

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

This Oral History is copyrighted by the University of South Florida Libraries Oral History Program on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the University of South Florida.

**Copyright, 1995-2017, University of South Florida.
All rights, reserved.**

This oral history may be used for research, instruction, and private study under the provisions of the Fair Use. Fair Use is a provision of the United States Copyright Law (United States Code, Title 17, section 107), which allows limited use of copyrighted materials under certain conditions. Fair Use limits the amount of material that may be used.

For all other permissions and requests, contact the UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA LIBRARIES ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM at the University of South Florida, 4202 E. Fowler Avenue, LIB 122, Tampa, FL 33620.

USF Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders 50th Anniversary
Oral History Program
University of South Florida, Tampa Library

Digital Object Identifier: U46-00016
Interviewee: Dr. Bettina Tucker (BT)
Interview by: Stephanie de Silva (SS)
Interview date: March 21st, 2017
Interview location: USF CSD Building
Transcribed by: Stephanie de Silva
Transcription date: unknown
Audit Edit by: Carla Butel
Audit Edit date: October 4th, 2017 to October 6th, 2007
Final Edit by: Carla Butel
Final Edit date: November 29th, 2017

Bettina Tucker (BT): So my current role is an adjunct clinical instructor.

Stephanie de Silva (SS): Okay.

BT: And prior to that, I was a preceptor¹ mentor for students who were doing their clerkships in the community. And I did that for 31 years.

SS: Okay.

BT: So, for the time that I started at the VA² in 1980 until I retired in 2011.

SS: Okay. Wow. How was it working for the VA? This one right here?

BT: Uh-huh. Yeah.

SS: How was that experience?

1A practicing physician, skilled practitioner or faculty member who gives personal instruction, training and supervision to students in a clinical setting to allow practical experience with patients.

2Department of Veteran's Affairs

BT: I loved it. It was a great experience, so we mentored—we had a lot of USF students that came through the VA to do their clerkships and their externships. I mean, the name changes over time, but you know, so even when it was a mast—so for years when it was a master's program and then when they changed it to the AuD [doctor of audiology] program.

SS: To the doctorate, right.

BT: And then I worked here at USF as a VA employee because the VA had an office here from— for about nine and a half years.

SS: Okay.

BT: So it is currently where all the clinical instructors sit downstairs.

SS: Right.

BT: That used to be the VA office.

SS: Oh, I didn't know that.

BT: Yeah. Most people don't know that.

SS: Okay. So actually I wanted to ask you first, what years were you a part of CSD? So you said —

BT: Okay, I came here in—let me think for a minute—I came here in August of 1973.

SS: Okay.

BT: And I graduated in December 1977.

SS: Oh, so you were a student as well at first?

BT: I graduated—I got my master's from here.

SS: Nineteen seventy—

BT: Seventy-seven.

SS: Seventy-seven, you graduated.

BT: With my master's. And then from 1980 until I retired, I was a preceptor.

SS: Okay.

BT: That was 2011. And actually, even before I retired from the VA, I started working a very few, part time hours helping with _____(??) and management. So I actually, I think my official time I started here as part time as adjunct was 2009.

SS: Okay.

BT: So I did that for a couple year—for a short period of time before I retired. And then I've just continued in my time that I work here as adjunct has—the amount of time has obviously increased.

SS: So that's 2009 until now.

BT: To present.

SS: To present. I know this looks awful but this just in case anything happens.

BT: That's okay. Okay.

SS: This is just notes in case. Okay, wonderful. Thank you.

BT: I basically have spent my adult life somehow connected to USF.

SS: That's a good sign. That means things around here are good.

BT: So just for the short time that I worked in Lakeland for an ENT³ doctor, that's really the only time I really wasn't at USF—

SS: Right.

BT: — working with the students and in some capacity because being a young, baby audiologist I, of course, didn't have students to mentor at that time.

SS: So you got the experience first and then—

BT: I was still being mentored myself, so—

SS: Okay. So you were in Lakeland when? Just curious.

BT: I worked in Lakeland from—well, I actually worked part-time for Tampa Speech and Hearing before I graduated because I had a license. And then I went to work full time at ENT in Lakeland from like March of 1978 until January of 1980. I finished there on a Friday and started at the VA on a Monday.

SS: Oh.

BT: So there was no downtime. My class graduated the year before me. I took an extended trainingship at the VA. And so, I had to be a student longer to take that. So, I should have graduated in '76, but I took this extended trainingship. And the VA trains fiscal years, so we— across the country, those of us who were already trainees stayed a little bit longer.

