minority staff member to student activities. Al Poston went elsewhere and eventually Pat took that position as Director of Student Activities and she earned her master’s at that same time. We hired Pat away from the Hilton Corp. incidentally. She was our alum and the first alum that I hired.

Tomczyk: Is there anything else you would like to say about the transition and changes?

The biggest change, and the biggest challenge, on the campus was residence halls. Because once we had residence halls we needed to have the support services as well. We brought in Kim Montague as the first Director of Residence Life. I’m happy to say that Ron Eaglin recognized the need to hire a Director of
Residence Life a year in advance so that he could market residence halls and also be liaison with the construction. Remember that this was a maintenance staff that had no insight into residence halls. It’s not like a motel that you can change the light bulb the next day. For these students if there was a plumbing issue or a lighting issue or something, this was their bedroom. Ditto with the dining hall program; this was something we expanded.

The student center when it came on line in 1978 was one third of what it should have because of budget. One million and a half dollars was taken off of budget. That meant basically one third of that facility was missing. In that student center was also a dining area and bookstore so we had very few services for students at that time.

I think one of the greatest things that happened is the establishment of the Lib Jackson Student Center or Student Union; something that was always a priority for student affairs on the campus but never made it as a campus priority given the idea and certainly the concept of the academic program being first.

Tomczyk: I’m glad it came to fruition; it is a beautiful building. I’m curious about the part that had to be chopped out. Who gave up what for that section that could not be built?

The meeting space went for students. In terms of the façade, the original façade, an architect firm that went bankrupt, happily because they should have never been in the business to begin with. They had the concept of a glass front; very expensive. So one of the first things that went was the glass front. I came to the campus and interviewed in ’77 and I was excited about the fact that we had a student center coming on line because this was certainly the place where students would have their living room. This is where they could interact and we could supply services.

Little did I know that we lost one third of the building. Dick Singleton never told me. Dick always apologized for the fact that we didn’t have the building we should have. However, what we did, Dick and I was one of the things that we added to the back of the building was a patio. That patio was built thanks to the good support of E. Craig Wall, Jr. and my good friend, Don Helms, for about $700. They poured it and that became the outdoor programming space for many years.

Later in 1986, Ron Eaglin when he was chancellor agreed we needed to box that in. Then we suddenly had sufficient dining room for students. Prior to that time we had a large meeting space that was also the dining space overflow and that was it.

The game room was on the second floor – very small. Offices were very small, so that was a real challenge for us. For programming on the campus, if it weren’t in the Wheelwright then it had to be off campus. I recall the first year, really the first two years, that I was on the campus we had an honors dinner in the Landmark Hotel. Ironically people were more concerned about cold peas than they were about the students that we honored.

I’m happy to say that Dick did accept my recommendation to have an honors convocation. We did cite the Wheelwright Auditorium as a logical place for the honors convocation. However, it wasn’t completed in time, so the first honors convocation was held in the gym. But I’m happy to say the next year and each succeeding years after that, the honors convocation was held in the beautiful Wheelwright Auditorium.
Tomczyk: The honors convocation you mention, this was academic honors and student affairs together – combination of the two?

It was a combination of three awards at the time. It was student awards; I’m speaking of student organization and leadership awards, academic awards and athletic awards, all at one time. It became clear to us that athletics needed to be its own. They had their own event and that’s how it should be. Then eventually it was only student affairs and academic affairs. I’m happy to say my office coordinated all this over the years. Then John Idoux, Provost at the time, agreed that academic affairs should run the academic side of the program.

Tomczyk: That was about 2002?

Yes, about 2002. Also getting back to student memorials for a moment, I had recommended we have a recognition certificate so that we could give that to parents as a kind of final message from the university that a student had been a member of our family. So the university certificate was part of honors convocation as well. So we moved from plaques which was very much of a challenge - and costly - to the university certificate which was quite a handsome and very nice certificate.

Tomczyk: Let me ask you some general questions now. What do you see as the biggest change in Coastal since you retired?

The biggest change no doubt is size. Remember that when I came to the campus in 1977 we had five buildings and 1200 students. Now, I frankly can’t keep track of the number of building we have including this building here. We have over 10,000 students and that certainly is the biggest change, in terms of size.

I also think that is the biggest challenge. How to you manage growth? How do you keep it a personalized campus? How do you keep a friendly campus?

Dick and I always discussed the fact that the ideal sized campus would be 5000 - 7,000. Once you get past 10,000 it’s really a challenge. I’ve had the opportunity and honor to serve on large campus, USC and State University of New York at Albany --on those campuses how do you personalize the campus? How do you make it friendly? How do you work collegially with parents and with faculty?

