



[Browse All Oral History Interviews](#)

[Oral History Program](#)

1-12-2015

Interview with Dennis Stamper

Dennis Stamper

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/oralhistoryprogram>



Part of the [Oral History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Stamper, Dennis, "Interview with Dennis Stamper" (2015). *Browse All Oral History Interviews*. OH 127.
<https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/oralhistoryprogram/194>

This Interview is brought to you for free and open access by the Oral History Program at Digital Commons @ Winthrop University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Browse All Oral History Interviews by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Winthrop University. For more information, please contact bramed@winthrop.edu.

**LOUISE PETTUS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**Interview #127
STAMPER, Dennis**

STAMPER, Dennis

One of the first male students on campus before coeducation. Philosophy and religion major.

At Winthrop: 1969-1972

Interviewed: January 12, 2015

Interviewer: Michelle Dubert-Bellrichard

Index by: Michelle Dubert-Bellrichard

Length: 1 hour, 11 minutes

Abstract: In his January 12, 2015 interview with Michelle Dubert-Bellrichard, Dennis Stamper shares his memories of being one of the first male, day students from 1969-1972. Stamper details his studies and professors from the Philosophy and Religion Department, as well as the Psychology Department. Stamper includes his perception of the atmosphere at Winthrop during a time of great change in the country, and how that experience coupled with his work in the Wesley Foundation and the influence he received from professors paved the way for he currently lives his life. Stamper concludes his interview detailing his studies and careers after Winthrop. This interview was conducted for inclusion into the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections Oral History Program.

Keywords: Coeducation, Alumni, Male Day Student, Vietnam War, Religion, Protests, Social Movements, Wesley Foundation, Social Work, Volunteering, Latin America, Hospital Chaplain, Dr. Murdy, Dr. Jacobson, Psychology, Lab

Interview Session (January 12, 2015): Digital File

Time Keywords

00:00:00 *Start of Interview*/Interviewer's Introduction

00:00:20 *Question:* Where are you from and why did you decide to attend Winthrop? *Answer:* Grew up in Fort Mill. Winthrop was always a part of his awareness. Personal connections: mother worked in the dorms. Stamper's sister went to Winthrop. Freshman year went to Methodist College. Men were allowed into Winthrop on a trial basis. Finances were a concern. The school was not officially coed. Winthrop admitted 75-100 men at first, only about 30 left.

00:03:25 *Question:* Time period? *Answer:* Transferred in 1969 and graduated in 1972.

- 00:03:45 *Question:* What was the process of applying? *Answer:* No exam. Grades were not outstanding the first two years. Lowest grades from Methodist College did not transfer to Winthrop. Doesn't remember any specific process.
- 00:05:10 *Question:* Any threat of getting kicked out? *Answer:* No. It was still up in the air if other men would follow Stamper. Alumni were the ones who were hesitant for Winthrop to go coed. The Board of Winthrop did not decide if school would go coed. Stamper felt welcomed onto the campus.
- 00:07:10 *Question:* Why did Winthrop decide to admit male students? *Answer:* One sex institution was a dying breed. Concern of enrollment drop. It was a state-supported college – there were no all-male state supported colleges.
- 00:08:55 *Question:* Did you have to explain going to an all-girls school? *Answer:* People knew what was going on. Eventually, Stamper got a new diploma.
- 00:10:10 *Question:* What was it like being one of the first males on campus before coeducation? *Answer:* Alumni were not protesting. Talks about girls playfully teasing him – first Physical Education class. Stamper recalls an event in Music Appreciation class being the only male student in the lecture hall. Stamper says he learned how to become friends with women – has helped in his career: social work. Involved in Wesley Foundation. Stamper did not date, while on campus.
- 00:14:30 *Question:* Other male students on campus dating? *Answer:* There was a small group of males on campus, but Stamper says he didn't get to know a lot of the men. Wasn't a lot of opportunity to bond.
- 00:16:35 *Question:* Can you comment on the sentiment that people feared men would be oppressed? *Answer:* "I was not oppressed." The only time Stamper felt oppressed was when he was referred to as Miss or Denise.
- 00:18:00 *Question:* Did you read a lot of news articles about coeducation? *Answer:* Stayed current with the debate in the General Assembly. Stamper explains the debate: arguments and concerns.
- 00:21:15 *Question:* What do you mean "it was finally possible" to make the change? *Answer:* Stamper talks about social movements of the 1960s. It was less popular to restrict things.
- 00:22:22 *Question:* Describe yourself as a student. *Answer:* Once Stamper got to courses in his major his GPA rose. Involved in philosophy club – details experience in this club. Academically, Stamper worked hard in the courses pertaining to his major:

Philosophy and Religion.

