

Southern Voices Oral History Project
Florida Southern College



Interviewee: Dabney "Satch" Davis, Class of 1947

Interviewers: LuAnn Mims, College Archivist, and James M. Denham, Professor of History

Date: April 24, 2013

Location: McKay Archives Center, Florida Southern College, Lakeland, FL

Medium: Audiocassette

Transcription: Debbie Szoke, July 2013

Mims: *April 24, 2013, LuAnn Mims for Florida Southern College. Today we will be talking with Mr. "Satch" Davis, graduate of 1954. Thank you for talking with us today Mr. Davis. Can you tell me where you were born?*

Davis: Elizabeth City, North Carolina. Pasquotank County, March 3, 1929. I believe that was the same week that Herbert Hoover was inaugurated, and my father commented one time that that was decade uh of hard times for him, and I was never sure if he was referring to me or President Hoover.

Mims: *You went to school there in North Carolina?*

Davis: No, my father was with F. W. Woolworth, he was a manager and we left there uh, in 1934. He was promoted to the store there in Roanoke, Virginia. That's where I started school.

Mims: *Ok, so how long were you in Virginia?*

Davis: We were in Roanoke, I was there from first grade through first semester fifth grade. Then he was transferred to the store in Orlando. That's how we got to Florida, courtesy of F. W. Woolworth.

Mims: *So, this was about 1939 or so?*

Davis: Well, no, we came to Orlando in January 1940.

Mims: *Pre-War.*

Davis: Right.

Mims: *Ok. So, did you go to Orlando high school?*

Davis: Yes.

Mims: *Which one?*

Davis: Well in those days, there wasn't but one. Yeah, uh, I was there from '44 to '47. I graduated in the class of '47.

Mims: *Now you're an Alum of Florida Southern College, so how did you come by to be here?*

Davis: I, well, I will try to make it as brief as possible. Uh, I went to prep school for a year at OHS up in Virginia. So, I didn't even start college until '48 and in those days the admissions requirements for Florida State and University of Florida, you had to be a graduate of a accredited white high school. So, I enrolled at the University of Florida. I was there three years and one summer, and majoring in high adventure females and ROTC. So, I was asked to leave, and I left, worked for a semester, reapplied, I was accepted again, and uh this procedure you know uh, the uh registrar said that, "We don't think you're happy here in the academic barn yard." So uh, I spent a year in Orlando, living and working at Fairchild funeral home doing ambulance work etcetera. And then, I came over here, probably in January 1953 and uh, Dean Peel very graciously allowed me to enroll, because my academic record at the University of Florida uh, I was you know, amazed that I got in. But anyway, here three semesters and one summer and graduated with I think a three point average, I'm not sure. So, uh.

Mims: *So why FSC? What brought you here?*

Davis: I'm not sure. Uh, I probably should have come here originally. You know for the small environment and so forth, but I really, I'm not sure how I found out. But we had moved, in 1950 we moved from Orlando to Cocoa Rockledge. My father left Woolworth and went in business for himself and there was several ladies or girls that I met when we moved to Cocoa that were coming to Florida Southern, so that's probably how, you know, I found out about it. I didn't come here because, uh you know, I had a romantic relationship with these gals. Uh, and that's about it.

Mims: *What was your major here?*

Davis: Major in History and a minor in English.

Mims: *History and English. Who was your History professor?*

Davis: Well there was a husband and a wife team the Fugitts, and I had uh, I think, Mr. Fugitt for the History class and uh, I had uh, oh, I think Educational Psychology, yeah right. Was it Warrenne Audie Fugitt?

Mims: *Warrenne and Audie, yep.*

Davis: Yep, right.

[Something happens in the tape and the sound fades away]

Mims: *Ellison. I read a lot about him. I am cataloging the 1950's papers and he writes articles for the papers.*

Davis: Yeah.

Mims: *Yeah.*

Davis: He was a Harvard graduate and probably one of the intellectual stars on the staff over here. [clears throat] Excuse me. But Mr. Fugitt and uh, this gentleman, I think that was it as far as the ...

Mims: *So, you only had three semesters here in the summer, so you probably just taken your four major classes.*

Davis: And then uh, the summer I was in Gainesville I took uh, two semesters of Florida history and two semesters of uh, speech and uh [clears throat] Excuse me. Uh, argumentation in debate.

Mims: *Hmm.*

Davis: So, and I had, I think I had one other course, at Gainesville that I got credit for here too, you know Social Science.

Mims: *Right. Did you live on campus?*

Davis: Yes, yes. Uh, they, they had been building the WWII for apartments right across the street from campus and I uh; I lived there the spring semester '53 then all of '53-'54.

Mims: *Where did you eat?*

Davis: Right across the street in a you know, uh cafeteria, and then when uh, the financial uh situation warranted, we went off campus.

Mims: *Uh huh.*

Davis: But you know, KFC or Pizza Hut or anything in those days.

Mims: *But you did go into the town of Lakeland?*

Davis: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

Mims: *What did you do in Lakeland?*

Davis: We went to movies and just you know, walk around. But you know, I didn't have transportation, in fact, not many of the uh, guys or the gals that I knew had their own car. So, and I think they had bus service, you know uh, but when Mr. Szabo gave me the job of driving the bus, I really didn't have a whole lot of time to you know, to spend in Lakeland, because just almost every weekend the chorus or the athletic team was on a trip.

Mims: *I want to expand on that, but before let me find out, how did you physically arrive here if you didn't have a car? Did your parents bring you?*

Davis: Oh no, my mom brought me, yeah.

