

**Kennesaw State University Oral History Series:
Policies and Procedures**

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- 1. The primary goal of the project is to interview all recipients of the main campus awards (KSU Foundation Distinguished Professor, Distinguished Teaching, Distinguished Scholarship, and Distinguished Service Awards and the Philip Preston Community Leadership Award). In addition, the project interviews top administrators, KSU Foundation trustees, and selected senior faculty members. We hope in time to interview past alumni presidents as well. The Foundation trustees are chosen from a list approved by the Executive Director of the KSU Foundation. The top administrators include all three KSU presidents and several long-serving vice presidents and deans. Senior faculty members are chosen for their central decision-making roles (for example, the chairs of the search committees that helped select Presidents Siegel and Papp), and/or for their major accomplishments on campus, in the community, and in their disciplines. An attempt has been made to include members of categories or groups that, for whatever reason, have been under-represented among the award winners.**
- 2. The purpose of the interviews is to gather primary-source (first-hand) information pertaining to the history of Kennesaw State University and the professional accomplishments of the persons being interviewed. We explain to the interviewees up front that a transcript of the interview will be placed in the KSU Archives and other places on campus, in the Georgia Room of the central Cobb County Public Library, and online through the website of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) and/or the KSU Archives. These interviews will supplement other archival material in establishing permanent source material for researchers interested in writing about the history of KSU.**
- 3. In practically all cases, potential interviewees (narrators) are first contacted by e-mail or letter. The e-mails explain the purpose of the project and why we think that person would be a good interviewee. The e-mails also explain approximately how long the interview will last, and what we will do with the tape once the interview is finished. Whenever necessary, the e-mails are followed up with telephone calls.**
- 4. The vast majority of the interviews have been conducted in the same location (the Conference Room of the CIE/CETL House, #54 on Campus Loop Road). The CIE/CETL House was formerly a private residence, and the Conference Room features living-room-type furniture surrounding a fireplace. Interviewees always sit in a comfortable chair next to the fireplace while being interviewed.**

During wintertime we typically maintain a fire in the fireplace. On several occasions when the Conference Room has been unavailable, the Bentley Rare Book Gallery has been our second choice as an interview site. Some administrators and Foundation trustees have also elected to be interviewed in their offices. The transcript always notes the place where the interview was conducted.

- 5. The first item of business in all interviews has been to secure a signed release form from the interviewee. Narrators are always told that the interview eventually will be made public, but not before they have a chance to review the edited transcript and make whatever changes they want to make. A copy of the release form is attached at the end of this document.**
- 6. The lead interviewer has been Dr. Thomas A. Scott, professor of History and a longtime member of the KSU faculty (since 1968). He has been joined for most of the interviews by Dr. Dede Yow, professor of English and also a longtime faculty member. For a few interviews, other faculty members also participated.**
- 7. The interviewers have a few questions that they ask practically everyone. We have been especially interested in questions about interviewees' backgrounds, mentors, professional accomplishments, and philosophies of teaching, scholarship, and service. We have asked most people why they came to Kennesaw, why they stayed, what they thought about the intellectual climate of KSU when they arrived, and how they perceive it today. However, oral historians never use a questionnaire, and the major questions are open-ended, allowing the interviewees to take the conversation in whatever direction seems relevant to them. All interviews contain numerous follow-up questions that could not have been anticipated before the session began.**
- 8. All the interviews in this series have been transcribed by one transcriber, Susan Estep of Woodstock, Georgia. She has been transcribing for Dr. Scott for well over fifteen years, and has also transcribed for other oral history projects at universities around the country. Her job is to make a verbatim transcript of the interview. CETL has paid transcribing costs for all interviews with Distinguished Faculty Award and Preston Award winners. The College of Humanities & Social Sciences, the KSU Foundation, the Department of History & Philosophy, the Center for Regional History & Culture, and the Athletics Department have paid for the rest of the transcripts.**
- 9. Once a transcript is completed, the Project Director gives it to a student assistant to edit. The students have been paid for their services as editors and indexers through CETL's budget. The first two (Joshua Dix and Jan Heidrich-Rice) received graduate research assistantships through the Master of Arts in Professional Writing (MAPW) program. Since then, the student assistant has been an undergraduate (Susan Batungbacal) from the Public History certificate**

program. The students were trained by the Project Director in the techniques of oral history editing. Their first task is to listen to the tape to make sure the narrator said what the transcriber typed. While listening to the interview the editors remove false starts (thoughts that are not completed when the interviewee changes her/his thought process in mid-sentence) and crutch words (expressions like “you know” that we all use to slow down the conversation while trying to formulate what we want to say next). They also make minor changes such as converting “yeah” to “yes.” And they make sure the transcript is punctuated properly. But the students do not rearrange sentences or re-write them to make them sound better. Nor do they attempt to capture dialect. If the narrator, for instance, dropped his “g’s” (goin’ to the store or runnin’ to class) the transcriber spells it correctly (going/running) and the editors leave it that way. A final task for the editors is to identify names mentioned in the transcript, giving full names and titles where possible. Anything of this type that the editors add will appear in brackets or occasionally in footnotes. The students, basically, do a light editing, designed to clean up the verbatim transcript for clarity and easier reading, but to leave untouched the modes of expression and ideas that the interviewee tried to convey.

