

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Floyd Buras, Jr.

COLLECTION: 4700.2625

IDENTIFICATION: Pediatrician; Former president of Louisiana State Medical Society and delegate to American Medical Society

INTERVIEWER: Trenton James

SERIES: Louisiana State Medical Society

INTERVIEW DATE: August 19, 2015

FOCUS DATES: 1970s-2015

ABSTRACT:

Tape 4581

Introduction; Buras currently practices in Metairie; practiced in New Orleans before Hurricane Katrina; born January 9, 1950 in New Orleans; married to Sharon, has one son; specialty is pediatrics; names the schools he attended; inspired to practice by his own pediatrician; always wanted to go into medicine; parents both from New Orleans; Buras was in the first class of LSU interns to rotate through Children's Hospital, which had originally been built for polio patients; describes rotation at Charity Hospital; rotated to Lake Charles in second and third years; married at the end of his residency; wife was a nurse, then she went to anesthesia school; started private practice in 1979 at time of malpractice crisis when new doctors couldn't get malpractice insurance; "My very first assignment was the pediatric emergency room, and there was a lawyer for the hospital standing there just telling us you cannot touch or talk to or see a patient."; start of LAMMICO; names of partners in his first private practice; Buras has remained partners with Dr. Richard LeBoeuf; lists hospitals where he had privileges; cares for children and grandchildren of his early patients; as senior resident, Buras became interim medical director of the pediatric ICU at Charity Hospital; he was also chief resident in pediatrics; Tulane's pediatric program was in chaos at that time; while in private practice, medical students came to his office to do their pediatrics rotation; as a student, Buras did his general pediatrics rotation with Dr. James Haney in Baton Rouge; supervising residents at Children's Hospital; LSU pediatrics department is now located at Children's Hospital; changes in pediatrics care; in his early days, pediatricians were specialists; "And it was almost, for a patient, an honor, I guess, to have a pediatrician do your baby's shots and general care. We're going through this period now where pediatricians were doing it all to the point now where what I do is being turned over to nurse practitioners. They don't want us to do that anymore."; insurance companies are behind this move, as nurses are cheaper than doctors; primary care pediatricians are becoming obsolete, as easier stuff goes to nurse practitioners and more serious cases are seen by pediatric specialists; nurse practitioners

don't have enough knowledge to replace primary care pediatricians; Buras is involved with pediatric society, but more so with general medical societies; to get hospital privileges, had to belong to the Orleans Parish Medical Society, which did the credentialing; now hospitals do the credentialing themselves; this may account for declining membership in medical societies; leadership positions Buras held in Orleans Parish Medical Society, then in Louisiana State Medical Society House of Delegates; committees he served on; becoming president of LSMS right after Hurricane Katrina; storm damage to home and office in New Orleans; lost all records and equipment in his totally flooded office; all his patients left town; "We had a thriving practice, we had over 10,000 registered patients, and they were all gone... So even if I could go back into my building, there was nobody there."; the whole city was deserted and everything was brown from mud; Children's Hospital bought a building in Baton Rouge as temporary headquarters, and let doctors in the area come practice there; the hospital took out ads in Louisiana papers to say the doctors were at this new Baton Rouge location; slowly restarting practice in New Orleans; realized his old office was not salvageable; opening current office in Metairie; Buras spent all his savings and retirement keeping his practice afloat; "It was a good decision from the point of view of getting the office back. It was a bad decision in terms of the fact that I spent all the money I had surviving it."; it would take 25 years to build back the savings he lost; effect of Louisiana Children's Health Insurance Program [LaCHIP] on his practice; on being president of the state medical society: "The storm in a sense was a mixed blessing because working one hour a day, I had all the time in the world to be president."; giving tours of his devastated office to people doing studies of how disasters affect a medical practice; description of his ruined office: mildew, stink, snakes; did about 1600 media interviews the year after Katrina; a healthcare redesign collaborative formed in New Orleans; LSU hijacked that process from redesigning healthcare in New Orleans to building a new hospital for LSU; Buras thinks they missed an opportunity here; career of Karen DeSalvo, former head of medicine at Tulane; Buras helped found another group called Collaboration for Healthcare in Louisiana, which fell apart; idea of decentralizing healthcare and moving it into neighborhoods; "It was to get preventative medicine, not promote sickness care, but how to promote wellness care."; Buras explains his Health Access Louisiana plan; leadership positions in the AMA; schism between doctors that believe in single-payer government healthcare and those who believe that patients should be able to choose their own healthcare; describes the Louisiana delegation to the AMA, of which Buras is currently chair; some of his nursing staff has worked with him for more than 35 years; "We went to school together and then we started our business together and then we raised our kids together and now we all have grandchildren together but we're still practicing medicine together as a group."; everyone's now facing retirement; most of the nursing staff are RNs; a live person answers the office phone; Buras is a member of the Medicaid Administrative Simplification Committee to deal with the chaos since Louisiana privatized Medicaid; success of the committee; serves on the committee as a volunteer; the new health insurance system is called Bayou Health, which involves five insurance companies; mentions different programs that fall under Medicaid umbrella; importance of getting immunizations and keeping immunization records; shot records lost during Katrina, so many children had to get shots again; love of horse racing; wife was a rodeo rider as a girl; "So it turns out we had a common interest. She liked to ride horses and I liked to bet on horses, and we actually have owned some racehorses."; had to give up racehorses after Katrina due to financial constraints.

TAPE: 1 (T4581)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hours, 5 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 41

PHOTOGRAPHS / PHOTOGRAPHER: 3 photos

OTHER MATERIALS: Curriculum Vitae; Correspondence

RESTRICTIONS: None