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1 INTERVIEW OF DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL, 1994

2 BLAKE HAILEY: Today's date is

3 March 31st, 1994. I'm Blake Hailey. We have with us

4 Deborah Blackwell, D.O., who is the Assistant Dean for

5 Clinical Affairs at the University of North Texas

6 Health Science Center at Fort Worth. We're making

7 this video in the Biomed Communications Department of

8 the Gibson D. Lewis Library.

9 And Dr. Blackwell, thank you for

10 taking time out of your busy schedule to -- to meet

11 with us today.

12 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: Thanks for

13 asking me, Blake.

14 BLAKE HAILEY: Well, you are the first

15 person we had to interview that's a graduate, so this

16 is a great thing, I think. I'd like to go back, if we

17 could, and perhaps you could recap a little bit of

18 your time here when it was TCOM. We haven't gotten

19 that perspective before.

20 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: Well, let me

21 recap. Before it actually became the building that I

22 initially went to school in -- because I actually

23 interviewed in the bowling alley, and I'm sure that

24 some other students have talked about that. I think

25 the -- the best recollection I had is that when the

1 taxi driver pulled up to the bowling alley, and I
2 said, "Oh, no, no, no. I need the Texas College of
3 Osteopathic Medicine." And he goes, "This is it,
4 lady." And I said, "Oh, no. This can't be it." And
5 he says, "Oh, yes. Out you go." And -- but what
6 happened the moment I walked in the door is I realized
7 it was going to be a very special place because -- and
8 I can't remember who it was at the front, but as soon
9 as I walked in she said, "You must be Ms. Blackwell."
10 And I thought, "How does this person know who I am?"
11 Because I had just been to a different school where I
12 was number 258, so I guess from that moment I knew it
13 was a special place.

14 BLAKE HAILEY: And what year was that,
15 that you started.

16 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: That would be
17 the year I got married, 1977, but I started in 1978.

18 BLAKE HAILEY: What were some of the
19 -- were there interesting things that happened back in
20 the early days of your medical education you'd like to
21 relate?

22 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: Probably not
23 so much interesting, but I think extremely
24 pleasurable, because of the fact that the institution
25 was so small, that we got to attend different classes

1 in different buildings. And probably our favorite
2 building was to go to River Plaza, which is currently
3 on University and that was special because we could
4 sit and listen to anatomy and listen to psych
5 lectures, but at the same time be able to go outside
6 and see the river and see the spring as it came forth,
7 see the choo choo train from the zoo and those types
8 of things. So those are actually my memories -- so my
9 memories are good.

10 BLAKE HAILEY: Definitely. After you
11 graduated, there was a time, I think from what? About
12 '82 to '89 when you came here. What were you doing --
13 what were you involved in at that point.

14 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: Well, when I
15 graduated we chose to go to Columbus, Ohio for my
16 training. And I started out my first year not really
17 knowing exactly what I wanted to do. I couldn't
18 decide if I wanted to do internal medicine,
19 family practice or pediatrics. It actually wasn't
20 until April of my internship year that I decided to do
21 pediatrics, so I stayed in Columbus for two years
22 following that.

23 After those two years that I
24 completed, I joined the Public Health Service, and was
25 stationed in Laredo, which is in South Texas, for four

1 years. And that itself was quite an adventure.

2 BLAKE HAILEY: What were some of the
3 things that you learned while you were in Laredo? And
4 interesting adventures you had to you could relate to
5 us?

6 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: Well,
7 probably the most exciting thing for me is that I
8 learned to speak Spanish, because none of my patients
9 spoke English. None of the nurses I worked with spoke
10 English. I would go to staff meetings at the hospital
11 and they would be speaking in Spanish, and then they
12 would realize that I was probably the only
13 non-Spanish-speaking person in the room, so they were
14 actually very polite and would go, "Oh, by the way, we
15 just said this, this, and this." So that was
16 interesting.

17 BLAKE HAILEY: So you learned Spanish
18 by -- by fire, I guess kind of --

19 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: Spanish by
20 fire, absolutely.

21 BLAKE HAILEY: What got you interested
22 in coming back to TCOM? How did you get hooked up
23 back here again.

24 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: Well, I
25 actually -- surprisingly, as soon as I finished my

1 residency, I had been in contact with the school
2 hoping that they would have another position open in
3 the department of pediatrics. I was at actually at
4 the end of my -- I had a two-year commitment to the
5 public health service and then opted for an additional
6 two years, and I was trying to decide if that's really
7 what I wanted to do. And I called the school and --
8 to see if there were any positions, and low and
9 behold, there was. So I applied and was accepted.

10 BLAKE HAILEY: That was back in '89,
11 right?

12 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: Right.

