

**Kevin J. Morris Oral History Collection  
A Register, 1996 - 1997**

**Creator:** Kevin J. Morris

**Collection Number:** Mss 284

**Title:** Kevin J. Morris Oral History Collection, 1996 – 1997

**Abstract:** Kevin J. Morris conducted a series of interviews with twelve individuals as part of research for his 1997 Clemson dissertation. The interviews focus on the establishment and evolution of the technical education system in South Carolina between the years 1961 – 1991.

**Quantity:** 0.11 cubic feet consisting of twelve cassettes in one box.

**Scope and Content Note**

This collection contains twelve cassettes that document interviews conducted by Kevin J. Morris during research for his 1997 Clemson dissertation entitled *A History of the South Carolina Technical Education System, 1961 – 1991*. Common topics of interest include: the caliber of student that the technical school system aimed for, admission of African American students, demographics (specifically related to gender changes over the years), attempts by technical institutions to become four-year colleges, controversy over whether or not to include “junior college” or “technical school” in institutional names, questions and politics concerning the physical placement of technical schools within the state of South Carolina, insight into how institutional missions and curricula were determined, changes in marketing strategies regarding public awareness, the economic impact that the technical school system has afforded South Carolina, and the tenures of both Julio Bortolazzo and Charlie Parker as Executive Directors of the State Committee for Technical Education.

**Additional Collection Information**

Cite as: [description of items such as “Robert E. McNair Interview”], box number, Mss 284, Kevin J. Morris Oral History Collection, 1996 – 1997, Special Collections, Clemson University Libraries, Clemson, SC.

**Biographical/Historical Note**

Kevin J. Morris was born in 1952 in New York City, the son of Howard and Joan Morris. He received a B.A. in English from Fordham University (1974), M.A. in English from New Mexico Highlands University (1975), and an Ed.D. in Vocational/Technical Education from Clemson University (1997).

Morris was an Adjunct Professor at Greenville Tech in Greenville, South Carolina from 1980 – 1984, and has been a full-time instructor from 1984 – present (2005). While at

Greenville Tech, he has been an instructor of Composition I and II, American English and World Literature I and II, Film Genre, and Introduction to East Asian Civilization. From 1988 – 1993, Morris was head of the English Department and in 1988 was a recipient of the SCETC – Gregory Cowan Award for Excellence in Teaching.

As part of the research for his 1997 dissertation entitled *A History of the South Carolina Technical Education System, 1961 – 1991*, Morris conducted a series of interviews with twelve individuals who were critical in the establishment and evolution of the technical school system in South Carolina. The individuals interviewed are: G. William Dudley, H. MacLean Holderfield, Robert E. McNair, James R. Morris, Y.W. Scarborough, Wyman Shealy, Fred R. Sheheen, O. Stanley Smith, Lex Walters, John C. West, Louis Williams, and Edwin Zobel.

**Related Material**

LC 1044 .M677 1997 *A History of the South Carolina Technical Education System, 1961 – 1991* / Kevin J. Morris

**Collection Item Indexed Terms**

Technical Education—South Carolina  
Technical Education—Planning—South Carolina  
Audiocassettes  
McNair, Robert E. (Robert Evander), 1923 –  
West, John Carl, 1922 – 2004

**Added Names**

Morris, Kevin J., 1952 –  
Dudley, G. William, 1931 –  
Holderfield, H. MacLean  
Morris, James R., 1930 –  
Scarborough, Y.W.  
Shealy, Wyman  
Sheheen, Fred R.  
Smith, O. Stanley  
Walters, Lex  
Williams, Louis  
Zobel, Edwin

**Administrative Information:**

Acquired from Kevin J. Morris on February 19, 2002.  
Formerly accession number 02 - 19.

**Processing Information:**

This collection was processed by Carl Redd, Project Archivist in 2005 as part of a re-grant project from the South Carolina State Historical Records Advisory Board funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

## **Detailed Description**

Box 1

12 Cassettes (Dudley – Zobel) --- user copies

### **CASSETTE ABSTRACTS**

#### **G. William Dudley Interview**

**1 Cassette**

**Speakers-**G. William Dudley, Kevin J. Morris

**Audio Quality-**Good

**Date-**February 7, 1997

G. William Dudley – Director, Horry-Georgetown Technical Education Center; Associate Executive Director and Executive Director, State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education.

