

## Reflections on the Establishment of the University of South Florida Applied Anthropology Graduate Programs: A SfAA Oral History Interview with Gilbert Kushner.

Gilbert Kushner played an important leadership role in the development of the applied anthropology pedagogy nationally. The foundation for his accomplishment was serving as department chair in the period when the USF's precedent setting graduate programs were developed. He was very active in the affairs of the Society and served as its secretary. Gilbert Kushner died in 2010. His contributions in these realms was recognized in 2005 with the Society's Sol Tax Distinguished Service Award. His friends, colleagues and students honored his memory and contributions with the establishment and funding of SfAA's Gilbert Kushner Student Travel Award. The interview was done by C. J. Brown in 2001, who was then a graduate student at USF and now is an adjunct faculty at Rollins College in Winterhaven, Florida. The interview was part of a course under the guidance of Michael Angrosino. Editing for accuracy and continuity was done by John van Willigen.

**BROWN:** We're going to be talking today about the inception of the masters program and the PhD program at USF since it was one of the first ones, and you were the department head at that time. Could you describe for me your motives in creating the program in Applied Anthropology at USF, the masters.

**KUSHNER:** Motives. I'm not sure we had any. There's a history. In early academic 1972-73, the Board of Regents notified my Dean and me as Chair that the department was eligible to propose an M.A. program. We had previously, as a faculty, talked very informally, but sufficiently, so that we all came to consensus that even if there was not the current moratorium on PhD programs in the system, we wouldn't be interested [in a Ph.D. program] because we saw that people weren't getting jobs at the time. Academic employment was really down and there weren't very many jobs for professors. That's all we were thinking about at the time. So when we had the opportunity for the M.A., supported by the very explicit desire of our Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs that we have a master's degree, [we started the process]. Academic administrators count coup by counting the number of graduate programs and we are always engaged in a competition in South Florida with Florida State and the University of Florida. We had fewer graduate programs, especially at that time. They clearly wanted us to have a master's program. So we sat down. We were 10 faculty, two of whom were leaving at the end of the 1972-73 year. And talked about it and we immediately agreed none of us wanted a regular, traditional master's program. We didn't think there was any need for it whatsoever. Particularly in that period. And so I reported to the Board of Regents, the governing body of the State University System in Florida that we really weren't interested in a traditional M.A. program. [The] person responsible for that sort of thing responded "Good, because we wouldn't approve it anyway. It's clearly unneeded." So think about it. Not a traditional masters program but you have the opportunity, nevertheless, to propose an M.A. I remember I hung up the phone and thought "What is he talking about? If not a traditional M.A., then what?" So I called another meeting of the faculty. We used to meet always as a committee of the whole. We had subcommittees, but anything important was all of us at the same time. So I told them what they

said and I asked if there might be some other sort of a master's program. They didn't have anything in mind. I just wanted to make sure that we thoroughly discussed it and we started to talk and at the end of that first meeting, it was very clear that we did want another kind of master's program and that it would be a program aimed at training people for employment not professing anthropology at the M.A. level. I remember asking people who said what. How did this happen? I mean we're all anthropologists right? How did this event occur and nobody remembered really who said what or who was responsible. It was a joint effort. We also determined very quickly that there would be an internship as a requirement of the program. But in response to your question, that's what happened as best as I can remember it, as best I inquired about it, to make sure and I've written about this a fair number of times and that's how it came about.

**BROWN:** What differences in philosophy and practice is there between the traditional anthropology program and the applied. I mean obviously you were going through something very different here. It must have also included some differences in philosophy.

**KUSHNER:** Lots of differences. All of which I wrote up at least once. Actually several times in a chapter called "Administrative Considerations" in a book edited by Bob Trotter called *Anthropology for Tomorrow*, [a] publication of the AAA and NAPA published in 1988. Initially the notion was that we were training people very explicitly for employment in public and private, profit-making and non-profit making agencies. We were training people to make use of their anthropological knowledge in the definition and resolution of practical human problems. We were aiming at training people to pursue the second part of the two-part SFAA credo statement that the SFAA is organized in order to number one, and I think this remains number one in terms of the individual choice of most of applied anthropologists in SFAA and elsewhere, was the first purpose of SFAA was to encourage the discovery of the principles governing the relations of human beings to one another. I think we have seen and continue to see the publications in *Human Organization* describing the result of such efforts on the part of the authors. Papers which, it seems to me, in some ultimate essence cannot be distinguished from papers published in the *American Anthropologist*. The second purpose of the SFAA, however, in that credo statement is to make use of these principles governing the relations of human beings to one another and the identification of and resolution of practical problems of human beings in human organizations. So our entire focus on the second part makes for all sorts of differences in the internship, the curriculum, the kind of thesis, the courses, the sequence of courses and so on and so on. I distinguish between the two, applied and practice by thinking of applied people as aiming at the first of those, of the two-parts of the SFAA creed. So these are the folks who publish in *HO*. I even publish in *HO*, but that's what I was doing at the time. . .

**BROWN:** Did you come to think of yourself slowly through the progression of this department and the progression of these programs as more and more as an applied anthropologist?

**KUSHNER:** I came, but quickly, to think of myself that way. Once we proposed the M.A. in applied anthropology, all of us in fact got up the next morning and we were applied anthropologists. None of us thought of ourselves as applied anthropologists. The closest I think to that notion probably were the archeologists who researched always--well not always, but most of the time, tended to be on contract rather than grants. The contracts would [involve] some state

or local agency, regional agency to study some site before construction is going to occur. So they were practitioners, very much more than the rest of us.