13 BLAKE HAILEY: And then, what are some
14 of the other activities you've been involved in here?
15 I know you have a connection with the Osteopathic
16 Medical Center of Texas. Could you go into a little
17 bit of that?

18 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: Well, as of
19 January of this year, I was appointed one Assistant
20 Dean for Clinical Affairs, and my major duties of that
21 is the Director of Medical Education at the
22 Osteopathic Facility, which is, at this point in time,
23 still our base institution for our students and our
24 other teaching services.

25 BLAKE HAILEY: What were -- how -- how

1 is the relationship going with that? The programs, I
2 know that you're working to do a lot in that area.

3 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: One of the
4 things that has happened is that in December of '93,
5 we signed an affiliation agreement with the
6 Osteopathic Hospital. And although the two
7 institutions have been closely linked in terms of
8 educational activities, that was the first official
9 agreement that they would become our base institution,
10 and that was really the reason that I was placed there
11 as director of medical education.

12 BLAKE HAILEY: You plan to continue
13 that role for a while, it sounds like.

14 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: I hope so.

15 BLAKE HAILEY: What were some of the
16 areas you were involved in before you took that
17 responsibility? Did you just instruct?

18 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: Blake, that's
19 probably my -- my weakest area. Let's see. I have a
20 full clinical practice.

21 BLAKE HAILEY: Oh.

22 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: And, at that
23 time, a hospital practice. I have students every day,
24 so I have a full teaching load. Also was course
25 director for our pediatric didactic course. I was on

1 Student Performance and also was the chairman of that
2 committee. I was involved with curriculum, including
3 with course directors one through five, and then
4 served on the curriculum committee. Those are the
5 things I -- I did on campus. And then off campus,
6 which are the things that truly -- truly enjoy, I
7 currently serve as chairman of the Tracks
8 Organization, I serve on the --

9 BLAKE HAILEY: What is that
10 organization.

11 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: The Tracks
12 Organization is they -- Texas Department of Health
13 organization that follows extreme premature babies as
14 they go through their first three years of life,
15 looking for, and hoping to avert problems with
16 developmental assessment and those types of issues.

17 BLAKE HAILEY: How very fascinating.
18 And then you said -- I interrupted you. Sorry about
19 that. You said another committee you were involved
20 in, organization.

21 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: Another fun
22 area that I am on the advisory committee for CIDC,
23 which stands for Chronically Ill and Disabled
24 Children. And what we do is we are somewhat a
25 consumers group that helps CIDC make policy

1 guidelines, and that's the real exciting part. I was
2 also involved with TCYC, which is Tarrant County Youth
3 Collaboration. It's a wonderful agency in town that
4 really looks at all the different agencies helping
5 children go through different problems and different
6 assessments.

7 BLAKE HAILEY: You do have a full
8 load, it sounds like, along with your teaching and --
9 and administrative duties, it sounds like.

10 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: I -- yes. A
11 full load.

12 BLAKE HAILEY: Do you do much
13 research, or do you plan to do any in the near future?

14 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: It's probably
15 one of the areas that I've not been involved in, and I
16 suspect because I've been so involved with the
17 community in terms of looking at those areas. We are
18 currently hoping to try to start some type of programs
19 with children and then looking at other assessments.
20 Some other children's issues.

21 BLAKE HAILEY: Do you have any plans
22 for the connection with the hospital and the school?
23 Do you have some areas you'd like to see grow in that
24 respect?

25 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: Well, I --

1 currently what's occurring is that we're starting a
2 new neurosurgical residency, which will probably start
3 in 1995. And I think that's one of the basics as we
4 recruited a -- an excellent neurosurgeon, that he has
5 been now with a vision to try to develop neurosurgical
6 programs for our profession. So I -- I perceive that
7 programs like that would continue to be developed in
8 the future.

9 BLAKE HAILEY: I'd like to move, if we
10 could, into some questions -- I guess, opinions, you
11 might say. And you were here back in '89 and you've
12 seen the transformation of TCOM becomes the UNT Health
13 Science Center. Why do you feel it was necessary for
14 TCOM to make this transformation into a Health Science
15 Center?

16 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: As we
17 transformed into a Health Science Center, I think
18 that, that name in itself really truly reflects what
19 we're doing as an institution. I think a lot of
20 people realize that the medical school is here but
21 they didn't realize we have such a significant
22 program in graduate medical education and other research activities. Probably to
23 me, the most important aspect of changing our name,
24 for me, and I've always seen that is that this is an
25 institution that changes. I often tell people that if

1 they -- if they don't want things to change, don't
2 come here. Because I think that we have a lot of
3 people that work here that have visions of -- of
4 change in the future and always looking to improve the
5 education for our students and our graduates. And for
6 me, as we became named the "Health Science Center", it
7 really gave us a greater opportunity to do that.