Mims: *Ok, but you came by car; you didn't come by train or bus?*

Davis: Oh yeah, yeah we went Cocoa, of course decades before the interstate and so forth

Mims: *Right. Ok, so Mr. Szabo gave you a job here on campus, you were part of work study and you were assigned to do what?*

Davis: Well, that uh the end of the semester my first job was cleaning out all the dorms or apartments, whatever you want to call them. And then I was promoted to uh, mowing. And this I think is an interesting story. Dr. Spivey, evidently any department didn't spend over \$50.00 without his approval, but Dr. Spivey was out of town and Frank Szabo purchased a tractor, a mowing tractor. You know riding type of tractor. And he [movement prevents hearing word] surprised Dr. Spivey when he got back. And the morning the Dr. was expected back on the train, Frank had me, he said, "You go down there and mow the front lawn." Which was Dr. Spivey's pride and joy you know [chuckles] and ...

Mims: *Is that by the President's house?*

Davis: Yes, yeah, and as you probably know the front lawn slopes down towards the lake and it had rained the night before and was very slick. Anyways, I was doing the tractor and I got a little too close to a young tree and I put it in reverse and the wheels started spinning, I was stuck. I couldn't go forward and I couldn't back up so, I shut it off, I literally ran across the campus and got the got uh Frank, and I told him what had happened. He got everybody on the maintenance crew to go over there [chuckles] when he got there and looked at that he said, "You're going to get all of us fired, including me, because he says, Dr. Spivey is going to have a fit." So, maintenance was able to push me away from the tree and then he had that whole crew stay there, and I don't know rather they re-sod, but they covered up my tracks, [chuckles] so anyway ...

Mims: *So, did President Spivey ever find out?*

Davis: I'm going to take a guess and say No, No, but in maybe five or ten years they might of mentioned that to him. But Frank said, "You're going to get us all fired," and I said "Hey, I can't get fired, I need this job." So anyway, at the end of the summer he said, "I'd like for you to go, we got to take the chorus over to Tampa, on a Sunday night, they going to sing at the Methodist church." And we got out of town I don't know two miles and he pulled over and he said, "I want you to drive from here on into Tampa." This was a diesel Greyhound bus type. Anyway, uh, I was uh, I had a chauffeur's license you know when I lived and worked at the funeral home at Orlando. You had to have the chauffeur's license. Anyways, as a result of that, I was appointed the driver. And if that bus went out of town, I was driving. And I think before that Frank had uh had also driven it some. But the time I had it, I can't remember he might of taken one or two trips. But uh, I had two trips to Philadelphia my last semester here, one with a chorus and one with a crew, and another trip to West Virginia, uh you know to uh, a choral trip, but mostly baseball and basketball games to Tampa, to Deland, where you know Stetson, and so forth.

Mims: *So, you got to know everybody on a different level, being their driver?*

Davis: Yeah, yeah.

Mims: *How much did you get paid?*

Davis: [sigh] I don't think, I didn't see any checks, I think it was primarily uh room and board and I was uh, switch over to ROTC. I had completed two years of ROTC at the University of Florida, the basic course system, and when I came here in January I came over and sat with Colonel Dickinson, who was the PMSMT. And he wanted me to go back and repeat the second semester of basic ROTC. But I didn't want to do that, so anyway, uh at the end of the semester, uh I went over and sat with Colonial Dickinson again and I said, "You know, I would like to get back in the program." And he had every reason to say, I gave you a chance to come in and you didn't want to. Anyway, he let me double up and take the two years of advance training in one year. And I was the last guy out at Bunt Hill, because the Department of Defense changed that regulation that summer. Saying that you could no longer double up, you had to go, you know, all four years.

Mims: *Ok.*

Davis: Yeah, so I really owe Colonel Dickenson, big time.

Mims: *Now your ROTC, uh, did that offer some financial help for your classes or what was that program?*

Davis: Yeah, I don't remember exactly the amount.

Mims: *right.*

Davis: But no, when you're accepted in advance, uh, it's something like, it was I don't know maybe \$20.00 or \$30.00 a month.

Mims: *Ok.*

Davis: Yeah.

Mims: *Was there any other obligation that went with that? Did you have to, you know, take a commission?*

Davis: Well, you didn't have much choice, because in those days you had the draft going on.

Mims: *Active draft, right?*

Davis: Yeah. Yeah. In other words if you were offered a commission, uh, you took it or you know, take a chance you were going to get drafted. So, but now it's entirely different ballgame.

Mims: *Certainly.*

Davis: Yeah. Uh, people graduate you know, from the college program even from a military academy like VMI of Virginia Tech, you know and uh, probably uh, a third of the graduates take commission and go on active duty. But, you know, 1954 things were winding down in Korea and so forth, so uh, I, the unit here was military police, and those days uh each college had a specific branch. All of the uh, Deland, Stetson, Florida Southern, Tampa all had a military police uh, program. So you were very strongly urged to, you know you had a choice, you signed up for three branches and uh the staff was saying you know uh, you need to go into the military police course. So, I ended up you know getting in and uh, I got [clears throat] excuse me, two of us uh, another classmate I think his last name, Connie Wagner. Connie Wagner and I

got orders to Germany, most of our class the MP officer training either stayed state side or either went to Korea or Japan. And uh, [cough] excuse me, I got in on the tail end of the German occupation. I got there, got to Germany in January '55 and I, and in May '55 the occupation officially ended. So, uh, that was just you know, about the uh, as close as I got to World War Two.