³Ear, nose and throat

SS: Okay.

BT: And then they started their new fiscal year and started with their one year trainees. So it was fine. It's probably why I got into the VA because I was a known entity.

SS: Right, of course.

BT: It worked to my—

SS: You had your foot in the door, so it was great.

BT: Yeah. It worked to my favor. So it was very good.

SS: Wonderful. And so, why did you choose USF CSD?

BT: I chose USF because it was actually the closest public university to my hometown.

SS: Okay.

BT: I was not prepared to go too far away. I had a scholarship for a public university in Florida, so it was critical to stay in Florida, and USF was the closest. Although, I'm from South Florida, and I had to go north to go to the University of South Florida, which I always found kind silly.

SS: The name. (SS laughs)

BT: I think when it was named, the only thing it was south of was Gainesville.

SS: Gainesville, obviously because it's kind of right there with UCF⁴.

BT: Exactly.

⁴University of Central Florida

SS: It's funny. Everytime I tell friends back home that I go to the University of South Florida, they say, oh so you're in Miami? I'm like, no.

BT: Where are you from?

SS: I'm from Trinidad and Tobago.

BT: I heard that little British [accent].

SS: Yeah. (SS laughs) Okay, so what did the facilities and surrounding area look like when you first came here?

BT: When USF—I started coming over here in 1972 because I friend who came over to visit somebody. So I actually had been in Tampa. And my parents and I, when I was a young girl, we used to vacation at Busch Gardens. So I actually kind of remembered Tampa.

SS: You knew the area.

BT: I knew the area a little bit, and it was just barren. It was just really barren, you know the—when you come in the front entrance to the university now it's—even though the main administrative building is the same, you know, all the signage and all the palm trees and all the oak trees that you take for granted were not there at all.

SS: It was all just very empty.

BT: Right, the library was not there. That was just a big blank spot. There were only a few buildings on campus when I came here. [The] Marshall Center was not here. The dormitories they just tore down were my dormitories.

SS: Mm-hmm.

BT: So I lived in Delta.

SS: A friend of mine lived there a few years ago and it was a mess. It used to flood out, the whole first floor would flood out.

BT: It did that.

SS: You know it well.

BT: Yes. I, luckily, was not on the first floor. The audiology department was in what we called Mildew Manor across the street. It was on Fletcher and 46th Street in an apartment complex that USF rented, and we called it Mildew Manor.

SS: (laughs) I've heard of it. Mildew Manor on Fletcher.

BT: Pardon?

SS: Mildew Manor on Fletcher.

BT: Yeah.

SS: The apartments.

BT: Yeah, so that was my first experience to audiology. And it was just, you know, there was a long walk from space to space, from one building to other. You know, we had some class over here in like the chemistry building. It's that one story building that's still there.

SS: Right.

BT: And it was like a hike across campus.

SS: And nothing really nice to look at in between, apparently.

BT: It was just, you know—it had a little bit of a hill, but you know. So it wasn't totally flat. The

front was flat, but the back where the Marshall is now, that little hill was always there. And you had to take a little walk down to get to Delta, to where I lived, so it was a little hill, just not much.

SS: In the Mildew Manor, I've heard about what the SLP⁵ little clinic used to look like, what did the old audiology clinic look like? Was it these tiny little rooms?

BT: It was tiny little rooms. Little tiny observation ports that you would look through.

SS: Like through the door?

BT: Like through the door, like a window they made. And it was—I was like just starting, and they were actually building the BEH building. So most of my classes were in like what the all the social sciences, social behavioral sciences were. And then I would go over for some observations, or if you wanted to talk to somebody, a professor, you had to go over there because that's where their offices were.

SS: Right.

BT: It was dingy and dungy and dark. It looked like it was kind of put together, not real professional. But, you know, it did the job. That was what we had then.

SS: Yeah.

BT: So when we moved into the BEH building, it was like a mansion.

SS: It was like luxury.

BT: It was like luxury accommodations.

SS: And then, now this.

BT: Right. So we went from like a, I don't know, kind of shack to a motel and now we're in a

⁵Speech language pathology

hotel.

SS: (laughing) That's great. And so, what was the atmosphere like between the students, and the professors, and just being in the department.

BT: It was friendly, a lot of fun. It was of course, much smaller, so small groups. And I'm still very good friends with the people I went to school with.

SS: That's nice.

BT: We've kept in touch. I still consider them very good friends. I still stay in touch with Dr. Shepherd.

SS: Okay.