10. After the student editors complete their work, the Project Director reads the transcript one more time while listening to the tape, to see if he can pick up anything that he remembers from the interview that perhaps was inaudible or incomprehensible to the transcribers and editors. For example, a name will occasionally be inaudible, but the director/interviewer remembers who they were talking about and can fill in a gap in the transcript.
11. The next step is to return the manuscript to the interviewee with instructions that the narrator is free to add, delete, or change anything that needs to be corrected. The release form specifically says that the interviewee has a month to complete this task, but the Project Director has frequently extended the deadline if the narrator needs additional time. To date, all interviewees have returned the manuscript with their corrections or have told the director that it is fine as written. The director honors any change that the narrator wants to make. The project is based on the assumption that the corrected transcript is the true primary source—not the tape—because the tape may contain omissions or mistakes as to names, dates, and events that do not reflect what the interviewee meant to say. The goal of this series is to produce documents that say precisely what the interviewees want to say.
12. Tapes of all interviews are preserved and stored in KSU’s Center for Regional History & Culture. However, the release form gives the Project Director permission to make public only the corrected transcript. Therefore, tapes, ordinarily, will not be made accessible to researchers. Upon receiving a request to hear a particular tape, the Project Director will attempt to contact the interviewee to determine under what conditions, if any, the interviewee will

- permit the tape to be heard. The interviewee will then be asked to sign a separate release form containing these conditions.
13. The “Principles and Standards of the Oral History Association” urge interviewers to “guard against possible exploitation of interviewees and be sensitive to the ways in which their interviews might be used” (Responsibility to Interviewees, paragraph 7). If the Project Director thinks there is something in an interview that could be libelous, he will call it to the interviewee’s attention. On one occasion, after an interview had been edited, approved by the interviewee, and made public, the Project Director removed a word from the online version after the interviewee contacted him to say that the word was causing embarrassment. The director and the interviewee agreed to remove the word “scandal” but left intact the rest of the sentence that mentioned the name of a person who “was dismissed rather quickly.” The word change did not seem to change the meaning of the sentence but did make it less objectionable to the person who had been dismissed. On a few other occasions the Project Director has removed or toned down an expression that could be embarrassing to the interviewee or to someone mentioned in an interview. For example, an administrator mentioned in his oral history that he was about to go on the road to “hit [some named potential donors] up for some money.” That administrator approved the final transcript without making any changes, trusting the Project Director to clean up anything that needed amending. Since the interview was going online where the potential donors might read it, the Project Director left unchanged the part of the interview that indicated what the administrator thought about academic fund raising and where he was going, but omitted the expression quoted above. Nonetheless, these changes are rare exceptions. In almost all cases, the editors and director merely highlight questionable comments and give the interviewee the opportunity to decide what to do with them.
 14. After the narrator has given final approval to a manuscript, the final task is to prepare an index. Most of the indices have been done by the student assistants, although the Project Director has done a few. After the students finish their work, the Project Director reviews it. The transcript always identifies the primary editor and indexer.
 15. After the oral history is completed, several copies are sent to the bindery (to provide hardback copies for the interviewee, the KSU Archives, the CETL library, the Georgia Room of the central Cobb County Library (the main public library of the county where KSU is headquartered), and occasionally for other public locations). CETL has placed on its website all interviews with recipients of the faculty awards at <http://www.kennesaw.edu/cetl/>. The KSU Archives have placed all the interviews on its website at <http://www.kennesaw.edu/archives/>.

16. It has been the policy of the Project Director and the Director of the KSU Archives to make the transcripts as accessible as possible to anyone who wants to read them. However, the online index page and most of the interviews contain a copyright statement that says that Kennesaw State University holds legal title and all literary property rights, including copyright, and that the interview is not to be reproduced without permission from the director of the Kennesaw State University Oral History Project.

Release Form

**KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
KSU ORAL HISTORY SERIES**

I, _____, do hereby give to the Kennesaw State University Oral History Project the following tape-recorded interview conducted with me on the date of _____. This unrestricted gift may be used for such scholarly and educational purposes as the director of the project shall determine. I transfer to Kennesaw State University legal title and all literary property rights including copyright. This gift does not preclude any use that I may want to make of the information in the recording.

After the interview is transcribed and I have had a month to review it and make necessary corrections, I acknowledge that bound copies will be placed in the Kennesaw State University Archives, the KSU Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning, and the Georgia Room of the Cobb County Public Library System, and that an electronic version will be placed on the CETL website at www.kennesaw.edu/cetl/ and the KSU Archives website at www.kennesaw.edu/archives/. The undersigned parties may revise or amend this document by mutual consent.

Signature, Interviewee

Signature, Project Director

Date

Date