Mims: *So the understanding here at Florida Southern, were all males obligated to take ROTC up to a certain point, and then you could do the advance training if you were going to go for the commission? What do you remember about it?*

Davis: I've been thinking about that ever since uh [coughs] excuse me, Adam contacted me about you know, coming over and talking to you. Now at a land grant college when I was at Florida.

Mims: *UF.*

Davis: Yeah, it was mandatory for two years.

Mims: *Okay.*

Davis: And then at the end of two years you had to apply to get into advance, but since Florida Southern and Stetson were not land grant colleges uh, I couldn't answer that question.

Mims: *Okay.*

Davis: But we had I think the enrollment here at that time, well let's say around 1,300 we had four or five companies in ROTC, and they even had a band.

Mims: *Right. Yeah, I saw the different companies. What company were you in?*

Davis: Gosh, I don't ...

Mims: *They don't give the names, but company A, company B, company C.*

Davis: I can't even find myself.

Mims: *[chuckles]*

Davis: I must have been in the library studying the day they took those pictures.

Mims: *There's company D, Company E, and then the Band.*

Davis: Yeah.

Mims: *Do you remember who the commander was? The names are Luzzo, Pfiel, Mosco.*

Davis: Oh you mean the cadet?

Mims: *Yeah. The company cadet captains Curtis, Selph, maybe we could figure that out. You don't recognize any of those names?*

Davis: No.

Mims: *Okay. Here's Dickinson's picture over here.*

Davis: Now, this gentleman I consider one of the big influences in my life. And, I don't think I ever met a nicer gentleman and uh, he was a company commander in one of Patton's Army division in World War Two. And then I guess he stayed in you know, after World War Two and switched over to the military police.

Mims: *Okay.*

Davis: He came his assignment prior to coming to Florida Southern, he was in charge of the POW camp in South Korea, all the North Korean prisoners, and uh, this was of course I think about a year before I got here in the program, and they said everybody was scared to death when they found out. They said the new PLSNT is coming right running the POW camp in Korea. But you never meet a nicer person than uh, Colonel Dickinson.

Mims: *You obviously, what you take a second chance?*

Davis: Oh absolutely! I, really influenced my life, you know, uh, I'm not real sure, you know, I just wasn't real sure where I was headed if I hadn't, you know, from here right into the Army. And when I got out and it was two years and in those days you had a commitment in the Reserve or National Guard. So, uh I came over here and interviewed with a position with the Florida Citrus Commission. That didn't work out. And uh, I was back in Cocoa and eighth grade American history teacher had resigned to run for the school board over in Brevard County. And I was just uh, backed into an education career. Uh, I got his slot and said, "Well ah, you know, I'll teach for a couple of years." And well 30 years went by and then somebody said, "Well you know every 30 years you should change jobs. You don't want to get in a rut." So, I made a drastic change, I went to work as a special agent with the defense department, doing investigation. That's about as uh, you know, far removed from public school guidance counselor.

Mims: *Yeah, is that it directly ties to your training in ROTC.*

Davis: Yeah.

Mims: *What other influences here at Florida Southern, did you play any sports, intramurals or?*

Davis: Well intramurals, I was a member of the Phi Alpha Theta fraternity in Gainesville, and they had, uh what they call a colony here, which they just call Phi Delta, and I, uh kind of hooked up with them. I played intramurals, I think just volleyball, but you know when I got that job of driving the bus I did not have a lot of spare time.

Mims: *So you were a Phi Alpha Theta?*

Davis: In Gainesville.

Mims: *In Gainesville, but they had a ...*

Davis: They had a colony here

Mims: *Called Phi Delta.*

Davis: Yeah. But it never materialized that they you know, I'm not even sure, I didn't keep up with them after I left here. I'm not even sure that they applied. You know there is a process you go through.

Mims: *Oh yeah, we know about that.*

Davis: But I think the whole atmosphere here, you know, the faculty I was associated with, just there was an interest in each student I didn't see at the University of Florida. Of course, as I mentioned, I was doing everything but what I was sent there for. My father said one time, "Now I got you in up there, now am I going to have to come up and get you out?" But no, I think Frank Szabo and Colonel Dickenson certainly were very influential in where I was going.

Mims: *Did you ever have any contact with President Spivey?*

Davis: [sighs] No, not really. Just [chuckles] the episode with the stuck tractor in the front yard. We use to see him on campus you know, he was all over campus. And then was required chapel I think on Wednesday. Uh, for maybe like 11:00 to 12:00. Then somehow, I got appointed to chapel committee the last year I was here, '53-'54. And uh, we were responsible for getting speakers, so you know I am an Episcopalian, so I contacted the Episcopal rectory in downtown Lakeland and he came and spoke. I don't remember too many of the speakers, they had. But we had Dr. Bethune, who was the founder of ...

Davis and Mims: ... of Bethune-Cookman.

Davis: Yes, she came over here, and I would say if I remember she was the most well-known speaker that we had that year.

Mims: *Was that when Frank Lloyd Wright showed up that year?*

Davis: No, I understand he came periodically and would walk around, but no, incidentally he was a Clydell, I don't know where he went to college, but uh.

Mims: *Hmm. So, with the buildings being built here it generally impacted somebody uh, '54 let's see, Ordway would have been being built by '54, uh with Polk Science. Were they still building that in '54?*

Davis: Oh gosh, I draw a blank on that.