**BROWN:** Okay. Who were some of your best supporters during that time for the program. Who was right there behind you?

**KUSHNER:** In the department?

**BROWN:** Both in the department and on a larger scale.

**KUSHNER:** Well, in the department there were Mike Angrosino, Roger Grange, Jerry Smith, Pat Waterman, Curt Wienker, Ray Williams. Those were the people who were around as we were developing the proposal and then, immediately thereafter, Ailon Shiloh joined us Graduate Director in 1973 and helped us put together courses, curricula, and a graduate administration. None of us had any idea about how to do that. Bob Wulff joined. It was Bob of WAPA who created the Praxis Awards. The Wulff of Wulff and Fiske. A wonderful collection of stuff that was in text. I taught the course.

**BROWN:** They're still using that course, or the text by the way.

**KUSHNER:** Well there's nothing else. It's old, but he's not interested in writing or putting together a new one. But it's great. The illustrations are wonderful I think. The format of his chapters were critical. A fair number of theses written under my direction follow that format. The critical thing is the anthropological difference. What is the anthropological difference? We say if a student can address that question sensibly, the student richly merits a masters degree. Bob stayed with us about four years I think. Three or four years. [We hired] Erv Chambers, who became the first editor of *Practicing Anthropology* which I'm delighted to say was created at this department in 1978 as a consequence of the visit from Sol Tax in which he suggested that we put together something to facilitate the communication of BA anthropologists to each other. The essential idea being that BA's were not professing anthropology. Chances are they were employed and they were doing something or other useful. So what was it that they were doing based on their BA in anthropology majors? We contacted a fair number of schools. We got alumni lists, but it didn't seem to work out that way and as I recall, Bob Wulff created a title for the thing which hadn't been published yet called *Practicing Anthropology at Work*. And then I guess we dropped the "At Work" from the title and talked about the thing as *Practicing Anthropology*. Communications with SFAA and Art Gallaher who was then the President, resulted in SFAA providing some cash to us in our publication of the newsletter which was created in an effort to let practitioners communicate with each other. Practitioners who were by in large treated like dirt by AAA and even though there's a NAPA now in AAA and there's a lot of talk, it seems to me most AAA people and a fair number of SFAA people think that practice is far less honorable than professing whereas my view, of course, is that practice is the best way to demonstrate the utility of anthropology in the world, to demonstrate the sensibility of anthropology in the world, far more than professing. I mean anybody could profess.

**BROWN:** What I hear you saying, if I'm correct, is that where many of us believe you weren't an anthropologist unless you had a PhD. At this point, applied anthropologists were people just practicing anthropology even with only BA's. How would you classify an anthropologist?

**KUSHNER:** Anthropologist is anybody at any degree level who has a major in anthropology. -I spent a fair number of years doing battle, politely and otherwise with, which accounts my current rep I guess, with people at AAA, in particular, because AAA used to publish from time-

to-time surveys based on interviews with recently graduated anthropologists, only PhDs and I used to sit on committees and such. I was active at AAA and some AAA organizations, the Society for Humanistic Anthropology, for example, and I use to argue with Ed Lehman who was then the Executive Director of AAA, that they ought to count MA's at least. Not just PhD's. Particularly at a time when not too many PhD's were employed professing anthropology but they're all doing something out there. They just weren't included in hardly anything. A few years before I retired in 1999, Meta [Marietta] Baba and I had articles published in *Human Organization* and Meta sent me her paper before it was published and she spoke only of PhD's and I remember saying "Meta, why only PhD's?" And this wasn't that long ago. So she changed it for publication, but it seems to me still there's lots of colleagues--AAA and SFAA who think only PhD and who think only professing anthropology and anything else is second class.

**BROWN:** I see. So in the greater scheme of things when you were working toward the M.A. in applied program here, did you have any support from people at AAA or SFAA?

**KUSHNER:** Yes. Lots, lots actually. What does that mean? It means 5, 6 people at least from each of those outfits. Officers, former officers. My mentor at Arizona, [Edward H.] Ned Spicer, was President of the AAA at the time the proposal went in, and I sent him a copy as I recall. He was so excited by it that he invited me to a meeting in Washington of mainly AAA former Presidents. They were meeting to discuss the situation which was really scary. No PhD's hardly get employed, very few advertisements in the newsletter. And I was there trembling the while in the face of all of these people to tell them what we were hoping to do at South Florida and that was very exciting to them because it meant the employment of anthropologists, but not at the PhD level. This was 1973. Sometime during the Spring of academic year 72-73 when that meeting occurred because I had in the package a wonderful letter from Spicer saying "At last somebody's going to try to do this and see what happens." I had a letter from Bill [William Foote] Whyte who was then the President of the American Sociological Association, just beginning his term. And he said "I am so pleased to see this. I'm going to devote my time as President of ASA to encourage the development of such programs in sociology." A fair number of "big" from AAA, from SFAA, and then we struggled to find practitioners out there. I asked them what they thought and of course they were thrilled. And so I had letters from such people. I had a letter from one guy, kind of a funny story, who had a pretty fancy job in Washington at some federal agency. He told me a story that he'd been going to lunch with a colleague at the agency for some twenty years and they'd chat about their families and their interests and so on and once one of them, by accident, said something about being an anthropologist and the other guy said "Are you an anthropologist? He said "Yeah." He said "I am too!" I mean that's how life was for those people. There was nobody to talk to. To say anthropology from their points of view then was irrelevant because obviously they thought at the time really that they got their jobs in spite of anthropology, but once they thought about it. . . I talked to numbers of them who realized not so much in spite of, but their efficiency at work was directly related to their knowledge of anthropology and most of all . . . I would conclude after all this, then and in the intervening years, [with] what Spicer calls the anthropological perspective. If we think of any problem from this perspective then we are doing anthropology and we are using anthropology. [I call it] "ECHH" as an acronym so I can remember what the components are. The etic/emic perspective, comparative cross-cultural perspective, historical and holistic perspective and we

put all that together and that's anthropology and there's nobody else. No other trade thinks about the world the way we do--still, in this era of globalization.