#### **Side 1**

**00:41** – The works and influence of Paul Weatherly and Wade Martin are recalled. Dudley highlights his own career in education. Dudley comments on the state of affairs in South Carolina as they existed in the early 1960s in regards to education and business.

**4:47** – Dudley discusses the philosophical changes in education in South Carolina as leaders sought to change the state economy from agriculture to a more industrial-based system.

**7:30** – Wade Martin and his associates were originally from North Carolina. The South Carolina State Board was quite strong; this was not the case in many states.

**11:35** – Dudley was the first Director of Horry-Georgetown Technical Education Center. There was much concern regarding the economic development of this region of lowcountry South Carolina. Aspects related to the foundation the institution are recalled. Their curriculum was to be focused on tourism/hospitality, rather than industrial. Marion County was initially involved; their decision to drop out of the proposal is given. The growth of the institution, its competition with vocational schools, and the innovation of its tourism curriculum are covered.

**31:37** – Audio ends.

#### **Side 2**

**1:19** – “Special Schools” and their flexibility as programs. Competition, committees, politics [the constant “selling” of the program at Horry-Georgetown Tech], and funding difficulties are discussed.

**8:30** – The tenures of Julio Bortolazzo and Charlie Palmer as Executive Directors of the State Committee for Technical Education: both sought needed change and a streamlining of policy, but were ultimately unsuccessful because of confrontational personalities and the general sense that they were “outsiders.”

**25:55** – AAS legislation: why did the program not begin in the 1970s? Dudley’s “Design for the Eighties” program is discussed.

**31:34** – Audio ends.

## **H. MacLean Holderfield Interview**

### **1 Cassette**

**Speakers**-H. MacLean Holderfield, Kevin J. Morris

**Audio Quality**-Good

**Date**-December 11, 1996

H. MacLean Holderfield – Associate Executive Director for Instruction, State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education.

### **Side 1**

**00:07** – Evolution of ideas concerning the technical school system in South Carolina can be traced back to the 1930s. In MacLean’s opinion, Governor Hollings was the right man at the right time, and had the vision and relationships to see the program through.

**7:00** – MacLean recalls the concern of in-state colleges and universities regarding the proposed technical school system. An exploratory committee was set up by the state of South Carolina during the early 1960s in order to research how best to proceed regarding the implementation of the new tech system.

**11:01** – MacLean speaks highly of Robert McNair’s influence and advocacy. Political machinations such as state resolutions and legislation are covered at length; impediments to progress encountered along the way are recalled.

**18:55** – Fire service training and the initial association between the State Fire Academy and the new tech schools; financing and legislation. Its eventual disbandment because of politics and financing are discussed.

**29:48** – MacLean recalls the events leading to Charlie Parker being chosen as Executive Director of the State Committee for Technical Education. Aspects of Parker’s leadership style, his departure, the reorganization of the State Committee for Technical Education, and improvements in policy under William Dudley and Jim Morris are recalled.

**51:46** – MacLean states that Jim Morris can be given much credit regarding the way in which the system now operates. The work of other reform minded individuals is also highlighted.

**56:55** – Audio ends.

### **Side 2**

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## **Robert E. McNair Interview**

### **1 Cassette**

**Speakers**-Robert E. McNair, Kevin J. Morris

**Audio Quality**-Good

**Date**-March 17, 1997

Robert E. McNair – State House Representative, Lieutenant Governor and Governor of South Carolina (1965 – 1971).

### **Side 1**

**00:21** – McNair discusses a committee that he was a part of [State Development Board?]. The state legislature was hostile to this group because of its makeup. McNair led the way in having the representation of this group expanded in its membership in order that it could be viewed upon by the state legislators more favorably.

**4:30** – There was a need to change the economy of South Carolina from one of agriculture to one of industry. Establishing tech schools for education and training was a critical step in bringing large manufacturing business into the state.