BT: And [I] call him regularly to check on him, see how he is doing. So it was very congenial. I felt welcomed and, of course, it was still intimidating being like—learning something new and doing something you'd never done before, but I certainly didn't shy away from the experience.

SS: That's great. And with professors, did you feel that there was a comfortable relationship or was it very professional, or distant?

BT: It was not distant. We had, you know—I would say it was not distant all. I mean it wasn't always strictly professional. You know, you would go to meetings and be able to socialize with them, and we did have parties with the professors, parties at their houses sometimes. They would host a party at the end of the semester. So it was—I don't think—it's very different maybe. It was very different for us than it is now.

SS: And it was a smaller program as well, right?

BT: It was—sometimes it was a party atmosphere, but it was—we still learned. And you knew when you had to be serious and when it was a party and when it was serious. I mean, there was a firm distinction.

SS: Thank you. And who were the major community partners at the time? So when you did

externships—

BT: The VA, Tampa VA; Tampa Speech and Hearing, which now has a different name; the school system, Hillsborough and Pinellas County. There were not a lot of private practice audiologists at that time, so it was mainly—there were just a few places. Tampa Speech and Hearing had three or four ENTs associated with it, that owned Tampa Speech and Hearing at the time. So, and it was primarily—even [though] it was called Tampa Speech and Hearing, it was primarily audiology.

SS: Okay. And it has a new name now.

BT: It has a new name. I'm really not, I want to say Suncoast but don't quote me on that.

SS: Okay.

BT: Okay. And then I think there was a—in Lakeland, the Speech and Hearing Center in Lakeland.

SS: Okay.

BT: Watson Clinic, in Lakeland.

SS: Is that something else or that's the same one?

BT: No, it's different. The Watson Clinic is different. That's what I'm familiar with. That's what I remember.

SS: Okay, thank you. That's actually a lot. That's great. Okay, and who else was a part of the department. How many students and programs were there at the time?

BT: They had an oral rehab department. So it was audiology, speech pathology, and oral rehab, and they were all master's programs. So we were in a five-year master's program. We did not get a bachelor's degree. It was a—there were just a few programs in the nation like that. And we were called communicology. We were not communication sciences and disorders. And my

degree is a master's in communicology, you know, audiology. It's a master's in audiology from the Department of Communicology.

SS: So they almost make it like a specialty in communicology?

BT: Right. So just like now it's the department of—

SS: Totally different now.

BT: It was just—we didn't have the disorders part at all. It was just the Department of Communicology. So how many—you wanted to know how many (BT and SS speaking at same time; inaudible)

SS: Like an exact number is not necessary, but about how many.

BT: We had two primary professors that did most of our, you know, strict audiology and oral rehab. And then we had several, there were several people that did both the—they taught both the speech pathologists and the audiologists. There were some crossover classes. We all took anatomy and physiology together. We had a class over—we had a special class over in the physics department for acoustical physics. And then we had—at that time, the audiologists had to do language therapy also. So we did work with the speech pathology instructors, clinical instructors because they would, you know, supervise us. And we had one primary—when I was in school, we had one primary clinical audiology instructor.

SS: Okay.

BT: It as Connie Kuffel-Hare. Sadly, she's deceased.

SS: Okay.

BT: It's K-u-f-f-e-l. Hare, H-a-r-e. But she kept her name professionally. She kept Kuffel, most of the time.

SS: And do you remember the names of these two primary professors?

BT: Dr. Crittenden and Dr. Shepherd.

SS: How do I spell Crittenden?

BT: C-r-i-t-t-e-n-d-o-n, or d-e-n. And Dr. Shepherd, Dave Shepherd. He's supposed to be being interviewed actually.

SS: Yes.

BT: Okay.

SS: Okay. Thank you. And some your classmates' names that you said you kept in touch with?

BT: John Berardino⁶, Tricia Blake⁷.

SS: I was hoping to interview Dr. Blake.

BT: Okay. And then the speech pathologists and audiologists, we all just kind of crossed over, so Don Lobelle.

SS: I'm sorry if I'm butchering the spelling.

BT: L-o-b-e-l-l-e.

SS: L

BT: L-o-b-e-l-l-e.

SS: Okay.

⁶An interview of John Berardino is available as part of the Communication Sciences and Disorders Oral History Project collection.

⁷Tricia Blake-Rahter

BT: Oh my gosh, I'm drawing a blank. It would be horrible if they knew I was drawing a blank on their name right now. I'll come back to that. I'll think about it.

SS: That's fine.

BT: Paula Sullivan, she's a speech pathologist. You guys should be interviewing her. She's been very involved in ASHA⁸ and Florida Association—

SS: Yes, I have interviewed her actually.

