Guide to the San José State University Oral History Project Collection

Processed by Veronica Cabrera, Reviewed by Danelle Moon.
SJSU Library Special Collections & Archives
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library
San José State University
One Washington Square
San José, CA 95192-0028
Phone: (408) 908-2062
Fax: (408) 808-2063
Email: special.collections@sjsu.edu
URL: http://library.sjsu.edu/sjsu-special-collections/sjsu-special-collections-and-archives
© 2008
Trustees of the California State University. All rights reserved.
San José State University

SJSU Special Collections & Archives
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library
San José State University
One Washington Square
San José, CA 95192-0028
Phone: (408) 808-2062
Fax: (408) 808-2063
Email: special.collections@sjsu.edu
URL: http://library.sjsu.edu/sjsu-special-collections/sjsu-special-collections-and-archives

Processed by:
Veronica Cabrera
Date Completed:
2008

Reviewed by:
Danelle Moon

Encoded by:
Veronica Cabrera

© 2008 Trustees of the California State University. All rights reserved.

Descriptive Summary

Title: San José State University Oral History Project Collection

Dates: 2005-2006

Collection number: MSS-2006-04-01

Collection size: 2 Boxes 1 Linear Foot

Repository: San José State University Library.
San José, California 95192-0028

Abstract: This collection contains audio tapes and transcripts documenting the experiences of key administrators and faculty from San José State University. The oral histories described, reflect the changes in campus governance, curriculum and student life from 1952 to the present.

Physical Location: For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Library's Online catalog.

Languages: Languages presented in the collection: English

Access
The collection is open for research.

Publication Rights
Copyright has been assigned to the San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives. All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the Director of Special Collections. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives as the owner of the physical items and is not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be
obtained by the reader.

**Preferred Citation**
San José State University Oral History Project, MSS-2005-04-01, San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives.

**Processing Information**
Processed and EAD encoded by Veronica Cabrera, 2008.

**History**
San José State University (SJSU) has the distinction of being the oldest public institution of higher education on the West Coast. The early history of SJSU began in 1857 in San Francisco with the formation of the Minns’ Evening Normal School. The Minns’ Evening Normal School provided the foundation for the formation of the first California State Normal School in 1862 and firmly established the college and university system in the state. In 1870 the campus moved from San Francisco to San José.

San José State University’s name has evolved along with the institution. In 1921 San José State Normal School became San José State Teachers College, later renamed San José State College in 1935, later renamed California State University, San José in 1972 when it achieved university status, and finally, San José State University in 1974. From its beginnings as a normal school to train teachers for the developing frontier, SJSU has matured into a metropolitan university offering more than 134 bachelor's and master's degrees with 110 concentrations. The California State University system is the direct descendant of the San José Normal School.

The SJSU Special Collections & Archives received a generous donation from Hobert W. Burns, former Academic Vice President, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, to sponsor the San José State University (SJSU) Oral History Project. This donation provided the funding needed to interview key administrators, faculty and staff. These interviews document the history of the university from 1952 to the present, and provide a rich array of personal accounts of student and campus life, faculty and university governance and policymaking.

**Scope and Content**
This Collection consists of fifteen audio interviews, interview transcriptions, and project correspondence from San José State University Oral History Project, conducted in 2005 and 2006. The Interviews were conducted by Dr. Margo McBane, Bonnie Montgomery and Suzanne Guerra. Each interviewee was asked to reflect on their early experiences working at SJSU, to describe key historical events, to discuss changes in policy, and to comment on the how these policies impacted the students, faculty, and administration. The interviewees include: Wanda Blockhus, Jack Douglas, Lester Lange, Mary Male, Brett Melendy, Sam Miloto, George Moore, James Noah, Lela Nobel, Theodore Norton, Jay Pinson, Wiggsy Sivertsen, James Walsh, Reverend Benton White, Jo Bell Whitlach, Ruth Jaffe.