**7:47** – McNair talks at length regarding several issues. It is worth noting that success in regards to tech school implementation was in large part due to the continuity of state administrations [West and McNair followed Hollings as Governor]. Exploratory visits to other countries such as Germany were undertaken in order to study tech schools in different parts of the world. The exploratory group that McNair served with was regarded as a committee. He gives the pros of keeping the group as such, and not making it into a commission.

**13:25** – McNair relates the philosophy of many of his generation regarding de-segregation, as well as aspects of the adult literacy programs in which he championed.

**18:51** – Political pressures regarding where to place technical schools within the state were not as heavy as anticipated. The differences in how industry was defined in the state of South Carolina both before and after World War II are given. In the years after the war, South Carolina was not very competitive; low pay and poor education were the norm.

**22:45** – Agriculture was not really a focus within the technical school system because the state wanted to move more towards industry; however steps were taken to ensure that schools like Clemson remained leaders in the agricultural arena.

**28:56** – McNair recalls the cooperation between technical schools and ETV within the state.

**31:00** – Wade Martin and his positive influence are recalled.

**31:49** – Back in the days of the exploratory committee, it was found that states with successful community college systems such as California had as high as 92 % graduation rates; South Carolina at that time had around a 40 % rate. McNair goes on to explain his philosophy behind why community college and technical schools should be kept as separate entities.

**38:37** – There has been changing opinion over naming an institution “community college” or “technical school.” In McNair’s time, it was more traditional and prideful to

have “tech” in the name, sentiment has changed; more institutions now seem to prefer the name “community college.”

**42:30** – The reasons behind the move toward branch-campus universities in South Carolina are recalled. Aspects of the “tier-system” that McNair’s administration researched are explained.

**59:40** – Audio ends.

**Side 2**

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## **James R. Morris Interview**

### **1 Cassette**

**Speakers**-James R. Morris, Kevin J. Morris

**Audio Quality**-Good

**Date**-December 11, 1996

James R. Morris – President, Sumter Area Technical College; Associate Executive Director, State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education; President, Midlands Technical College; Executive Director, State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education.

### **Side 1**

**00:30** – Morris relates his early experiences after his arrival at Sumter Tech around 1972, the institutions academic reputation; the work towards the first two-year community college in South Carolina. The politics and back-room deals that led to the failure of Clemson’s proposed branch campus at Sumter are discussed.

**8:02** – Morris gives his recollection of events surrounding the resignation of Charlie Parker.

**19:27** – Re-evaluation of the “Design for the Eighties” program is recalled. It was no longer cutting edge, implementation of the “Phase II” program in the latter half of the 1980s sought to alleviate this.

**26:05** – Aspects of the college transfer programs are discussed; institutions who received it and why, and concerns expressed as a result.

**31:05** – Audio ends.

### **Side 2**

**00:07** – Morris continues his thoughts regarding the transfer programs. Politics, discussions and tactics, and voices of opposition to the proposal are recalled.

**11:14** – Relations between the State Tech Board and the Commission on Higher Education are recalled and the natural tensions between the two.

**18:45** – Audio ends.

## **Y.W. Scarborough Interview**

### **1 Cassette**

**Speakers**-Y.W. Scarborough, Kevin J. Morris

**Audio Quality**-Good

**Date**-February 6, 1997

Y.W. Scarborough – Chair, State Committee for Technical Education; Chair, State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education.

### **Side 1**

**00:14** – Scarborough recalls the work of Wade Martin and Ashby Ward [?]. They were clever individuals who knew what strings to pull in order to get federal grants. The insights of Hollings, West, and McNair are praised.

**10:35** – Scarborough talks about a few of his fellow committee members and their reputations (specifically Julio Bortolazzo). Dealings with the State Board of Education are recalled.

**15:58** – Wade Martin’s influence on the way training programs were conducted in the new technical school system. The coordination between General Electric and the Security Employment Commission and aspects of Russell Stover Candy bringing industry into South Carolina through the technical school program are discussed.

**21:45** – Act 1268 and its eventual passing after much difficulty (politics, legislation and financing). The act of McNair’s appointment of members to the Commission on Higher Education is recalled.