BT: Gail Rosenburg, she was an SLP BN⁹, got her degree in audiology, and she is deceased.

SS: Okay.

BT: I'll come back to some other names.

SS: That's fine, thank you. And who was the chair?

BT: Stu [Steward] Kinde. He had just taken over because the original person had—right before I came here, the original director had a fatal accident. I remember he was electrocuted something working on his pool.

SS: Right.

BT: Had a heart attack or something.

SS: Okay.

⁸The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) was founded in 1925. ASHA is the national professional, scientific, and credentialing association for speech, language, and hearing scientists, audiologists and speech pathologists in the United States and internationally.

⁹Bachelor of Nursing

BT: So Dr. Shepherd had come in like right during that time, and whoever the other person was, I think was an audiologist and Dr. Shepherd got hired then.

SS: Okay. And how has CSD changed?

BT: Bigger. CIs have changed—cochlear implants¹⁰ have changed a lot, what we do. Dispensing hearing aids, which was not allowed when I—we did not dispense hearing aids. We recommended because the rules had just changed so that audiologists could dispense hearing aids. Because when I started, audiologists could not dispense hearing aids. It was illegal. I would say, you know, some difference in the relationsh—in the, like the party atmosphere is a little bit less than maybe it was when I was in school. And of course the location. I mean, the equipment and everything just it's—in many ways much more professional. We were just beginning. So I think the other thing is I've had an opportunity not only with my own classmates because I've mentored so many students, [but also] I've become friends with them, that some of my really good friends now are—were my former students that I mentored. So that's been like a really wonderful part of not only being an audiologist but mentoring students because it just has expanded my friends.

SS: Yeah, and they become colleagues and friends.

BT: Right, right. So they go from students to colleagues, and we've built this repertoire and have become friends. And so, going to meeting is like, oh hi, hi, hi. Hey, how are you doing? Hey, haven't seen you in a long time.

SS: (laughing) How's it going.

BT: Yeah, so that's like, you know a really marvelous part of that. And Helen Techlar would be another name.

SS: Please spell that for me.

BT: T-e-c-h-l-a-r

¹⁰Cochlear implants are electronic medical devices that do the work of the damaged parts of the inner ear to provide sound signals to the brain.

SS: Okay.

BT: And then the Devlins, Kathy, Dolores Devlin, D-e-v-l-i-n.

SS: Okay.

BT: So all three of them. The mother went to school with me.

SS: Okay.

BT: And Dave, David Devlin is also—her son and daughter were Kathy and David. And David was just like a few months ahead of me. And Kathy was like a year behind me.

SS: And Dolores?

BT: And Dolores was the mom. So they were hearing aid dispensers. She saw the writing on the wall that audiology was coming of age, and she traveled from Sarasota and got her degree, and both her kids did too.

SS: Fantastic. It's an audiology family.

BT: And David, her son, is deceased. He died about a year ago. Jan Boger, J-a-n B-o-g-e-r. She's an audiologist right over at Morsani.

SS: Okay. Wonderful. Thank you. Okay and what are your favorite memories?

BT: Well, I think my favorite memories would be, just the camaraderie with, you know, my group—this group of people right here. You know, we studied together. We played together. You know, we went on conventions together. We really knew—we really just were such a part of each other's lives for such a long time, and we continue to be. And we may not see each other every year, but somebody's keeping up with somebody. I may talk to John and he goes, oh I heard from Don Lobelle, or oh, I heard from somebody. Do you remember her?

SS: Right.

BT: So there's this um, I'd say just the comradery always felt like somebody had my back. And we didn't have football then but, you know we had Gasparilla and the things in Tampa. So that was a—and basketball. In addition to being in audiology, I was part of the—I was a little sister for a fraternity. So I had an active life with, you know, outside of audiology. Also [I] had other activities on campus, so for me, just being at USF was just like a wonderful experience. I had never been away from home. So it was where I kind of my wings.

SS: Right.

BT: And I have lived within a five-mile radius of this campus, either on campus or within a five-mile radius for entire time that I've lived here.

SS: Wow.

BT: And I moved here in '73. So I lived on 46th Street.

SS: Right.

BT: Across from the USF golf course, and I have lived in Temple Terrace, one place or another all that time.

SS: Right. That's convenient.

BT: Very convenient.

SS: I lived on 42nd Street for a while, so I know exactly where you lived across from the golf course.

BT: Right. You know. And it's just been—somebody commented to me and said, are you ever going to move? And I go, I don't think so. I'm kind of like—I'm like hung in here right around USF.