**BROWN:** Taking all of that as the background, obviously it was important how you were going to shape this applied program as far as the curriculum. You said earlier that the internship was important. How was that first class coming in. Were they encouraged? Did you have a hard time getting that first set of students to sign up?

**KUSHNER:** As I recall, Al [Alvin W.] Wolf didn't join us until 1974, . . . I think, which was the first year. As I recall, we had enough students applying that first year because I got the word out. We all got the word out. So a lot of people knew about it. Some were very excited about it and sent us students, their students applied. As I recall we had enough students apply. Our students were and are self-selective. All graduate students are self-selective but in our case, I think right at the start, we got students who wanted to make use of anthropology in the world rather than teach it.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** Or teach it, as it were, by demonstrating its utility. People who are not afraid of bureaucracy. Lot of people continue to be I suppose. Professors maybe especially and this was in the early mid-70s. It was a time when bureaucracy really was a code word for hell and "mean people" who didn't want to give people, power. But I think our students saw that the whole world is bureaucratically organized. We certainly, on the faculty side, knew that there is nothing more bureaucratized than a university campus, than a department. Faculty had to fill out so many pieces of paper and they're supposed to go to so many meetings and chairs [go] a million more times than deans--millions of more times. I mean we live in bureaucracy, all of us. Kids in first grade are participants in a bureaucratic system. They take exams and so and so. The world is bureaucratized and I think our incoming people saw that and welcomed the opportunity to get into a bureaucracy, get a job with some power and change the world. It's far much more efficient than standing on a corner with a clinched fist saying "Power to the People" which I spent a fair number of years doing myself. But if you're in an organization and you get some power in that organization then you can affect what goes on in that organization. Whether it's a Department of Anthropology or a university or the Congress or the Senate or whatever it is. You can do something if you want to and if you apply yourself and if you apply anthropology. . . it seems to me. So, we had that kind of person right away.

**BROWN:** How long did it take you to develop the curriculum and how did you develop it differently?

**KUSHNER:** We told the Board in the Fall of 1972. We want to propose this for a program and the person at the board said "Whoa! I don't know what that is, but it sounds--it's a first, right?" We said "Yes. It's great." He was thrilled. The Dean was thrilled. The Vice President--the President was excited--everybody--knowing that it was going to be a first. I mean what better for academic administrators on the campus and in Tallahassee to turn to their bosses and say "Hey, here's the first and it's at South Florida, not FSU and not Florida." So we started to fill out the proposal. The proposal is, was--I think when we were done 4, 5, 6 inches high and it had to include among other things, a need and demand for the program which required us to go and get statements from potential students, and potential employers in the locality in our part of the state, in the state, in the region, in the United States and elsewhere. That required quite a lot of

labor. Eight of us took pieces of the--well, the Chair assigned individual faculty pieces in the proposal and then coordinated the whole thing--edited and so on. So everybody is working beginning in the Fall through the Spring because it took us that much time to get the proposal together and then submitting it to the Board of Regents the end of the Spring. They considered it in the Summer and approved [it]. Part of the proposal is curriculum and we talked about that. What courses are going to be appropriate for this kind of thing? I mean, we didn't know. Nobody knew because it hadn't been done. Well, one thing we decided on quickly was that we would not require a bachelors degree in anthropology for admission for several reasons. First, we weren't at all sure what a bachelor's degree for "Wooshkahoopa Tech" relative to "Wooshkahoopa State" meant.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** If we had 15 people with BA majors and most of us were--BA majors, what did that mean, except that we could all spell anthropology. Our visions of anthropology were so different and so we thought well, getting BA majors wouldn't really mean much. Besides that, SFAA is multidisciplinary in character right at the start. More at the start, in fact, than now. There were psychiatrists and social workers, for example, regularly publishing in *Human Organization* in the early years. Political scientists, economists, sociologists. Getting people outside of anthropology--finding people outside of anthropology publishing in *HO* these days is relatively rare. Far more rare than it was then and there were more, it seems to me, in the early years, more of the others than anthropologists. In any case, so we knew that and we respected it and loved it and thought it made good sense. So we thought "Well" we wanted different points of view. Different ways of looking at the world and we thought getting all that variability in would lead to great class discussion.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** Would make it easier for us standing in front of classes and would lead to really interesting combinations of stuff. The American dream, right? All this diversity coming together in a classroom.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** It was very exciting. So I said "What do we do with all of these different people" We've got to make sure they think of something sort of alike." And so we came up with a notion of a core course in each of the four branches although I guess increasingly we speak of a fifth. The fifth being Applied, but that's where we were. So, one in each branch. I, some years thereafter unsuccessfully, for a number of times, tried to convince the faculty to go for one course and to teach in that course a number of key concepts. And then have a huge reading list, which we have never even discussed, but require of the students. But we all experienced that as graduate students ourselves.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** But I don't imagine that's how it is now, but it was then. We'd come in to a department, as a graduate student and got a reading list and we were told "Read." And that sometimes had something to do with stuff in class--more often it didn't. Meaning it was context.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** And exams, M.A. exams would include questions from that reading list. So you'd really have to read that reading list on top of everything else.