**39:14** – Scarborough makes comment regarding changes in the “mission” of technical schools in South Carolina over the years.

**41:43** – Audio ends.

### **Side 2**

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## **Wyman Shealy Interview**

### **1 Cassette**

**Speakers**-Wyman Shealy, Kevin J. Morris

**Audio Quality**-Poor

**Date**-December 19, 1996

Wyman Shealy – Financial Officer, State Committee for Technical Education; Interim Executive Director, State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education; Financial Officer and Associate Executive Director, State Committee for Technical Education and State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education.

**\*\*Note\*\*** the audio on this cassette is very poor. The interview took place in a restaurant -- the heavy background noise makes it quite difficult to understand much of the conversation.

### **Side 1**

**1:20** – McNair’s opposition to Junior Colleges in South Carolina are recalled. Shealy recalls a few members of the State Board of Education that he knew. Aspects of maneuvering around the Advisory Committee are recalled. Policy decisions regarding de-segregation in the state, and the fact that technical schools were from the very beginning open to all races in South Carolina are related. The constant changing philosophies of technical education in the state of South Carolina are highlighted. The influence of Wade Martin was enormous.

**14:35** – Local control of the technical school system came only after a period in which policy was centrally controlled by state government.

**16:55** – NBCA funding of the technical school system.

**22:09** – Issues surrounding Wade Martin’s return from sabbatical are recalled.

**28:15** – Julio Bortolazzo; his arrival in the state and his reputation.

**34:14** – Policy changes under the leadership of Charlie Parker.

**43:19** – Challenges to the Supreme Court over institutional bonds.

**52:23** – Audio ends.

### **Side 2**

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## **Fred R. Sheheen Interview**

### **1 Cassette**

**Speakers**-Fred R. Sheheen, Kevin J. Morris

**Audio Quality**-Good

**Date**-December 18, 1996

Fred R. Sheheen – Chair, South Carolina Commission on Higher Education; Executive Director, South Carolina Commission on Higher Education.

### **Side 1**

**00:12** – Sheheen provides a short introduction with a sketch of his career and accomplishments (he was appointed to the Commission in 1971) He discusses “Open Door” colleges and the Carnegie Commission Model. Sheheen was among the proponents of converting technical schools to community colleges in the state of South Carolina (he provides the philosophy behind this belief).

**17:35** –Governor Russell’s earlier attempts to consolidate schools into community colleges were met with initial success, but ultimately fell through. Julio Bortolozzo faced difficult circumstances during his tenure.

**25:31** – Sheheen gives his recollections of the Morris/Holderman Agreement.

**33:37** – The evolution of the technical school “mission” over the years is discussed, as well as the fact that, in his opinion, technical schools should be proactive. In the 1990s, the system was reactive because of funding issues. Sheheen also states that the State Board too often acts as a restrictive influence.

**39:43** – Audio ends.

### **Side 2**

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## **O. Stanley Smith Interview**

### **1 Cassette**

**Speakers**-O. Stanley Smith, Kevin J. Morris

**Audio Quality**-Good

**Date**-December 19, 1996

O. Stanley Smith – Chair, State Committee for Technical Education; Executive Director of State Committee for Technical Education.

### **Side 1**

**00:24** – Smith recalls being picked to be on the State Committee for Technical Education and the general makeup of the committee. There wasn't much turnover in membership; it was a very satisfying job where one could get a real sense of accomplishment.

**4:50** – The thinking behind the criteria for placing technical schools in the state is recalled. It was stated that 95 % of the state population should be within 25 miles of a technical school. Examples of negotiations with certain counties are given as an example (such as Horry County initially wanting an institution of their own, but eventually accepting the Horry/Georgetown proposal). Aiken was initially not supportive.

**10:31** – Smith classifies the prior existing county trade schools in South Carolina as an “unwelcome gift.”

**17:53** – There was a conscious effort by the committee to be “color-blind.” They wanted to set up a system that rewarded application; Smith personally felt no pressure from pro-segregationists.