The key really is how do you develop a sense of community on a large campus?

Tomczyk: And in your opinion, what is the answer to that?

First of all, communication. I think secondly it’s people being collegiality, in terms of recognizing that we are all in this together. I’m happy to say that when I came to the campus the first think I did was to establish a series of study committees.

The second thing is to preserve our history. I’m delighted that you are the archivist because one thing we don’t do is recall our history. It’s often said if we don’t recall our history, we are doomed to be re-living it. We need to profit from our history. I think the fact that we have archives is important. Charmaine, this is a gift I want to give to the archives. That is a prototype from a businessman whose son was a student here and started a business. This is the original Coastal Carolina College seal, I want to present this to you because I know it will be in safe keeping in your hands in the archives.
Tomczyk: Thank you, Bob.

What I won’t give you is a memento that I have. Over the years, Bi-Lo had a drink that they called “Dr. Bob” and I used that as a gift to students at different times.

Tomczyk: And that is a non-alcoholic beverage.

Of course. In fact, it’s diet. There is no sodium in it as well. It’s a very healthy drink.

The other memento that is mine is something some friends gave to me some time ago. Yes, I was known as “Dr. Bob” but I was also known among my colleagues as “Bob the Builder.”

I’m pleased I had the opportunity to maintain the spirit that Dick Singleton and I established in 67. We met ten years later, I worked with Dick and then ten years later in 87 his dream, our dream, of a residential campus came to fruition. I’m happy to say Dick was alive at that time and in good health. Our friendship was maintained over the years although ironically he was a Red Sox fan and I was - and still am - an avid Yankee fan. We maintained our friendship and our collegiality.

Dick’s fingerprints are all over this campus. The spirit of Dick is very strong here. He believed in the student, he believed in the student as being the center of the enterprise. He believed Coastal should be a centerpiece for our community. We were, in terms of bringing the community together and building hospitals, building roads and bridges and also preservation in terms of various plants and animals, as well as the beauty of the campus.

Tomczyk: Over those years what was the most significant event that changed you or had an effect on you?

Well of course there are many things when you begin to think about this. You know thirty-three years is a long time. I think even after I retired and retired a second time from being a consultant I was delighted in 2010 that I was invited to start a veterans association on the campus working with my good friend Rod Gragg. In establishing the veterans association our group, that we got together, recommended to the leadership of the campus and I’m happy to say they accepted our recommendation that we establish a veterans service on campus. We hired an excellent counselor. We established an office and budget and so on and of course that transmitted itself to the future as our now being a “military-friendly campus.” I’m very proud of that; proud that we continue to serve our veterans in that regard.

Tomczyk: When you mention veterans, are you speaking about student veterans?

We are speaking of the organization that I established was one of alumni, faculty, and staff to serve as mentors and advocates for the military on the campus to include ROTC, which I’m proud to say came back a second time. And I’ve always advocated that. I believe it’s important for our campus to recognize the role and sacrifice of the military and I think it’s important for our faculty to support the concept of the citizen soldier.

Tomczyk: You are a veteran yourself and I thank you for your service.
Thank you. I’ve had the privilege to work beside wonderful men and women. We need to honor them in our daily lives by putting their interests and the interests of our nation first.

Tomczyk: I’m glad we have that service on campus. In closing, are there any specific events or memories you would like to recount?

When I came to the campus I recognized and Dick said this many times, when we first came here we need to have a process whereby we can establish services. So I became an advocate for working with and collaborating with faculty. Our award system, I’m proud to say, continues to be in excellent condition in terms of recognition of the Ron Lackey Award, as an example, the Faculty Excellence Award, the general faculty student development award, recognizing outstanding faculty who serve on behalf of students. I’m proud of that award system. It’s been said by a friend of mine that all student services on this campus stand on my shoulders. That is a humbling statement to hear from an esteemed colleague.

Tomczyk: Well, you did establish them all.

It was a pleasure to do that.

When Betty and I thought about coming to Coastal we saw it as a great place to raise children. We’ve been blessed with four great children and their children as well. And a great place to interact with the campus.

One of the things that Dick impressed on me was to give back to the community. And I think that is what Coastal is doing and I hope continues to do: To continue to be a place where we can combine the resources of the campus and focus on the community and the regional good.

That should be our mission and that should be what we hold uppermost in our minds on behalf of students and the development of students on behalf of their leadership and service to our campus and to our nation.

Tomczyk: Thank you, Bob; well said. Thank you for your time today. I really appreciate your recounting and sharing with us the many years you served at Coastal and contributed so much to its growth.

And thank you for your service as an outstanding archivist. Good luck to you in your great adventure.

Tomczyk: Thank you.