**BROWN:** But you didn't require that at that first class.

**KUSHNER:** Not the reading list. Although we distributed one. Yeah, we were old timers right? So we distributed a list, but by the time we got to exams, we decided not to ask questions based on that list. But we told people "This is good stuff you really ought to know it. We don't have time for all this in the curriculum." I can't remember now exactly how many years we did that; providing the list. A good number of years. The four core courses and then we came up with the tracks – urban, medical, public archeology -- because we tried to figure out what was special about our situation and what was needed in our situation and what would be desirable in our situation. All the university always claimed in particular an urban mission, because we were the only urban university at the time. There was FIU [Florida International University] that was just expanded by leaps and bounds but then they were hardly the size of a community college so we were the serious urban institution. We had branches in Lakeland, Sarasota, Ft. Myers, St. Pete and we were served in an urban community unlike any other university in the system. So we said, "Well, how can we best serve the urban community?" And we were clearly not going to focus on overseas exotic stones, bones, and savages.

**BROWN:** Right

**KUSHNER:** And so the notions of an urban track focusing on urban issues and then medical track also focusing on urban issues but it turned out we thought it would be politically advisable to call another track medical anthropology so as to stake out an area of interest and expertise which would link us with the medical school later when it was created -- public health, with the Florida Mental Health Institute and would potentially protect us from sniping from Florida State and the University of Florida.

**BROWN:** If you think about the demographics and how our aging population has increased the interest in health. Did you have that in mind also? That this was going to be a large area?

**KUSHNER:** Oh yeah. Besides that, the department at our college, we were the College then of Social and Behavioral Sciences. We became later Arts and Sciences in a traditional sense but that returned the situation to where we were before it became Social and Behavioral Sciences, it was a *mélange* of everything.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** And then the powers that be determined if they split the college up into smaller pieces things could be done more neatly and efficiently and I think they were. But then some other administrator came in and wanted to make a name and put it altogether and called it Arts and Sciences again. I don't think it's as efficient nor do I think it's as useful for departments in the social sciences because if you're right on top of natural sciences, administrators always go crazy about those and think that we just make up what we say and that we're not real scientists, they are. Medical track, urban track, public archeology. We had archeologists doing what, around that time, was beginning to be called public archeology. We had two archeologists who did that and there were people interested, undergraduates and graduate students. We had then a number of people, [Michael] Angrosino for one who was interested in medical issues and we had people interested in urban issues, particularly in Bob Wulff's case, he had spent time in architecture at UCLA when he was a graduate student so he was much interested in urban planning and urban design and started a whole thing in that direction which was pursued by Erv Chambers who shared those interests. So we have people now all over the area and beyond,

maybe beyond state, whose employment is in agencies, public and private, that have to do with urban planning and urban design and from the medical track, the same is true with regard to employment in agencies that have interests in things medical. Another thing, we knew that what was then, I forget what it was called, it wasn't gerontology. It had another name.

**BROWN:** Aging studies maybe?

**KUSHNER:** Maybe. Maybe the department then clearly wasn't capable of dealing with all of the problems of aging in the area, although my God, here we were right in the middle of it and it seemed to us a whole lot more could be done. We had Maria Vesperi, who is now at New College, as an adjunct instructor for some years. Her PhD is out of Princeton and her dissertation was on St. Pete. It is called *The City of Green Benches*. There used to be green benches on the main streets of St. Pete, but then the newer city administration decided they were unsightly, particularly the elder people sitting on the benches were unsightly. There were movie shorts, there were magazine articles around the United States for years and years showing the green benches and they talk about St. Pete as a city of green benches and show people sunning themselves in the winter. Brilliant dissertation. It was then published in paper and then republished in paper but with the old introduction at least once. I wish we had her. She knew everything about the elderly in St. Pete and the area at large. So anyhow, we thought we could do a lot. This is even before the glory days of AIDS research. All of that money available for AIDS which seems how somehow to be consistent with a lot of people's interests. There's money. There's always money. Much more money for medical stuff than other stuff. That was another reason to identify an area like that.

**BROWN:** So you could be funded?

**KUSHNER:** I knew it would be useful.

**BROWN:** So you said, early on, something about the one thing you absolutely all agreed on was the need for an internship.

**KUSHNER:** Yes. How we came up with that is another one of these questions. Maybe when we find Atlantis, we'll find the reason for the internships. It wasn't practica. Came up with practica later to distinguish between the BA and M.A.. We called the BA part-time work in agencies. Practica meant [a] full-time work internship. I think maybe we must have had something in mind. Well, two things in mind at least. One to use the same label existing departments used. Public administration students, for example, did internships. Social work students did internships. Clinical psych students at the PhD level did internships. Medical students did internships. Everybody knew internship. That was glorious, was important and vital in saying "Our students do internships." People say "Whoa!" They'd understand that. We thought the internship was a good thing to do in a practical program such as ours because it would build on classroom learning and expand classroom learning, it would give the students experience in a particular problem area. So by the conclusion of the internship and the writing of the thesis, the student could say I'm your person for this problem area, here's what I did my internship on and where. This is my thesis.

**BROWN:** So strictly an employable tack was part of the reason for the internship?

**KUSHNER:** Well, and training of students. It would give the opportunity to the student to make use of what the student had ostensibly learned. It would be a wonderful experience in the real world.