**20:44** – Proposals of the two-year college systems were seen as a threat by state universities.

**23:52** – Smith discusses Manpower Development Training and its funding. Wade Martin's skills at finding extra federal money are recalled, as well as are the reasons behind why the committee never went to commission status.

**30:34** – Audio ends.

### **Side 2**

**1:05** – Smith continues his thoughts regarding the committee/commission. Examples highlighting occasional exploitation of the technical school system are given. Success stories such as Elgin Watches, Smith Corona typewriters, and military aircraft manufacturing during the Vietnam War are also related.

**14:13** – Problems that technical schools faced are touched upon. It was found that although training was at the core of the program, upgrading literacy was essential. The failure of the Clemson/Sumter Tech partnership is recalled.

**19:55** – Strengths and weaknesses of Bortolozzo's tenure are related.

**31:32** – Audio ends.

## **Lex Walters Interview**

### **1 Cassette**

**Speakers**-Lex Walters, Kevin J. Morris

**Audio Quality**-Good

**Date**-December 3, 1996

Lex Walters – Instructor, Dean of Instruction, Greenville Technical Education Center; President, Piedmont Technical Education Center and Piedmont Technical College.

### **Side 1**

**00:30** – Comment is made regarding demographics as they relate to the technical student in South Carolina over the years. There was initially an enormous need for advertising because people didn't understand what these new technical schools offered. Segregation was never considered.

**8:48** – The University of South Carolina expressed much concern regarding the community college system. Reasons behind the Clemson/Greenville Tech partnerships are commented upon.

**13:35** – Walters reflects on the tenure of Julio Bortolozzo.

**16:51** – The 1980s brought recession. On the proposal of combining branch campuses with technical schools, Walters and his associates took no opinion. Pros and cons regarding the issue are given.

**21:10** – In 1974, the college transfer program was blocked. Lander University in Greenwood, SC was at the forefront of non-cooperation in regards to this issue. Lander had an "Ivy League" view in those days according to Walters. The institution became much more open and progressive under the leadership of Dr. William C. Moran [President of Lander University 1992 – 2000].

**26:07** – Walters relates the many challenges of dealing with counties and their respective county councils.

**29:15** – Issues regarding Laurens County's attempts to bring a college transfer program to that county.

**31:05** – Audio ends.

### **Side 2**

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## **John C. West Interview**

### **1 Cassette**

**Speakers**-John C. West, Kevin J. Morris

**Audio Quality**-Good

**Date**-December 11, 1996

John C. West – State Senator, Lieutenant Governor, Governor of South Carolina, and Ambassador to Saudi Arabia (1971 – 1981).

### **Side 1**

**00:07** – West provides his own recollections regarding the establishment of the technical school system in South Carolina. Hollings was elected Governor of South Carolina on a platform of improved economic development with an aim to transition the state from agricultural to industry based service. A special exploratory committee was set up in order to research how best to proceed. West, who had been elected to the state Senate, was named Chairman of this group. The committee visited several states as part of the inquiry. The committee was especially impressed with North Carolina’s system, from which they borrowed heavily (they also hired Wade Martin, who had worked in the North Carolina system). The three main findings were: (1) there should be training schools for industry; (2) the schools should be statewide within commuting distance; and (3) adult education should be part of the program. Examples of opposition to the proposals are given. The “defining moment” in West’s opinion in the success of the technical program was the partnership with Elgin Watch Company in Elgin, SC [the name of the town was changed from “Blaney” to “Elgin”].

**30:31** – Segregation: economic incentive overcame racial issues. In addition, a segregated system for blacks would have been too expensive to maintain.

**34:05** – The sites of the technical schools that were chosen throughout the state were very logical and natural; there was no political maneuvering involved.

**35:45** – West highlights some of the conflicts that arose between the technical system and state colleges and universities [issues concerning branch campuses].

**36:23** – The tenures of Julio Bortolazzo and Charlie Palmer are briefly discussed.

**42:47** – Audio ends.

### **Side 2**

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## **Louis Williams Interview**

### **1 Cassette**

**Speakers**-Louis Williams, Kevin J. Morris

**Audio Quality**-Good

**Date**-December 9, 1996

Louis Williams – Greenville Technical Education Center and Greenville Technical College Area Commission member and Chair.

