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## Interview with Bob Gorman

Robert M. Gorman

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

**Interview OH #169  
GORMAN, Bob**

**GORMAN, Bob**

Librarian

*At Winthrop:* 1986-2014

*Interviewed:* August 20, 2015

*Interviewer:* Michelle Dubert-Bellrichard

*Index by:* Michelle Dubert-Bellrichard

*Length:* 01:15:15

Abstract: In his August 20, 2015 interview with Michelle Dubert-Bellrichard, Bob Gorman describes his career at Winthrop from 1986-2014, and his involvement in the Vote of No Confidence in 1995. Gorman compares the Winthrop of 1986 to the Winthrop of today and recounts the history of Presidents from 1986 to the present. This interview was conducted for inclusion into the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections Oral History Program.

Keywords: Dacus Library, Vote of No Confidence, Martha Kime Piper, Anthony DiGiorgio, Jamie Comstock, Dan Mahony, Fretwell Report, Legislative Audit Council, Committee of Correspondence, Kinard Fire

**Interview Session (August 20, 2015): Digital File**

**Time      Keywords**

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

00:00:30    *Question:* Why Winthrop? *Answer:* Started in library profession in 1972. Graduated from Emory University. First job at Georgia Military College. Head of Library at Kansas Newman College. Georgia College. Came to Winthrop in 1986. Kinard Fire first day on the job. Damage from Kinard Fire. Gloria Kelley.

00:02:15    *Question:* Why did you choose Winthrop? *Answer:* BG was used to an urban environment. Close to Charlotte. BG loved Winthrop. Strong community.

00:03:15    *Question:* Strengths and weaknesses? *Answer:* Strong community. The library was accepted on campus. Librarians seen as real faculty members. Library considered one of the five major academic units on campus. University attracted a lot of first-generation-college students – BG found that appealing. Martha Kime Piper. BG speculates Piper was sick when she started. “Ushered in a period of instability on

- campus.” Mike Smith stepped in as Acting President.
- 00:06:25 *Question:* Weaknesses? *Answer:* Funding, but that was true for the entire state. Budget. Not a wealthy alumni base. All-girls school.
- 00:07:35 *Question:* President Lader? *Answer:* Personable. Politician. Ego.
- 00:08:05 *Question:* Titles and roles? *Answer:* Head of Public Services when hired. BG suggested that he and Susan Silverman switch roles. BG became Head of Reference.
- 00:09:25 *Question:* How did the role of Head of Reference change? *Answer:* Under the current Dean of the Library. BG started writing. Became Head of Reference in the mid-1990s. BG describes his working relationship with Mark Herring. BG retired July 2014.
- 00:11:50 *Question:* Other roles? *Answer:* Head of Academic Council – Vice Chair of Faculty Conference. Vice Chair during the Vote of No Confidence.
- 00:13:20 *Question:* Accomplishments? *Answer:* Good reference librarian. BG loved working with the students. Collection development. BG discovered his ability to write. “Death at the Ballpark.” BG describes book.
- 00:16:00 *Question:* How did you research “Death at the Ballpark.” *Answer:* Rock Hill Chiefs research. Internship at Baseball Hall of Fame. BG describes research process.
- 00:20:45 *Question:* Second book? *Answer:* South Bend Blue Sox. Jean Fautt.
- 00:22:05 *Question:* Primary resources? *Answer:* Resources from Jean Fautt. Lib Mahon.
- 00:24:10 *Question:* Describe Dacus when you first arrived? *Answer:* “It’s not an attractive building.” Electronic revolution. Crowded. Few outlets. “Red-headed stepchild.” BG talks about library staff. Larry Mitlin.
- 00:27:00 *Question:* Card catalog? *Answer:* BG not sad to see the card catalog go. “I don’t miss the print indexes either.”
- 00:29:20 *Question:* First impressions of Piper? *Answer:* BG says that Piper was very distracted. Piper had a real connection to Winthrop.
- 00:30:45 *Question:* Did anyone know she was sick? *Answer:* Perhaps people on the inside. Mike Smith stepped in temporarily. BG speculates the Board wanted someone who would stay here.

- 00:31:30 [no question] BG liked DiGiorgio. BG thought DiGiorgio was more professional than Bernie Dunlap. BG mentions DiGiorgio's mustache. Bernie Dunlap came across as a "clown" to BG. BG describes DiGiorgio's first year as President. Budget crisis. Vice Presidents. Faculty Concerns Committee. Board of Trustees. Patty Cormier.
- 00:36:45 [no question] Paul Dubois. Library placed under IT – lost direct line to faculty. Raises to administrators.
- 00:40:30 [no question] Committee of Correspondence. Statistics of trends on campus. January 1995. "That was the match that lit the fuse." Budget Priorities Committee. Board of Trustees hired E.K. Fretwell.
- 00:44:40 [no question] Vote of No Confidence. March 1995. BG was shocked that there was an overwhelming vote of no confidence. Johnsonian. DiGiorgio began looking for another job.
- 00:48:15 [no question] Fretwell Report May 1995. DiGiorgio became more visible. BG wanted General Assembly to investigate. Legislative Audit Council. Herb Kirsh. January 1996 audit of Winthrop. BG discusses results of the audit. "The Rebellion" was done. BG pulled back. Morale declined. BG discusses Dacus Library today.
- 00:56:10 *Question:* Decline? *Answer:* BG says the library used to be innovative. Morale at the library.
- 00:57:40 *Question:* Atmosphere on campus after Vote of No Confidence? *Answer:* Faculty pulled back. BG began looking for a new job.
- 00:59:10 *Question:* What happened to the faculty that voted no confidence? *Answer:* Some left, some stayed.
- 00:59:35 *Question:* Divides? *Answer:* People were depressed.
- 01:01:15 *Question:* Why did you stay? *Answer:* Married. Settled in.
- 01:02:45 *Question:* Current strengths and weaknesses? *Answer:* Solid education. BG thinks the faculty and students are great. Weaknesses: morale and lack of funding.
- 01:03:45 *Question:* Comstock? *Answer:* Came to Winthrop "under a cloud." Chairman of the Board. BG shares his theory about why Comstock was fired. Comstock was supportive of the library.
- 01:09:30 *Question:* New President? *Answer:* BG concerned about his experience. BG offers suggestions to Dan Mahony. Funding for academic programs. Mahony needs to

fundraise.

01:13:00 *Question:* Why did you retire in 2014? *Answer:* “I couldn’t take another day here.”

01:13:45 *Question:* How would you like to go down in Winthrop history? *Answer:* As somebody who “fought the good fight.” BG wants to be known as a good librarian.

01:15:15 *End of interview*