Mims: *Okay.*

Davis: Most of the, when I say guys I don't know how many of the girls were you know, here on work study.

Mims: *Sure.*

Davis: but most of the guys that Frank had they were working on the construction. They didn't have all these esplanades like they do now. I think at that time, finishing those up probably was one of their top priorities.

Mims: *So, after construction was on the Esplanades, I think Polk Science it took them the longest to build because just the nature of it.*

Davis: Yes, well I needed one semester of science and I took uh, I think, Earth Science, I know it wasn't Biology, that summer I was here. But I don't remember you know

Mims: *What building?*

Davis: Yeah.

Mims: *Okay. Any other extracurricular that you did? I mean you're working, you're going to school, your ROTC, so you're pretty obligated for your time.*

Davis: Yeah, well I don't know how I got on that chapel committee to get speakers, but then I was appointed as a uh, senator from the senior class. There again, I don't know how that came about. Obviously, it wasn't based on my previous experience.

Mims: *[laughs] I guess you came here with a blank slate. They didn't look at your past.*

Davis: Yeah.

Mims: *Where was Commencement held when you graduated?*

Davis: In the Chapel.

Mims: *Pfeiffer?*

Davis: Yeah. Annie Pfeiffer.

Mims: *Annie Pfeiffer Chapel, uh-hum.*

Davis: Yeah.

Mims: *And so, right after graduation what did you do?*

Davis: Well, I had to go you see, ordinarily in ROTC you're going into advance the last two years. Between the first two years and the second two years you had to go to what they called summer camp. So uh, I had to go to summer camp after I graduated. In other words I had the cart before the horse.

Mims: *[laughs]*

Davis: Uh so, I graduated I think in June and I went to Fort Gordon Georgia for summer camp. And then uh, I was commissioned and I came home. I don't know for just a few weeks, and I was back at Fort

Gordon on active duty. Uh, went through the military police office of basic and from there lead to Germany.

Mims: *Right to Germany.*

Davis: Yeah.

Mims: *And then you did your whole time there in Germany?*

Davis: Yeah, 19 months and 3 weeks.

Mims: *[laughs] Not that you were counting.*

Davis: No, no. Well you know, people ask you know, they come up and thank you for your service and what not and I'm very careful to say, now I wasn't there when the Germans were shooting at us. I was there in the occupation. They just didn't like us when I was there, but they weren't shooting at us.

Mims: *Right. Well it sounds like you have a real perspective, a historical perspective knowing what happened in the war, then being over in Germany. What did you kind of do in your off time? Did you, were you limited as to what you could do in Germany or could you go and look at some stuff?*

Davis: Well you know, a boy I was in high school with, was over there the same time, a boy named Dave Fickman, he was in the Navy and he was on what they call the Wind River Patrol.

Mims: *Hmmm.*

Davis: He was fluent in German, so he and I took several trips together and we took what they call the Red Ball Express, to Berlin. Which at that time, was occupied jointly with the Soviets and the British and the U.S.A. That was probably the highlight of the trips I had. I got to Paris, I got to Rome, uh, I got to London.

Mims: *We're talking post war here, so I mean that ...*

Davis: Yeah, yeah. Which I can remember the Red Ball Express we rode to Berlin. I don't know, two o'clock in the morning the train stopped and all we could see was just dark. You know, why are we stopped here? Then we see some Soviet soldiers walking fast towards the train with semi-automatic rifles that they carried, you know and I said, "Hey, I hope we're not going to have to fight our way out of here." [said as he chuckles] I don't know why they stopped us, we went on in to Berlin and they told us to be very careful and you stay in uniform all the time! And they had the check point Charlie, this was of course way before the wall and they said, especially now if you go into the Soviet section you go through that Check Point Charlie, uh you're on your own. They said do not take any photographs over there and you know, be sure you're in uniform. You know you get caught over there in civilian clothes, they could say this guys a spy, so anyway. I wasn't very anxious to spend a lot of time in the Soviet section. I think we were there like five days and then uh. On duty I was in Nurnberg and we were fairly close to the Czech border and sometimes in the middle of the night we would get a call, I guess from the CIA. They wanted an escort up to the Czech border and if you were duty officer that night, that meant you had to go. And we would escort a couple of sedans up to Czech border. We stopped maybe 50 yards from the border. I guess CIA agents would get out with a couple guys. They would go, somebody would come

from the Czech side, they were exchanging I don't want to say prisoners, but we were exchanging personnel. And I had uh, I had that experience a couple of times, and I uh, you know, I always kept my fingers crossed that you know, when I was duty officer, hey you got to make a run to the border. I don't know why the CIA, you know why they needed an MP escort; you know but don't ask any questions.

Mims: *Wow. And did any of this reflect your training you got here at Florida Southern? You know in preparation?*

Davis: Well yeah, I think mostly uh, prep, you know, when you go to summer camp, you functioning as a listed man in the military police. Uh, you know, searching the suspect, handcuffing, I mean police work 101.

Mims: *Right.*

Davis: And then after I got commissioned and went back to guarding for the military police back to basics, you know the managerial side of you know, being a military police officer.

Mims: *You brought a couple of things, can you tell us about what you brought?*

Davis: Well, uh I am having one of my two utility runs uh, ...

Mims: *Dad Vail Regatta, I read a lot about this in the newspapers, because the crew teams were really huge during this period of time.*

Davis: Oh yeah.