### **Side 1**

**00:25** – Williams recalls his own involvement with the exploratory committee; specifically the research of pre-existing state systems.

**4:46** – Governor Hollings reasons for interest in the technical school system were, in Williams’ opinion, was driven by economics, not politics.

**8:15** – Greenville was very aggressive in expressing interest in a technical school. The Greenville Chamber of Commerce led the way in championing the cause.

**10:30** – Overall vision regarding race: the tech schools provided open admission from the very beginning. There were gender problems initially: the public didn’t fully understand what the new technical system offered; many thought that they offered only heavy-duty training such as welding or car mechanics for example, which were not traditional for women.

**17:15** – Williams discusses the system of college branch campuses in South Carolina: structure, policy, and bureaucratic entanglements.

**21:54** – Funding of the system, problems with allocation, and the “me-too syndrome” and rivalry among institutions. The Matrix System was initially used in order to set curriculum.

**27:14** – Clemson’s association with Greenville Tech: why did Clemson become involved?

**29:22** – Williams reflects on Bortolazzo’s nomination and tenure. He was a brilliant man, but sought unpopular reform and was seen as an “outsider.”

**37:25** – Morris is interested to know the background concerning the “Iranian Situation” that occurred at Greenville Tech during the time of the hostage crisis [c. late 1970s]. Greenville Tech had, at the time, a small population of Iranian students. As the political situation between the United States and Iran worsened, many on the Board at Greenville Tech suggested that the Iranian students be ejected from school. Williams opposed this move, but the suggestion came to a vote, and the majority approved. The situation quickly began to unravel; a Greenville News reporter (Williams describes the individual as “adversarial”) was present at the Board meeting, and immediately left in order to inform the Iranian students and get statements from them. Williams, who was a media liaison, was caught in the middle. The proposal was never enforced.

**44:55** – Williams recalls problems Greenville Tech had with the Spartanburg, Tri-County, and Piedmont institutions in regards to advertising.

**48:57** – Contributions of Executive Director’s Wade Martin, Julio Bortolazzo, and Charlie Parker are reflected upon. Leaders in the political arena are also highlighted.

**1 hour** – Williams points out some of Greenville Tech’s most notable accomplishments.

**1:01:46** – Audio ends.

## **Side 2**

**1:07** – Notable accomplishments and successes of Greenville Tech continue to be recalled.

**4:26** – Is the South Carolina technical school system proactive or reactive? In Williams’ opinion Greenville Tech had been more proactive in general than the overall state system. Difficulties surrounding attempts to plan a cohesive statewide system of operation are provided.

**14:10** – Williams reflects on the effects that lobbyist and advocacy groups have on the technical school system in South Carolina.

**22:19** – Audio ends.

## **Edwin Zobel Interview**

### **1 Cassette**

**Speakers**-Edwin Zobel, Kevin J. Morris

**Audio Quality**-Good

**Date**-December 11, 1996

Edwin Zobel – Executive Assistant, Inter-Agency Affairs, State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, 1974 – 2005.

### **Side 1**

**00:25** – Popular “selling points” and the growth of technical education in South Carolina are discussed.

**5:49** – South Carolina was initially reluctant to give tax breaks to prospective industry, but this thinking soon changed.

**9:00** – During the period 1986 – 1996, delegations from twenty-two foreign countries had visited South Carolina in order to learn more about its technical school program.

**14:30** – Zobel recalls his first involvement with the South Carolina technical school system in the mid 1970s.

**15:33** – Reasons behind the traditional problems between the University of South Carolina and the tech schools. The relationship has warmed over the years.

**23:32** – Zobel praises the work of Vernon Smith in regards to Greenville Tech.

**28:02** – Traditional problems of state finances are highlighted. Funding is now based on performance.

**31:48** – Zobel comments on the rocky relationship between the state tech system and the Commission on Higher Education.

**41:16** – Issues regarding the college transfer system are discussed. The tech system in South Carolina has been reactive in Zobel’s opinion.

**46:35** – Audio ends.

### **Side 2**

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