

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Glenn Lewis McMullen

COLLECTION: 4700.0760

IDENTIFICATION: LSU alumnus, Class of 1968; Anti-Vietnam War activist

INTERVIEWER: Mary Hebert

SERIES: University History – Distinguished Alumni

INTERVIEW DATES: October 4, 1996; October 8, 1996

FOCUS DATES: Late 1960s, early 1970s

ABSTRACT:

Session I

Tape 1100, Side A

McMullen born in Washington D.C., August 1945; parents from Illinois, father served in WWII; family moved to New Orleans in 1947; father's name Louie and mother's name Jean; mother worked during WWII, then was mainly in the home; both parents are high school graduates, were very intelligent, instilled value of education; getting an allowance for chores like yard work; his father inspired him; lists elementary, middle, and high schools he attended in Kenner, Louisiana, after his family moved from Gentilly, New Orleans; family move wasn't prompted by increase in crime; attendance at East Jefferson High School before it became an all-boys school, supposedly over fear that integration would mean black boys associating with white girls; aware of school desegregation in New Orleans but was not directly affected; becoming politically conscious; rumor in his community that black people must be secretly rich because they all drove Cadillacs; sorority and fraternity culture at East Jefferson High School; McMullen and friends created their own anti-fraternity called MOP and he was the president; deliberation on where to attend college, he wanted to go north but his family could not afford it; started at Northeast Louisiana State in 1963; recollections of fellow students' jubilant reaction to Kennedy's assassination made it clear he had to leave; transferred to LSU New Orleans and then to LSU Baton Rouge in 1964; he participated in ROTC but didn't like wearing a uniform or marching with a gun; he avoided most drills because he worked in the office writing press releases; doesn't believe he had to register for classes by his ROTC company; while he was a student, he worked at the library and at Edwards' Orange Bowl which was a hangout for hippie-types; progression in majors led him to associate with more philosophical and radical people; memories of philosophy professor Jason Xenakis and rumors surrounding the professor; positive influence of philosophy professor Charles Bigger; enjoyed upper-level classes in philosophy; professor Carleton Berreckman was a proponent of LSD; Berreckman once house-sat for T. Harry Williams; McMullen's various residences while a student at LSU; McMullen's girlfriend, now his wife, Judy, who he met in a journalism class after giving a speech on Barry Goldwater; Judy dealt with

rules for female students; McMullen briefly belonged to the precursor to Delta Tau Delta fraternity; he was always ambivalent about fraternity involvement; Judy wrote for the *Daily Reveille*; social life on campus involved football games, fraternity and sorority events; no prominent student leaders come to his mind; Mike Connelly was with the Young Americans for Freedom; Charles Zewe who's now with CNN; activism in free speech alley, he was usually in the background; McMullen's anti-war activism came about through the influence of fellow philosophy student Don Baker; McMullen's primary objective was that LSU catch up with other universities who were also protesting the Vietnam War in the late 1960s; rumors that Don Baker had been brainwashed in communist China; vivid memories of Tony Begg, McMullen's roommate who also worked at Edwards' Orange Bowl; McMullen thinks that Mr. Edwards' fatal heart attack was due to Edwards yelling at Begg for over-filling customers' malts; spending time with English professor Tommy Blouin at Edwards' Orange Bowl discussing Plato; he never had courses with Herbert Rothschild and isn't sure if he was an activist; planning meeting for 1967 anti-war protest took place in McMullen's apartment on Highland Road; he recalls there were students from Southern University in attendance; Dean Arden French granted a permit for the protest; it was a non-threatening protest that McMullen dressed well for; he remembers TV cameras being there; end of interview session.

Session II

Tape 1101, Side A

Continuing discussion of anti-war protest that McMullen helped organize at LSU in 1967, it involved about fifteen people; he thinks the organizing meeting was held at his apartment; Southern University students were present at the meeting; at the protest, his respectful sign was torn up; other people's signs, like Don Baker's, were more inflammatory; Mike Connelly, the Young Americans for Freedom, and some Cuban students had a hand in breaking up the protest; he was labelled a communist but expected that; the demonstration was very short, broken up almost immediately; brief meeting with Governor John McKeithen regarding a black man that was about to be executed; while teaching sixth graders in 1968, his attempt to generate a discussion on presidential candidates was a terrible mistake; if drafted, he planned to be a conscientious objector which his parents and Judy's parents disapproved of; in 1970, he drew a high draft number; brief stint at University of Colorado then returned to LSU; recalls seeing David Duke on campus, thinks Duke was a German history major at one point but heard he couldn't master the German language; after returning to LSU and drawing high draft number, he was no longer fixated on anti-war activism; doesn't think that many LSU students were attending college in order to dodge the draft; after getting his master's at LSU in 1973, spent two years at University of Massachusetts in a doctoral program; eventually ended up in the New Orleans Public Library; tremendous influence of folk music; memories of attending various folk shows in New Orleans; when he was in high school, recalls Dave Brubeck refusing to play the segregated Municipal Auditorium in New Orleans; reaction to Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination at LSU and by Judy's coworkers; on segregation in Baton Rouge, "I don't think we ever saw black people"; black students on campus weren't visible, but he does remember Charles Vincent; greatest contribution of LSU to his life was a superb education, he was a bright student and atypical, so he got to work with professors in esoteric subjects and one-on-one; end of interview.

TAPES: 2 (T1100, T1101)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 53 minutes (Session I: 35 minutes; Session II: 18 minutes)

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 37 pages (Session I: 23 pages; Session II: 14 pages)

OTHER MATERIALS: Correspondence (3 pages)

RESTRICTIONS: None