- 00:24:38 *Question:* Did you have a minor? *Answer:* Double minor in Psychology and Sociology. Planned to be a pastor with a focus in counseling. Was a research assistant in the Psychology Department. Stamper took care of the rat room – had to exterminate rats at the end of the semester.
- 00:26:25 *Question:* What were students trying to learn from these labs? *Answer:* Behavioral shaping. Talks about Skinner boxes and mazes tests. Students also learned how to write research papers.
- 00:28:00 *Question:* Buildings? *Answer:* Philosophy and religion classes located near Arts Department.
- 00:28:43 *Question:* Professors? *Answer:* Dr. Jacobson – expertise in Eastern Religions. Stamper tells a story about Dr. Jacobson. Computer scoring fascinated Dr. Jacobson. Stamper close to Dr. Murdy – Stamper worked for Dr. Murdy in the lab. Stamper tells story about Dr. Travis.
- 00:33:40 *Question:* Do you remember any assignments from these professors? *Answer:* In the Psychology Department students had to really dig in and fully understand behavioral psychology. Stamper had to learn to think critically.
- 00:36:25 *Question:* Rules and regulations for male, day students? *Answer:* Couldn't go to the dorms. Couldn't take any contact sports in Physical Education. Stamper took bowling, golf, and square dancing. In square dancing, women had to learn both roles. Stamper talks about final project for square dancing class: Stamper's group got the "A" – their theme was coeducation flipped. This dance was videotaped and shared with future classes. Restrictions namely on where males could go.
- 00:40:20 **[no question]** Stamper talks about where male students lived. Talks about protests.
- 00:42:10 *Question:* Can you talk about the atmosphere with Vietnam? *Answer:* Stamper explains how the draft affected male students. The draft board in Rock Hill tried to help men from getting drafted. Stamper recalls watching the lottery for the Vietnam War and the parameters of the lottery.
- 00:46:40 *Question:* How were you involved in the Civil Rights Movement? *Answer:* In the Fort Mill Rock Hill area, Stamper did not witness many protests. It wasn't as visible. Stamper says he is more outspoken now then he was.
- 00:48:50 *Question:* Why wasn't Civil Rights Movement as visible? *Answer:* Conservative area, not a lot of support. Schools still mostly segregated – Stamper talks about his high

- school.
- 00:50:40 *Question:* Why do you think you are more outspoken now? *Answer:* Stamper says his beliefs made him more outspoken. Stamper considered himself liberal. Stampers say seminary school exposed him to cultures, etc. Got a Master's in Social Work – this work opened his eyes. Through reading and his faith, Stamper has become inspired to get involved. Stamper talks about his work in Latin America.
- 00:53:55 *Question:* What is your work in Latin America? *Answer:* Works cross culturally with a group to help them with their needs: education and health care. Stamper takes medical teams down and holds a week of clinics. Stamper has been doing this work for 12 years. Stamper has created life-long friends through this program.
- 00:57:00 *Question:* Did any particular Winthrop affiliation guide you towards this path of giving back? *Answer:* Wesley Foundation and Dr. Murdy.
- 00:58:45 *Question:* Did you feel connected to the campus? *Answer:* Not a lot. So few men on campus. During the trial period, males were allowed to take classes. No fraternities on campus, and men were not really encouraged to take part in traditions.
- 01:00:10 *Question:* Any thoughts on President Davis? *Answer:* Did not meet him. Stamper knew the college was run well, but he never got to know him.
- 01:01:00 **[no question]** Stamper talks about his life after Winthrop. Stamper worked in a hospital as a Chaplain. Did volunteer work in Puerto Rico. Stamper then got his Master's in Social Work. Currently working in a hospital under the commission, lay pastor. Is a hospital Chaplain now. Stamper adopted two foster children.
- 01:05:10 *Question:* In what ways has Winthrop influenced your life? *Answer:* Dr. Murdy instilled confidence in Stamper. Stamper learned to study and understand other beliefs and faiths. Stamper learned how to be colleagues and friends with women. Stamper was prepared to work with women – currently works in female-dominated profession.
- 01:08:05 *Question:* What did it mean to be a student at Winthrop? *Answer:* Winthrop was always apart of Stamper's life. Winthrop was always seen with respect. Students had a lot of pride in Winthrop. Stamper's former teachers attended Winthrop. Stamper is proud to be in the first group of guys on campus.
- 01:10:35 *Question:* Any final comments? *Answer:* Stamper reiterates his pride in attending Winthrop.
- 01:11:25 *End of interview*