Mims: *They had the canoe teams then they had the crew.*

Davis: Well now, do they still have crew?

Mims: *No, I don't think even as intramural, it went away.*

Davis: Yeah.

Mims: *But look at who they are up against, you know a lot, here we got the Navy team, Annapolis looking at a 1954 Regatta program.*

Davis: You know all the Ivy League schools you know were big in crew.

Mims: *Yes, right. And obviously, I think our junior varsity, I think in like '51, '52; maybe even '53 took the national championship. So, that's cool.*

Davis: Well, if you would like to have any of these things, you know ...

Mims: *Well yeah, whatever you would want to leave, but first I want you tell me about these things. Like, did you pay attention to the crew because you were their bus driver or did you like watch them?*

Davis: Oh no, I with some of them rowing and it was on Schuylkill River and uh, there's a road that parallels the river, I would take the bus and at the start and I would follow them all the way up to the finish line. Not to pick them up just to ...

Mims: *Watch them?*

Davis: Oh yeah! We had of course air horns like a truck and I was going along [laughter] go fast. So, that year driving the bus was a very, very interesting experience.

Mims: *You were like an extension of them, kinda like fifth man.*

Davis: And when I was taking glee club they were singing and when I would try and sing along with them [laughter] and you know, that's not one of my strong suites. They'd say come on you know, and then they'd do some rehearsing about what they were going to sing at Methodist church. Then they'd start you know, 99 bottles of beer on the wall, [laughter] some of the, you know ...

Mims: *That's not good Methodist school.*

Davis: Well yeah, very interesting experience. [laughter] Now, I had both the Patricks for Florida history. The sooner I made my grades to get into the fraternity, [chuckles] now you might be interested in that. I had Mr. Patrick the first semester of summer school and got a B, and then his wife taught this semester and I guess I was resting on my laurels I got two D's for the semester, so anyways I came across that the other day.

Denham: *That's great.*

Davis: So, ...

Denham: *The great Patrick Patrick.*

Davis: Yeah.

Mims: *I like that.*

Davis: Now, I don't know rather that was a final or a mid-term test, you know.

Mims: *Right. It's nice to see this kind of stuff though. Very nice.*

Davis: I'm probably the only student they ever had that still has a copy of the test.

Mims: *But see you're a Historian, so we save this kind of stuff. I got my stuff from like grammar school. [laughs]*

Davis: I just came across my report cards the other day and ...

Mims: *Why, I don't know. It's just in us.*

Davis: You know, not a real impressive, now this was ...

Denham: *Did you have Bill Carlton out there, Bill Carlton?*

Davis: Uh, no, what did he teach?

Denham: *He was government.*

Davis: No, no I was thinking he had

Denham: *Political science.*

Davis: No. No. But I know him by reputation.

Denham: *Wild Bill.*

Davis: Yeah. Wild Bill.

Denham: *You know him by reputation.*

Davis: Yeah. Yeah.

Mims: *So this is what you would get for ROTC here at Florida Southern?*

Davis: In other words, early on in the fall they promoted me to you know

Mims: *Sergeant.*

Davis: Sergeant in adjutant cadets.

Mims: *Right.*

Denham: *What about Sam Crawford, do you remember Sam Crawford?*

Davis: What did he teach?

Denham: *History as well.*

Davis: No. no. Uh, the only ...

Denham: [unable to determine question asked.]

Davis: No. The Patrick's were the only History teachers I had at Florida, and then of course down here Elderkin and then the Fugitts. Well actually just Mr. Fugitt. Well, I shouldn't say that, I think he and his wife both were Doctors.

Denham: *Remember Patrick was very distinguished wore a suit, wore a suit all the time, is that correct? A very distinguished looking man?*

Davis: Yeah, well, oh gosh [chuckles] that's been almost 60 years ago [laughter] I couldn't help you much on that. Now there was another one that I had, Dr. Phil Constance, Phil was an icon at Florida.

Denham: *Constance?*

Davis: Constance. C-O-N-S-T-A-N, I think. He taught Argumentation and Debate and he had the advance Speech courses. And he, he was always dressed to the nines. I had him for two semesters I was there for summer school. And I, I was a waiter in a downtown restaurant in Gainesville. And Dr. Constance was a speaker I think at the Kiwanis Club. He had a white Palm Beach suit. He was always dressed to the nines and uh the dessert that day was a scoop of vanilla ice cream with chocolate syrup. Thank goodness I didn't get the details, but he was at the head table and the space behind it where the server came with a tray of those things, and when he got to Dr. Constance the tray tipped a little bit and along with it came running down the chocolate syrup, [laughter] down the front.

Mims: *That's a magnet.*

Davis: Oh, it absolutely brought the house down, [laughing] oh, Dr. Constance, he really could have been a stand-up comedian, [laughing] he you know uh, they got wet towels and everything, you know, and got him cleaned up. And this was going on right before he was going on to speak. So, he took his coat off and hung it up on the back of his chair and uh, he didn't get a standing ovation, but I think it was the Kiwanis club, they uh, I don't know why you remember things like that, with all these important things in life.

Mims: *It's a good memory, that's why you remember it. This was from you're commencement?*

Davis: Yes. And [long pause] this is the breakdown of the ROTC.

Mims: *Oh, okay. Are you a company, oh ... ?*

Davis: No. That is when I was a sergeant.

Mims: *Okay. It doesn't tell you which company you were with?*

Davis: Yeah, it should.