SS: It's so convenient.

BT: It's so convenient. The traffic has gotten worse, I will say.

SS: I was going to say, now I live on Fowler and I'm so happy because I don't have the Fletcher traffic anymore. I have to admit [it].

BT: The traffic has expanded, but just really—I think I really found myself as a—became of age here, if you want to think of it that way. So it's just like wonderful memories for me. I'm just looking through here if I see anybody else that I would be horrified if I left them off and didn't say—Ken Booher.

SS: You can always email me is all. Ken—

BT: Booher. And he still works in town.

SS: Can you please spell that for me?

BT: B-o-o-h-e-r.

SS: These last names, they get me.

BT: That's okay. That's okay.

SS: Okay.

BT: And they're so—way too many audiology students that I've become friends with—and, you know, still get Christmas cards from, and see them at meetings—to even mention. But, yeah, I'm all about USF.

SS: That's great.

BT: I would be—you know, somebody asked me, they said, do you actually bleed green and gold. And I said, sometimes.

SS: Yeah. It's there.

BT: So this is great. Do you know if they've had the opportunity to talk to Dr. Shepherd yet? Because he's one of the few faculty [members] still around.

SS: Not yet.

BT: Okay, and you know he doesn't do emails. So you're just going to have to catch him by phone.

SS: Yes, I actually have to cold call him and explain to him what I am doing here. (BT and SS speaking at same time; inaudible)

BT: I already told him.

SS: Okay, so he knows.

BT: So he should know. Because last time I talked to him, he said, nobody's called me yet.

SS: I have to do that shortly.

BT: Yeah, I would just keep in mind too, he does have a little hearing loss now; although, he would not admit to it. So probably going to have to—your voice is a little soft [when you] speak.

SS: Okay.

BT: Clearly (BT and SS speaking at same time; inaudible)

SS: And louder. I can do that. Yeah and do you know—I mean, knowing him, when would be a

better time to call. Because what happens is that I'm in here so late and then I feel bad to call. So I've been waiting for day when I can call him at a decent hour.

BT: If you can just find a few minutes any time to call him during the day, and I think he has a recorder.

SS: Okay.

BT: He lives in Apollo Beach, so—and it might even be that if you have trouble getting a hold of him, even to mail it to him. And, I have his address.

SS: Okay. That would be great. But I'll call him first, and if I really can't get through I'll do that too.

BT: And you can, I just interviewed Tina, you know, and she provided—but he said he would do it.

SS: Oh, wonderful.

BT: He said he would do it.

SS: I'm so glad. Okay. Because everybody else, we've had email contact with. But there are two people that I'd really like to interview that I have to cold call, so I haven't done those yet. And he is one of them.

BT: Did you get to interview John yet? Berardino?

SS: No.

BT: Okay. You should try to interview him or at least, you can also um, I know he has email, so that's another way too. Do you have his email?

SS: I don't have his email. Can I actually get that from you?

BT: Mm-hmm. (long pause; sound of writing)

BT: Dr. Shephard used to always get Tricia and Tina confused. So he would call Tricia by—he would call her Tina and he'd call me—

SS: He'd call you Tricia. (laughs)

BT: So, well, thank you very much.

SS: Oh wait, I have one more question for you. Sorry if you don't mind.

BT: I'm here.

SS: Thank you so much. Are there any last words that you would like to leave behind? Anything that I haven't asked you about that you'd like to mention, or—?

BT: Well, I'm very passionate about, you know, giving back, and I think that you know, it kind of ties into what I was saying about mentoring students. I felt like that was—I felt like I, you know, my livelihood, my—you know, the things I'm able to do because I have good training and secured a good job. I think that it's enabled me to do so many things, and have so many opportunities. And not that we're rich, but we're financially stable. And so it's allowed me to do things that—I think that I always have had this feeling to give back.

I went to school on scholarships, and I was very fortunate to have good enough grades to do that. So I've made it really my effort in life to create scholarships for USF audiology, and I have done that. So the scholarships that we give out now, I'm very much a part of the funding of those scholarships.

SS: That's very special.

BT: So I think that, you know not only did I get my education but my friendships. The people I see on a regular basis, many of them, if not two-thirds of them, are people I know from audiology. So it's not just my job or my profession but it's my support system.

SS: Of course.

BT: So giving back by helping other students is really important to me.

SS: That's great. Thank you so much. Thank you so, so much. This is wonderful.

BT: Okay. And good luck.

SS: Thank you.

BT: So [are] we off the air here?

End of Transcript