**BROWN:** How were those first internships in the terms of success?

**KUSHNER:** They were stupendous. They were so successful that as I remember now for a few years almost all of our students were offered employment and accepted employment in the agencies at which they were interning because they were so impressive. See unlike some departments, our internships were real. That is, they were not problems created for the student and they were not go-fer positions. I'm thinking of an article by Mike Trend in *HO*, years and years ago. He wrote about go-fers in anthropology. No, we made certain that the internship problem was one that the agency was working on and need[ed to be] resolved. So we also, very early, decided that the internship would require a contract. Not necessarily signed by, but agreed to by the agency supervisor, the faculty supervisor, and the student. So there were three parties involved, and all three would have to be content with what was written up in a document and that document was to provide, and it did, at least in the early years. I know that later on faculty would discombobulate with their own private interests and frequently the contracts were honored in the breach and students would find themselves wondering what to do, when it would end, and so on. The contract was to specify not only what they would do [and] when, so that there was a time line. We would show a calendar leaving the last two weeks free during which time the student was to write a report to the agency to the faculty supervisor, and usually on the basis of that report, the thesis would be created. The idea for the thesis was to put that report in context, to put the items in the report in anthropological context. And show that the student understood some anthropology. Some times however, the report, expanded somewhat in more detail, would be the thesis by itself. It depended on what made sense.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** The critical question was “What made sense?” In the case of the internship, the faculty adviser, the student, and the agency supervisor determined what made sense. They were the ones that know. But as I say, so many of the students were hired while they were interning to pursue that job at that agency and get paid for it. There were delays in the preparation of the thesis, because once you get out in the world and make car payments and so on, it was a different situation. Al Wolf said that “a student was hired by an agency discussant during the coffee break at the annual colloquium [where interns made presentations of their work].” The agency discussant was so impressed with what the student said and how the student said it, the student was offered a job during the coffee break at the colloquium and they accepted it. Those are good years. We, by the way, did not require that the intern be paid although in some cases, the intern was paid. Not a lot, but something or other because I guess for one thing our own experience doing field work was that often enough nobody paid us. We didn't have any cash. Unless we hustled a grant from somewhere or other.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** And we thought the student was getting paid off by the experience and by the ability to make the opportunity to make contacts.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** During the internship, you're not just going into the agency and doing your job, you're hustling. You're having lunch with people. You're calling people. You're talking to people. Who else is there? Where else might I go? And so on and so on.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** So that a whole opportunity to prepare for employment in the world.

**BROWN:** So was it difficult then to find internships for the students?

**KUSHNER:** I wouldn't say it was difficult. It was a task initially because there weren't any. So we had to go out, faculty had to go out.

**BROWN:** Okay we were saying that it was a chore at first. The faculty had to go out.

**KUSHNER:** Yes. We had to go out in the process of preparing the proposal because we had to have letters from people who were potential employers of our graduates. So, in that effort we contacted agency representatives--local and otherwise.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** And then public service became a significant component of faculty activity given the nature of the program. What faculty did, faculty roles are different in this kind of program, a lot of differences. We required community service. I know in sitting in various committees at the college and then as Associate Dean for a number of years, I discovered that people in other places on the campus didn't do any community service and they were not required and were not even asked to. They weren't asked to do public service either. No professional service either. But in our department, all faculty members were encouraged to do professional and public service as well as teaching and research because for one thing, public and professional service would enhance the reputation of the department. If more of us were upfront as presidents and secretaries of professional outfits, more people heard of South Florida. Who knew about South Florida? I never heard of South Florida before I got here. In addition, one could learn stuff in those positions--professional service positions that one could bring back to the program. Community service would help enhance the university's urban mission and various administrators on campus were delighted to see faculty out there working with the town, so town and gown.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** We really care about it. Hardly anybody did. None of the professors. Few of them were interested in serving the community. We were. The administrators liked it and that helped the department. The whole thing really was the focus. Programmaticals, the achievement of which would result in the individual faculty doing very well indeed. The usual situation in academe was for individual professors to do what they do for their own well-being and promotions and raises. . . . In our case, given the focus on the program, everything's a program and everybody had to contribute to the program to the extent that the program did well then each of us individually did well. You're interviewing me here. I mentioned earlier some chapters in this book, my presence at this fancy AAA meeting, I've consulted in -- I did consulting in a lot of places that were thinking about applied programs. I mean I became an expert on training programs in applied anthropology. People, you, me, and some of them probably still remember me because of that. The point is that individually I think we all did a whole lot better than we might have otherwise had we not been engaged in this community effort to enhance the program. Public service, we needed to go out in the community and also research and do local contract research. That was one of the tasks of the guy we hired to be Graduate Director was also suppose to hustle contracts and he did--\$300,000, \$400,000 bucks as I recall his first year in contracts. He didn't follow through on them, but he got them. Other people followed through. My God, but he hustled that money and in doing so he contacted lots of agencies and individuals

and then got the money from the few. But a number of them discovered the USF was there in the first place. It took many years for this community to pay attention to what was going on north of Kennedy Boulevard.

**BROWN:** Why?

**KUSHNER:** Because most of the community was south and they didn't pay attention. South Florida was nothing and Florida State and UF was important. So a number of agencies got to know about the university and our department through this contract hustling. Other faculty started to hustle local contracts and contributed. All of us volunteered to serve on boards and directors of community agencies so that we could make nice to the civilians and suggest to the them that we were not so strange. Professors were just ordinary folks, but we were more than that because we made use of anthropology to do our work on the board and help the agency do better and become more efficient.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** So we'd chair committees of the board and I sat, for example, on one board of a public housing facility and part of the federal funding for such public housing sets aside some percentage of the budget for the resident's recreational fund. And some significant amount of monies and thousands and thousands I think tens of thousands which when given the situation of the people in this building, it was very significant. So the President of the Board at one meeting said "Well, what should we do with this money?" A board member said "Well, how about this and this and this." I couldn't believe it. I'm waving my hand and finally was recognized and I said "How old are the people? What's the average age of the people?" "Well, 66-67." I said "They're all adults, you would agree?" "Yes." "Then why can't they manage their own damn money?" I suggested. Not very politely for a change. And they said "Well, what do you mean?" I said "Why don't we tell them." We had already a resident's board or something another. I said "Why don't we let them know about this? That there is this money. That the purpose of the money is to be used for recreational endeavors and why didn't they appoint or elect the committee or something and take care of this money? And they'd have to know that once it was gone, it was gone. It's their money and they're adults, why can't they do it themselves?" People around the table said "Oh, gee, wow." Honest to God. "What an unusual idea." I said "Well, we call this participation where I come from." Stuff even as simple as that, let alone people conducting research on behalf of an agency and so on. So we got to be known downtown. Unlike, a fair number of programs at the university.