Mims: *Dabney Davis you were Company B. So, according to that you should be in this picture here at the top. You were Company B. You were the boogie woogie bugle boy of company B? [all laugh]*

[long pause] You got to be in that, I'm just going to look through some of your other stuff while you're looking.

Davis: Well, the officers were not listed ...

Mims: *Together?*

Davis: No, they are always at the end.

Mims: *Corning Tolle, How much contact did you have with him?*

Davis: Well a fair amount.

Mims: *Was he, Doctor of, Szabo was Dean of the students, but Corning Tolle was ...*

Davis: Uh, Szabo wasn't the Dean at that time.

Mims: *He wasn't?*

Davis: No, no I think that was I don't know how many years after I left. He was just, I don't know what his official title was, but he was just in charge of grounds and working students.

Mims: *It says here, you were elected to the Men's Council. What's that?*

Davis: Well, [chuckles]

Mims: *Looks like it's pretty important.*

Davis: Well, uh I'm not real sure. We met periodically, but I'm not sure what our agenda was. Uh, ...

Mims: *Okay, because it says the voters made a wise choice, so it must have been something you must have been known about.*

Davis: Well yeah, young fool.

Mims: *[laughs]*

Davis: Just some odd ...

Mims: *yeah, these are the Phi Delts and their intramural volleyball.*

Davis: And I even got my ...

Mims: *Okay, here's your student committee for Chapel Program, there's your Episcopal Card; oh this is the choir bus. So, you wrote for the newspaper, too? So, how did you get the nickname "Satch?"*

Davis: Uh, [chuckles] I got that when I was at Orlando High School. Um, I managed the football team at OHS and I guess somebody thought that my derriere was a little ...

[End of tape, side one]

[Beginning of tape, side two]

Davis: Thank goodness they dropped the second part and it just became "Satch."

Mims: *Uh, huh. Usually it is conjunction with somebody playing the trumpet. Satch O'Mouth, Satch ...*

Davis: Well somebody said, I was the only white guy they ever heard of named "Satch," so ...

Mims: *That's an interesting story, I see your Chauffer's license here, and then this is your ID card, not a photo ID, but just a ID card. Now would you attend any athletic events? Now you were driving the bus half the time, but I mean like local events would you go to them?*

Davis: Uh, well I'd go to the basketball games, and I'd go to some of the baseball games, but I you know, when you spend a lot of time with them on the road you kind of, well I was kind of the pseudo-manager of the basketball team.

Mims: *Oh yeah?*

Davis: Yeah. Now I, I took them up to Mercer for a Basketball game with Mercer, and we were really getting thumped bad, and I had on warm-ups. I'd go out there when they warmed up and you know just throw them the ball back and so forth. And I think one of the play, right at the end of the game, uh, one of the players said the coaches name Clipson, and they said, "Why don't you put 'Satch' in." So anyway, he said, "You want to go in?" I mean this was like the last two minutes of the game and we were like 25 points behind. I said, "I don't think it would get any worse." [laughter] So, you know it was seventh ball out of bounds, I'd take the ball out of bounds, I threw it in and one of the Mercer players intercepted it and soon as I stepped on the court, he basically handed me the ball and then I took about one or two steps and I, today it would probably be near three point range, and of course I didn't get anywhere near it, but anyway the buzzer sounded and you know, I can honestly say I played basketball at Florida Southern for about two minutes.

Mims: *[laughs] Still you played nevertheless.*

Davis: Now,

Mims: *You make claim to that.*

Davis: This was at summer camp, I was telling you about, uh ...

Mims: *Uhhmm, Again looking at photos of him at summer camp and this was at Georgia?*

Davis: Yeah, in Georgia at Fort Gordon in uh, Augusta. And Pasco Cadd, these other guys were a year behind, but Pasco and I were in the same class and we, and I think this was the Episcopal Church we went to. And this was taken when I was in Nuremburg at a Provo Marshall's conference. This is yours truly and Connie Wagner my classmate, here at Southern, and this gentleman in the back right here was uh, one of our instructors here.

Mims: *At Southern?*

Davis: Louis Defreda, yeah.

Mims: *Wow, what are the odds of that and you guys are in Nuremburg, Germany?*

Davis: Yep, Yep, well this was taken just a couple of months before I rotated back.

Mims: *Okay.*

Davis: Jack DeFreda ended up as Brigadier General, I think in the Army Reserve. But I you know, I didn't keep in contact with him after that. These are the Marshalls in Germany.

Mims: *And what are you doing here?*

Davis: Oh they had a conference you know.

Mims: *Just a conference?*

Davis: Yeah these are short term goals, these are long term. Now uh, this is the Japanese exchange with Shiro Yamazaki, and these two guys all three of them were on the tennis team here and uh, Shiro, I think, he had all the rights to all the NFL or NBA uh, not artifacts, anything connected with uniforms and whatnot. He had the franchise to retail them in Japan. And whatever it was, evidently he did very well. Anyway, he and his wife came to Orlando, I think two years in a row. They lived in California, he contacted me and then these two tennis buddies to meet him at this Japanese restaurant on International Drive. And then this is some kind of Japanese ceremonial apron. I'm not sure what I guess thee; Shiro was a good friend of the guy that owned this Japanese restaurant. And I'm sure that's where he got those you know.

Mims: *Now did you know him because he was a tennis player or did you ... ?*

Davis: No, now don't quote me, but I think he, uh one semester lived in the apartment. You know I think there were four of us per apartment.

