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Interview with Frank Ardaiole

Frank Ardaiole

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LOUISE PETTUS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview #176
ARDAIOLO, Frank

ARDAIOLO, Frank

Vice President for Student Life

At Winthrop: 1989-Present

Interviewed: March 9, 2015

Interviewer: Daniel Lee

Index by: Michelle Dubert-Bellrichard

Length: 00:25:21

Abstract: In his March 9, 2015 interview with Daniel Lee, Frank Ardaiole shares his experience with and response to Hurricane Hugo. Ardaiole recounts the destruction on Winthrop campus and how Hurricane Hugo helped establish new emergency response standards. This interview was conducted for inclusion into the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections Oral History Program.

Keywords: Hurricane Hugo, Emergency Response, 1989

Interview Session (March 9, 2015): Digital File

Time Keywords

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

00:00:39 *Question:* Nobody saw this coming? *Answer:* No. People knew a storm was coming. Started at Winthrop in 1989. FA had gone through a hurricane in New England – made him realize what could happen. Campus police and Resident Life reports to FA. FA convened everyone to meet with him the afternoon before. FA started talking about the potential of a hurricane. FA was still going to prepare for it. In this meeting, people talked about what could happen. In the middle of the meeting – FA got a call from a realtor in Connecticut about selling his house. FA said, “I am preparing for a hurricane.” That evening FA stayed with campus police until about 12:30. Nothing had happened at that point. FA was staying at a bungalow near Winthrop's farm. 2:30-3:00 FA woken up by loud noises. House starts shaking. FA parked his car against the leeward side of the house. Power goes out, window breaks, door flies off. FA huddled in the middle of the hallway. The phone worked. FA called campus police.

00:06:20 **[no question]** FA called someone to come get him. Trees and power lines down everywhere. Everything was green – the wind stripped the trees. Found Cynthia “Cindy” Cassens, Director of Residence Life, and they started walking the Residence

- Halls. Rain was pouring. FA and Cindy walked every floor to check in on people. FA was looking for damage and injuries: two minor injuries from broken glass. FA found Dr. DiGiorgio. The rest of the day was spent in recovery. Most people wanted to get in the cars and go home and see their cars/parents. The Governor's office sent a message asking colleges to keep the students on campus. Winthrop had power and made an "unpopular" decision to start classes on Monday. Winthrop wanted to get back into a routine. FA had constant communication with Walter Hardin. WRHI was one of the functioning radio stations to communicate with faculty and staff.
- 00:11:20 **[no question]** FA saw a lot of kindness. Tom Webb created a group of students to clean up campus. Food service was helpful: fed first responders. FA's office at the time was in Dinkins. FA recalls seeing an electric wire down on Oakland Avenue and some people were jumping over the electric wire. People were trying to get out of the dorms. FA was trying to keep people calm and safe.
- 00:14:10 *Question:* Project 5000 worked? *Answer:* Quite well. Put students to work.
- 00:14:40 *Question:* Why was Winthrop criticized? *Answer:* It's exciting to have some extra time.
- 00:15:45 **[no question]** FA talking about Winthrop's damage versus Rock Hill and the rest of the state. FA says Winthrop got off easy because it had electricity. Winthrop had a million dollars-worth of trees go down. Winthrop fortunate that there were few windows broken down. FA talks more about destruction of trees. "It was nature pruning itself."
- 00:17:35 **[no question]** Keeping students on campus. No way to do so. Students were responsible for going to classes. FA had a niece (wife grew up in Rock Hill) who had to be on a feeding tube – FA was concerned about getting her electricity.
- 00:19:48 **[no question]** FA moved into Bancroft eventually. FA speculates that students didn't like him in Bancroft. FA talks about the poor conditions of Bancroft. Academic Affairs needed more space for faculty. FA wanted to give faculty Bancroft Annex. Faculty given all of Bancroft. FA had to tell female students to move the following year. Bancroft then renovated as a result.
- 00:23:20 *Question:* What would you have done differently? *Answer:* FA is now the manager of the Critical Incident Team (result of Virginia Tech incident). Everything is now more formalized – that didn't exist back then. Winthrop now has phones in every room with alert lights. Winthrop used to print off alerts and post them on front doors – "those days have passed." Unsung heroes are facilities.
- 00:25:21 *End of interview*