**BROWN:** So this was obviously successful right from the beginning. Did you feel [the program] was going to be a success after the first year -- the second year?

**KUSHNER:** During the first year--yeah, I must say I did.

**BROWN:** The other thing I hear repeated in our conversation is you don't take any personal credit for this. You feel very much it was definitely--

**KUSHNER:** No, I'm a good American, I know it's not polite to do that.

**BROWN:** No, but you've indicated repeatedly that it had to be a team effort.

**KUSHNER:** Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

**BROWN:** Were there any dissenters in the department or the school?

**KUSHNER:** A lot of colleagues in other departments were very upset because they had competition now, not only from the usual sources but from us as well.

**BROWN:** Right. So was this a good setup? Was the success of the masters directly related to the PhD program that was also started 10 years later?

**KUSHNER:** No. I would say the success of the PhD program was related to the masters. See, again for the PhD, the board notified us, the Dean and I, that we were eligible to propose a PhD program and eligibility in both regards the M.A. and PhD is based on the number of graduates of the preceding level. So we had produced N number of BA's and therefore were eligible for an M.A.. We produced so many M.A.'s who were eligible for the PhD. Now for the PhD, our Dean and the central administration were even more excited because a PhD is the apogee and they really count coup for PhD programs. Deans go to Dean meetings and say "How many PhD's do you got?" And then again, it enables the university to do battle with Florida, Florida State. So it was the success of the M.A. that really led to the PhD or that made the PhD of interest in the discipline. And since it was a PhD, we decided right away we'd be going for practitioners and professors. At first there were, as I remember, I think I'm accurate--maybe not. There were relatively few who wanted to be professors.

**BROWN:** Was this due to the employment climate at the time?

**KUSHNER:** No. By 1984 things were looking up, particularly we thought for professors of applied anthropology because people were real hot about applied by that time and we realized that people coming out of our place would be desirable.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** But as I recall, there were not that many people who wanted to be professors. Instead they were PhD practitioners and I thought about [a] PhD as necessary for people who wanted to work in medical institutions with physicians with PhD's in public health with overseas development situations with PhD's in economics and political science and agriculture so the anthropologist with these circumstances could also be called Doctor.

**BROWN:** Carry a little more credentialing.

**KUSHNER:** Absolutely. Yes. I mean there was—really, the only thought I had [was] that the PhD was necessary for some kinds of employment but not for lots and lots of other sorts of employment situations.

**BROWN:** Are there any students from the early programs in either the masters PhD that particularly come to mind after all these years?

**KUSHNER:** Sure. I have lunch with a numbers of students still from early, early in the masters. I think one of our--well I think he may have been the first distinguished alumnus awardee. Mike English who has chaired the County Planning Commission two or three times, served as a member for many years.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** Mike has been very successful planning and design--urban planning and design consultant since he graduated. His son is our God son, so you know we're real close to Mike and Jane. We see them a lot and others as well. I don't think I see any of the doctoral graduates because for one thing I saw them, I would see them only in one course--the doctoral people. I've sat on committees, but I've never chaired--I don't think I've ever chaired a doctoral committee. There's always tension between M.A. and PhD students and between faculty, those who want doctoral students and value them more than M.A. students and we all knew about this and we were warned about it and we felt like we could handle it because we knew about it before. But I

don't know. It seems to me I saw even by the time I graduated that the warnings probably made more than less sense. I mean to be brutally truthful.

**BROWN:** But is it inevitable, I mean you knew about it, so evidently there isn't really a way around it.

**KUSHNER:** No I think not.

**BROWN:** And the field can benefit from both masters and PhD students.

**KUSHNER:** Oh absolutely, but within the department there comes to be a division in attention that wasn't there before when there was only the M.A. and everybody was focused on the M.A. or the BA.

**BROWN:** I see. So what percentage of those first graduates in your masters and PhD program do you think got jobs in applied anthropology?

**KUSHNER:** All.

**BROWN:** Even 10 years later when we were turning out PhD's they all ended up going into anthropology programs, anthropology projects?

**KUSHNER:** Yes. Whatever they did--I get a newsletter, for example, sent to me from a graduate, who is Watershed Coordinator in a county in Northern California and what his task essentially is, is to protect and preserve the physical environment in that county. Not all of it, but water resources in particular and trees and grassy areas, the public lands. Because in preserving those, then the private holdings of ranchers particularly are enhanced. So he publishes a newsletter every couple of months. He hustles contracts, grants for his office. He meets with all of the stakeholders in the area so as to ensure that they participate and are aware that they participate in what goes on.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** He doesn't sit there and make up what happens. We correspond in email. He's always telling me he's making use of "ECHH" all the time.

**BROWN:** Well what's the history of the mentor program in the department? I understand from some of the students I've talked to, the mentoring program that is so prevalent in the department, was that part of--did that grow out of the masters program or the PhD program?

**KUSHNER:** You're going to have to tell me what you mean.

**BROWN:** Well, just the mentoring that goes on between students and faculty, etc. It seems to be a little more pronounced in our anthropology program. Is that because of all passion that was brought to creating these?

**KUSHNER:** Well I think there is, even in a straight program, that relationship between a student and faculty adviser.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** And if you're lucky, that can be a wonderful experience on both sides and you can take that experience away with you forever.