**Arrangement**
This collection is arranged into one series: I. Oral History Project, 2005-2006.

**Subject Heading**
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.
San José State University-- Curricula--Programs
Education, Higher
Education--California--San José
San José State University (Calif.)
This Oral History Project documents the history of SJSU from 1952 to the present. The interviews cover a wide spectrum of subjects from student life, faculty and university governance, policymaking, capital campaigns, and changes in higher education in California. Collectively these interviews document the sweeping social, political and economic changes that shaped American society and which thereby transformed academic life and culture at SJSU. The post-war years offered great prosperity and new opportunities for college students in California. The impact of the Civil Rights Movement and Vietnam War forever changed academics and influenced the development of new programs and disciplines, including the formation of New College (1968-1980), an experimental interdisciplinary school, and new majors in African American Studies, Chicano Studies, Asian American Studies, and Women Studies. Changes in curriculum and the diversity of the student body and faculty led to a watershed that moved the institution forward from a small college to a major metropolitan university. The interviews and specially the account of Reverend Benton White, Professor of Religious Studies, present some of the challenges the university faced in addressing civil rights on campus and in society. Many of the themes from these interviews shed light on student and faculty strikes during the Vietnam War, the Tommy Smith and John Carlos 1968 Olympics controversy, the development of an ombudsman position to address racial discrimination and other social justice issues on campus. The tumult of the Civil Rights Movement and anti-war demonstrations on campus, mirrored other college and university experiences across the United States, yet laid the foundation for a more democratic and diverse institution.

Wanda Blockhus
Business
Jack Douglas
Library
Ruth Jaffe
Chemistry
Lester Lange
Science
Mary Male
Special Education
Brett Melendy
History
Sam Milioto
Personnel Management
George Moore
History
James Noah
Journalism
Lela Nobel
Political Science
Theodore Norton
Political Science
Jay Pinson
Engineering
Wiggsey Sivertsen
Counseling
James Walsh
History
Reverend Benton White
Religious Studies
Jo Bell Whittlach
Library

This series is arranged alphabetically by Interviewee
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box/Folder 1/1</th>
<th>Interviewee Agreement/Signed &quot;2005-2006&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box/Folder 1/2</td>
<td>Interviewee Correspondence &quot;2005-2006&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box/Folder 1/3</td>
<td>Interviewee Resume/CV &quot;2005-2006&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box/Folder 1/4</td>
<td>Photographs &quot;1992&quot; &quot;1995&quot; &quot;2005&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box/Folder 1/5</td>
<td>Staff Correspondence &quot;2005-2006&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box/Folder 1/6-1/21</td>
<td>Transcripts &quot;2005-2006&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Box/Folder 1/6 | Blockhurs, Wanda "March 07, 2006" |
| Box/Folder 1/7 | Douglas, Jack "March 14, 2006" |
| Box/Folder 1/8 | Jaffe, Ruth "February 22, 2006" |
| Box/Folder 1/9 | Lange, Lester "January 27, 2006" |
| Box/Folder 1/10 | Male, Mary "February 12, 2006" |
| Box/Folder 1/11 | Melendy, Brett "February 27, 2006" |
| Box/Folder 1/12 | Milioto, Sam "February 22, 2006" |
| Box/Folder 1/13 | Moore, George "March 01, 2006" |
| Box/Folder 1/14 | Noah, James "February 25, 2006" |
| Box/Folder 1/15 | Nobel, Lela "February 27, 2006" |
| Box/Folder 1/16 | Norton, Theodore "March 03, 2006" |
| Box/Folder 1/17 | Pinson, Jay "March 07, 2006" |
| Box/Folder 1/18 | Sivertsen, Wiggsey "November 30, 2006" |
| Box/Folder 1/19 | Walsh, James "October 12, 2005" |
| Box/Folder 1/20 | White, Benton (Reverend) "April 26, 2006" |
| Box/Folder 1/21 | Whitlach, Jo Bell "February 22, 2006" |
| Box/Folder 2 | Transcripts-Audio Tapes "2005-2006" |