Mims: *You shared the apartment.*

Davis: Yeah, now I had a letter from him that summer. He went to New York to work, he had some Japanese connections and he wrote me a letter, [chuckles] I still have a copy of that. He referred to me as his advisor.

Mims: *Oh really.*

Davis: He wanted to say Advisor. And the letter was addressed to Mr. "Satch" Advisor Davis. And Sweet Street you know in Cocoa, and he said I was his Advisor. He said now I have a friend coming here and you're going to be his advisor too, but I graduated though, so I didn't have that distinction. Now this here is ...

Mims: *Oh your 50 year club.*

Davis: Yeah, yeah, now, ok, this is the only ...

Mims: *You driving the bus! Oh! Cool! Somebody was smart take your picture with that.*

Davis: I wish I had somebody getting my picture standing outside the bus.

Mims: *Yeah that would have been good too.*

Davis: Yeah, yeah.

Mims: *Yeah, he was the campus photographer here for a long time.*

Davis: Oh.

Mims: *Sanborn, Harold Sanborn. Yeah, if you look through any of the newspapers, you'll see where it often says photo by Wille here, it often says photo by Sanborn.*

Davis: Now this was when I took them to Pennsylvania .

Mims: *This was the Chorus?*

Davis: Yeah, yeah.

Mims: *Now what's your hat?*

Davis: I think it was a cardboard thing that somebody stuck on my head.

Mims: *[laughs] taken a trip last Thursday night, well okay.*

Davis: Here's another picture, Shiro.

Mims: *Oh this is ...*

Davis: Shiro.

Mims: *Yeah. So, I got to ask, post World War Two Asian International Student at Florida Southern College, I wonder how the atmosphere was for that? Did you pick up any of that?*

Davis: I was never aware of any friction you know, and we had the Phi Delta's had several Cuban nationals up here and this would have been Batista was there, pre-Castro. No I think the atmosphere here; uh everybody was all the same color. There weren't any minority students, you know, here from America. No, I, a couple of times I thought about taking a break or something, taking Shiro home with me for the weekend, you know in Cocoa. Of course, I didn't have a car. The thought entered my mind, well maybe I didn't know how Cocoa and Rockledge, in those days they were pretty along the redneck side, you know, and uh, but anyway, if I had had transportation, I probably would have taken him home, you know for the weekend. I know he would have been more than welcome by my parents. That wouldn't have been a problem.

Mims: *It's still just hard to imagine that we're still in the Jim Crow South, during this period of time as well. Other than what happened during the war years, just the whole kind of race interaction here in the United States. I just wondered what your take was on that? I mean Florida Southern, it seems like it was a cohesive kind of homogeneous type environment.*

Davis: Well no now, I think the African American or a person of color would have been more than welcome here. And I can't well, I didn't much contact within the community, but I think at that time Polk

County was still kind of redneck, but as far as campus was concerned, I think most of the kitchen help in the cafeteria was black, I don't think at that time the minority population in Lakeland was real high.

Denham: *Now was Miss Bethune very well received when she was here?*

Davis: Oh absolutely, absolutely.

Denham: *Did they have any other African Americans who came to see her from the community at the same time?*

Davis: I couldn't answer.

Denham: *You don't remember?*

Davis: No. But we were assigned a seat.

Denham: *Right. You had to be there.*

Davis: Yeah. Well, if you were there the semester, you got something like two honor points. And I said, "Hey, I need all the help I can get." [laughs]

Denham: *Well now was there a Miss Davis in this?*

Davis: No, no. Just a couple of close calls.

Denham: *Couple of close calls.*

Davis: Yeah, yeah, But that doesn't count except in ...

Davis and Denham: Hand washing and horseshoes.

Davis: No a couple of close calls, well you know, kind of limited, I had no car when I was in Gainesville, but a couple of my fraternity brothers sometimes would over indulge in the social function, and I could use their car and a down here I had a couple of close friends in Orlando that would come down here sometimes on the weekend. And you know, they would have a dance or whatnot, so uh, just uh, and then one of these guys would come down sometime and I probably spent more time with co-eds at Rollins than I did with down here. [laughs] Uh, when my closest friend ended up marrying one gal from Rollins and of course they were an item and they would fix me up with one of her Sorority sisters. But this guy and I uh, the I guess in those days more of the kids came to Winter Park by train and some by air, you know. And my buddy got the idea and said, "We ought to get a jump, they got the mixer you know Friday night and everybody is there, and we ought to make contact with these gals before that." So he came up with the ideal and he said, "Listen, we will go to train station", which is downtown Winter Park, and we would go there and see the girls getting off. Now the deal was whichever one that sees one and makes the first contact the other one has to get her baggage, her luggage. [all laugh]. We ...

Denham: *Now where would they be coming from?*

Davis: Oh, all over.

Denham: *But, all on a Friday night? I mean that's ...*

Davis: Oh no, no, no. That is when they would be having the mixer that would be on Friday night.

Denham: *You mean when they would be coming in for the semester?*

Davis: Right.

Denham: *And you guys would just go down and hang around to see the young ladies coming off.*

Davis: Yeah. Some people would probably say dirty young men not dirty old men.

Mims: *Yeah, these college guys.*

Davis: Hey, I said look, the light came on, I said, "You know Jimmy, the real high rollers aren't coming by train, they are coming in their own car or they are coming to the airport. We need to be meeting them out ... I mean they had uh, these oh gosh not Del Monte, one of the big canning companies. Their daughter was down here, they had another one from the Spaulding Sporting Goods, youngster I mean the top of the line.