**BROWN:** Do you remember some of the students you mentored?

**KUSHNER:** Sure. All of them. Oh yes, and I have lunch with a number of them now and have email contact with others who are around the country. Yes, it can be a wonderful thing and I guess, especially early on when we were all aware of the students and the faculty, that we were engaged in a glorious experiment and we were hoping that the experiment would work. It added even to the passion and excitement that was already there so we all felt like we were blazing a

trail which in fact is what we were doing. And so as the years went on, initially we'd go to meetings usually SFAA, AAA--where the people would say "Oh, you're at that place they're trying/doing something or other. What is that? I've heard about it." And then, a few years later, people used to come up and say "Oh, you're at the place that has that M.A. in applied anthropology."

**BROWN:** So you feel you got a lot of support from the other schools too? Other universities?

**KUSHNER:** Yes.

**BROWN:** In state, out-of-state? You said earlier that they actually would--

**KUSHNER:** Mainly out-of-state. No, but there were people. A very good friend of mine came to Florida. I mean we were good friends before as chair. He was wonderful. I have a plant in the backyard which he gave to us personally when we got the PhD. I know people at Florida State as really good friends. It's the institutional competition one has to separate from individual.

**BROWN:** Right, but we do have support across the United States for the program, right?

**KUSHNER:** When I last heard. Oh yeah.

**BROWN:** Okay. What advice would you give to graduate students and would it be the same advice for the master's student and it would be for the PhD student?

**KUSHNER:** One, try to figure out what you're interested in. If you presently at any point in this don't know what you're interested in--wonderful. Take more courses where the requirements are minimal. Take reading courses. You can get credit for that.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** There are reading courses in the catalog. Go to some faculty member who knows something about something and say "I'd like to find out about that. What might I do." I took a reading course for example when I returned to Arizona because I had heard--well, I was an instructor for four years teaching mainly introductory and a number of courses in sociology and uh--I knew that there was something called the "New Archeology or Processional Archeology" going on, but I didn't know very much about it.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** So when I returned to Arizona to be a doctoral student, I realized that one of the archeologists there was a distinguished junior but a brilliant junior in the new archeology movement, he was a first or second PhD of the guy who created it in Chicago. And so I ran to him my first term. I said "Please, I want a reading course and I want to find out what all of this is about." So he assigned readings and toward the end of the term, I had to give him a paper, and he read the paper. I'd meet him once a week and we'd talk about what I read and we argued because I had a lot of criticism. I loved it, but I thought they really need to improve in a number of ways and I told him. So after one of these "shouting" matches in his office, he said "God dammit, put it in writing." Really. And I did. The following week I gave him 25-26 pages. Something like that, and he said "Would you mind if I send it to the guy Binford, Lewis Binford, who started it all?" I said "Oh my God, I'd be delighted." So he did and Binford didn't respond so he gave me back the paper and said "Listen, clean it up a little bit and send it out to *American Antiquity* which is the journal for American archeology. I did, and it was published. I was still a graduate student and it was the first published critique of the new archeology ever and it was in *American Antiquity* which is the number one American archeology journal and that was

consequent to a reading course. Of course, I wanted to be a professor. So publication was important.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** In any case, that was really I guess, in terms of my career goals, and that's what we're talking about, it was wildly successful--that reading course. I took others in areas that I wanted to learn about but were not covered in class.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** A student has to take that responsibility upon their self. That's one thing. So these two suggestions are aimed at enhancing one's knowledge. Very importantly I would say given my experience in the later years of the program. Students increasingly felt that they wanted an internship that would pay. I saw any number of students, not my advisees but others, taking internships that paid but in which they were not real interested and that was not what they wanted to do. They didn't want to work in that area. They took the internship because they got money. I would point out at every opportunity I had because they were not my students directly, that I spent two years in Arizona working on my masters degree eating horse meat, tortillas and beans. That was it. I didn't have any money. Horse meat then was I think twenty cents a pound. It was wonderful. There's no fat. French gourmets eat horse meat after all. So I would suggest to people take out more loans. You're already burdened by loans. All of us were. I don't know hardly any anthropologist who had independent means as a student. We all took out loans. We all didn't eat a whole lot. We all were very skinny, years before being skinny was nice, right? We were skinny because we were hungry. So now is your chance for that experience. My God, don't take an internship someplace unless you're really interested in it. [This is] your first experience in the world off campus. You want it to be a good one. You want to make use of it. Don't be wasteful.

**BROWN:** I also hear in you recounting your own experience that perhaps graduate students didn't use to be quite as timid as holding themselves out for what they knew in their expertise. I mean here you took on Lewis Binford in your opinions. When do you think it begins to sink in to people that they are anthropologists once they're in the graduate programs?

**KUSHNER:** Oh God, I don't know. My situation was different I think because I had taught for four years at the University of Houston. That was my first job. I had been a graduate student at North Carolina at Chapel Hill for three years after my masters at Arizona and then while I was teaching at Houston, Chapel Hill threw me out. Long bloody story, but it was the best thing that ever happened to me. I stayed at Houston a little longer and then went back to Arizona for the PhD and Spicer was there and again we were mentor and student and it was wonderful. I was real close to Spicer until he died. But the point I'm making is that I was kind of a semi-pro by the time I was a doctoral student at Arizona.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** I came in as a matter of fact, my first term I taught a course, a huge lecture course for a guy who was overseas and I had a faculty office. I had access to secretaries. The head of the department told me to attend faculty meetings and I did. I went to the first meeting and I said I'm not going to come back anymore. But it was very nice. It was a nice transition back into being a graduate student after four years on the faculty.