8 BLAKE HAILEY: Do you see this Health
9 Science Center having some different, you know,
10 different from others in the State of Texas or in the
11 nation, perhaps, that you looked at?

12 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: Absolutely.
13 I think that this Health Science Center will be known
14 as the Health Science Center for primary care. As an
15 osteopathic profession, I think that we're very much
16 can relate to the need for primary care and preventive
17 care. And as we progress, I think that you'll see
18 that the majority of the focus is going to be based on
19 primary care and preventive therapies.

20 BLAKE HAILEY: Do you think the new
21 health proposal is going -- are we in a good position
22 to whether changes in the health care system changes?

23 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: I think if
24 you can be in a good position, then we're probably in
25 a good position. One of the things that will effect

1 certainly my training program, is there probably will
2 not be any significant new moneys available for
3 subspecialty training for us as we train the majority
4 of our positions are primary care physicians.
5 Certainly Mr. Clinton and Hillary feel that those are
6 important issues, and I think we hold the forefront in
7 that.

8 BLAKE HAILEY: Do you see some major
9 challenges that lie ahead for the Health Science
10 Center and yourself as well? Your role?

11 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: Well, I think
12 in terms of looking at duplication of services, we're
13 going to have to show that we have a primary care
14 focus and a difference, and that's the State of Texas
15 looks to try to see who gets money for what. The
16 Health Science Center that hopefully will shine and
17 that we do have such a strong interest in primary
18 care.

19 BLAKE HAILEY: How do you see your
20 role changing? I know you wear several different
21 hats. So how do you see things changing for you in
22 the future in the next few years?

23 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: One of the
24 things that's probably going to happen for our
25 residents is that we're probably going to be involved

1 in probably more allopathic, which are the traditional
2 M.D. programs. Wanting to help expand the services
3 for residents, but then as we expand down into the
4 community that they will need those services to help
5 strengthen their programs. As we were named Health
6 Science Center, and certainly with our current
7 leadership, we are starting to become a leader in the
8 community and -- and then we will be the forefront of
9 those training programs.

10 BLAKE HAILEY: Do you see some need
11 for more community -- community support? I know
12 you're involved in a lot of community-related
13 activities. Does the -- do you see more community
14 support needed for the school?

15 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: I think the
16 school needs to provide more community support, only
17 because most community boards and those types of
18 agencies are always looking for people with
19 health-care-related issues and certainly the
20 leadership qualities to help bring those committees to
21 their best fruition. When we look in terms of the
22 community at large, that I think they will find that
23 the Health Science Center will then become a proponent
24 for them as they look at changes that they need to
25 make in the -- in the 90s as we go on to the

1 21st century.

2 BLAKE HAILEY: I'm curious, how do you
3 think, how are all the other graduates you know
4 reacting to this name change? Is everybody pretty
5 positive about the way things are moving?

6 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: I think there
7 was probably some initial confusion as -- in terms of
8 where is TCOM? You know, it's always been TCOM, why
9 are we changing? And a lot of people are just not
10 realizing the fact that TCOM is still housed under the
11 larger name of the Health Science Center. I perceive
12 it as they've become more aware of -- of the changes
13 that they anticipate are really not going to occur and
14 that we're really going to stay in the osteopathic
15 facility, and we are going to stay a primary-care
16 facility that then they will appreciate the name
17 changes as we're all learn to go do.

18 BLAKE HAILEY: We've covered quite a
19 bit of ground in a short amount of time. Are there
20 some areas that you would like to go into that we
21 haven't mentioned? Are there some other interests
22 that you have, or programs you're going to be working
23 on?

24 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: I don't think
25 so, Blake. I just hope that as we continue to recruit

1 more physicians, that they become more involved in the
2 community, because I think that's a huge need, and
3 certainly as that develops, then the community becomes
4 more aware of where our focus is and the quality
5 physicians that we are producing.

6 BLAKE HAILEY: Well, I know that
7 you're, sounds like, an excellent physician and
8 definitely a credit to the school and will continue to
9 be. I know we were talking in the interview, it
10 would -- it would be interesting to know how many
11 other graduates have come back to work here and so
12 forth. And it has been indeed a pleasure to have you
13 as -- as one of our guests. I do thank you for taking
14 the time out to do this. And I hope that I get to run
15 into you again. And, again, the school owes you a lot
16 for coming here and continuing on. Thank you very
17 much.

18 DR. DEBORAH BLACKWELL: Thank you,
19 Blake.

20 BLAKE HAILEY: And with that we'll
21 bring to a close this interview. Thank you.

22

23

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25