Mims: *Here at Florida Southern or at Rollins?*

Davis: Rollins.

Mims: *Yeah okay.*

Davis: Now the last time we did this, my buddy spotted this gal first you know, he said, "Satch, you going to get her baggage?" She had nine pieces of matched luggage and a set of golf clubs. I said, "She must be running away from home." [laughter] So, anyways I said, "Hey, a guy could get a hernia lugging all of that stuff." But uh ...

Mims: *When we had mixers here at Florida Southern, dances or whatever, where would those usually take place?*

Davis: In the cafeteria.

Mims: *In the cafeteria? Yeah, I heard that there was something in Ordway?*

Davis: Well yeah, there may have been I couldn't ...

Denham: *Well now was Eleanor Searle used as a meeting place as well?*

Davis: Yes sir, yeah.

Denham: *For mixers? Receptions?*

Davis: I'd say for receptions and so forth. But no, I'd think most of the dances we'd have you know, would be in the cafeteria. And some of the sororities and well the fraternities might have a function at the house, but that was you know kind of invitation only. But the Pikes here uh, had invited me to be an honorary member.

Mims: *Hmmm ...*

Davis: So I went you know, to a fair amount of their functions.

Denham: *Now we know that Florida Southern College is a Methodist School and there's no alcohol, but where were the places that, not that you would ever do it or go to those places, but where were some of the places that students would like to go to get away from campus and misbehave?*

Davis: Well there was one place ...

Denham: *Obviously drinking per se.*

Davis: Yeah well uh, I wasn't really indulging that much at that time in my life. Economics reasons, you know. There was a place uh I guess west of Lakeland.

Mims: *County Line?*

Davis: I'm not really sure, uh ...

Mims: *Was it Polk Drive?*

Denham: *Yeah.*

Davis: It was oh, I don't know rather it was a barbeque place, I know they served beer and wine, but I don't never remember going down there and drinking, and I don't ever remember any of us drinking in the apartment.

Mims: *No, of course not.*

Davis: And then these trips uh, the certainly the glee club probably didn't have many that were interested in indulging. And the crew and the baseball team, and the basketball team, no, I don't ever remember any drinking going on, on the bus. You know ...

Denham: *Did you ever go to the Hungarian Inn?*

Davis: Yeah, that rings a bell, I'm sure I did.

Denham: *And did you uh, oh, did you ever go with groups down to Scott Lake?*

Davis: Ummm.

Denham: *Did you ever hear about anybody ever going to Scott Lake? Of course back then, all it is now is housing developments and stuff like that. Before it use to kind of be the place where a lot of people could go and have parties and stuff.*

Davis: Well uh, no that doesn't ring a bell.

Denham: *Okay. Well, what about experiences hitchhiking? Did you ever hitchhike much? Oh, say hitchhike from Orlando to Lakeland?*

Davis: No, no. I hitched hike one time, uh it must have been the second summer that I was at Gainesville. They use to have house parties, with the week the high schools let out. Everybody would head to Daytona. In those days they had high school fraternities and sororities and they different groups would rent a house and of course uh, the gals would have two or three parents chaperoning us and so forth. I think one time I hitched hike over from Orlando over to Daytona. But I could usually get a ride with somebody. And I didn't get a car of my own, until I had finished out the basic at Fort [coughs] excuse me, Gordon. And uh, in October '54, I bought a car in Augusta and then when I got orders to Germany, officers and senior noncoms the government would transport your vehicle over there, so ...

Mims: *That's nice. Kind of expensive.*

Davis: Yeah. But I had a little Plymouth Savoy, uh I drove that car all over Germany and came back and then uh, I had to get certified you know to teach. You know I had some education course and ...

Mims: *Sure.*

Davis: And I started teaching in '56 and I had to get certified and I went to the Orange Bowl and Clemson and Colorado were playing and I sat in the section with a bunch of kids from Colorado. Oh, you should really come out here in the summertime, it's really warm, so that's how I ended up going to grad school in Colorado.

Mims: *Oh, I did not know that.*

Davis: Yeah. So, uh I went out there five summers, six summers, because one summer I just took one term and then I did some ...

Mims: *Well we need to wrap it up, because Adam is back to get you. I want to thank you so much for talking to us today. Is there anything you think we left out that maybe you still want to talk about?*

Davis: Hmmm. Well I think we kind of covered the water front and finagled a little bit. Uh, no my experience here, you know, I don't think it could have been any better because you know, I came here at a kind of a lowly time of my life with my experience at Florida. So anyway, when I somehow finished it in Colorado, for some reason I had to stop in Gainesville and I went in and this registrar had been in Florida I think since the early 1900s [laughter] and uh, I had to get my records or something, anyway he came out you know he had all my records and uh, I told him, "I finished it at Southern and I just completed a Masters at Colorado." He said, "Mr. Davis, you're the only student that I ever knew that flunked out of here twice and then ended up getting a Master's degree." It's all motivation when you're sitting on a roof, in the middle of July doing roofing and it's 120 up there. It kind of gets your attention. But no, the experience here and this you know and the thought of getting into the ROTC and getting

commissioned and having a working scholarship. It cost my parents very, very little to even be here, so then I had the GI bill at Colorado. So, but no I really, you know owe Florida Southern big time. If I ever won the lottery this would be you know they would be a big benefactor. But somebody said you have to buy a ticket before you can win the lottery. I said, "Oh, I didn't realize that." [laughter]

[END]