**BROWN:** That's right.

**KUSHNER:** So it didn't faze me in the least to argue with a guy in his office or to write that paper about the new archeology. I knew some of that stuff anyway, philosophy of science anyway.

**BROWN:** So what particular pitfalls besides the internship would you caution us to be conscious of, and are there different pitfalls or different advice for the masters students than the PhD or are they still pretty much the same?

**KUSHNER:** I would say in terms of being a student, it is essentially the same. You have got to be responsible for yourself. It seems to me the relationship between adviser and graduate student is one in which the student is an equal participant in the process. The difference is knowledge and I suppose worldliness too, but that varies. That varies so much. Sometimes you get a kid who has just finished college and other times you get more mature people. So the difference is knowledge of the field, but the adviser can't advise you to be a different person. The student has to be responsible. The student has to read the catalog and be aware of the requirements. The student has to know that if you get a serious contract written before the internship and all three parties know what's going on, and if you get a schedule. If you make sure as a student that the contract contains this time line and tasks are laid out month by month and if the contract includes a provision that there is time at the end during which your only task is to prepare the final agency report, and if all three parties understand that and you know that all of that has to be done before registration. We used to require the contract to be shown before we could register, but then that went by the board in later years with a less-rigid chair. Students would begin their internship and not have a clue as to what they were doing and have to scramble and the internship is nowhere near as productive and the thesis was messy. So the student has got to take responsibility and use what's available here in ways that makes the most sense for the student. Not for the faculty. You've got to realize everything is minimal. Requirements are minimal so you can always take more hours and in the good old days we all did because we knew that we couldn't get everything wanted in the required minimal curriculum.

**BROWN:** Excellent advice.

**KUSHNER:** Well, I think of it as practical stuff for a student in a practical program to do. If this program is approached as if it were any other where you do the minimal stuff and you get out, it's not going to be anywhere, anywhere near as useful with a student.

**BROWN:** Is there anything else that you would really like to have on tape as far as your experience with the people you dealt with or your vision for the program or what you feel like the legacy was that was left here?

**KUSHNER:** I'm very pleased that it worked out. It gave me something to do. It gave me something to do for a very long time. I had 14 years as chair which is more time than anybody I've ever known. Seven of those years, I was associate dean and that was a lot of fun because both of those jobs made me aware of the world in which I lived as a professor. [If] I'd been a professor the whole time I wouldn't have been aware of all of this and I found it as fascinating as any other field work I had done. More actually, because I had power as chair, as associate dean, and to the extent that I found out more and more about how things worked which is what we wish to do as anthropologists and as practicing anthropologists, we want to know how best to intervene. Planned intervention Spicer said "Was the essence of applied anthropology." So as I learned how to intervene in this whole system to make things work the way I wanted them to

work for my department for which I was responsible, it was my job. I found all those 14 years just fascinating. Fascinating. Trying to figure out this bureaucracy and trying to make it do what I wanted it to do, not what it wanted to do to me. I organized a symposium at a SFAA meeting on practicing anthropology in academic administration. Two of the papers presented were published. Ray Thompson's who was head of anthropology [at the University of Arizona] and director of the Arizona State Museum for many years and mine in *Practicing Anthropology*. Art Gallaher who went from professor to chair of the department at Kentucky to dean to chancellor, - all of Kentucky, had a wonderful paper, but he didn't want to write it all down. Erv Chambers wrote a great paper on what he did in Maryland.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** Erv is wonderful. Elegant writer. So you know, my life was surrounded by such people as Erv and Bob Wulff, whom I still see and am in touch with, a whole bunch of other people, has just been very rewarding. Particularly, I think in an academic environment in which most professors think that doing the job of chair is something to be avoided at all costs and because its just pushing paper around. I never thought that was the case. I was amazed in fact to discover it was not the case because I thought it was pushing paper around. I got here in 1970, late August. In October, the chair and senior faculty member told me I was going to be chair the following year--1971. That would have been 4, 5, 6, 7--in my eighth year of academe and I said "No, I wasn't--" They said "Yes you are." "No, I'm going to push papers." And then one of them said it's a twelve month contract instead of nine and you know I said "I'll be chair." But then I found happily that it was much more than that.

**BROWN:** So you actually started being chair of the department several years before this program came up?

**KUSHNER:** Oh yes, 1971.

**BROWN:** Oh okay. All right.

**KUSHNER:** And I must say during 1971, I can say I because I did it myself, re-did the BA program and made an introductory and then courses at the junior level in each branch and then the electives in each branch.

**BROWN:** So it became a real four-fold program.

**KUSHNER:** Yes, and hired a physical anthropologist [Curtis Wienker] and a linguist, Jerry Smith.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** So I did that and that was such fun. To make something I thought made sense. I had the power to do it so when the MA thing came up and we all were involved with that, that was even better. It was much better.

**BROWN:** I read a certain amount of passion each time you speak of the group.

**KUSHNER:** I felt that certainly. I think others did too, but I probably more because I was the one who coordinated the whole thing and I could see all of this going on in front of me whereas maybe the others not having that angle didn't see it altogether that way, but I view it and I publish about it as a dream time, *a la* Australian Aborigines. A wonderful time in the past.

**BROWN:** Right.

**KUSHNER:** Very exciting. During the day, at night, various of us would meet and talk about it and we knew that it was going to be wildly innovative in anthropology and it was just exciting as hell. I mean it's one thing to publish something the first couple of times.

**BROWN:** Dr. Kushner it's been a delight to spend this time with you and get some of the history of the department and history of the applied program here at USF and how it fits into the whole scheme of applied anthropology. I can say that on behalf of the oral history project, we appreciate the time you've given us.

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