

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Virginia Lanier Martin Carmouche **COLLECTION:** 4700.0441

IDENTIFICATION: LSU alumna; LSU Foundation board member

INTERVIEWER: Mary Hebert

SERIES: University History – Distinguished Alumni

INTERVIEW DATES: May 20, 1994; May 21, 1994; June 15, 1994

FOCUS DATES: 1923-1994

ABSTRACT:

Tape 628

Carmouche born Virginia Martin in Thibodaux in 1923; grows up familiar with LSU; gets legislative scholarship to LSU; lived on campus; sorority and fraternity life; shocked by empty whiskey bottles behind sofa at the DKE house; rush; Panhellenic House; effect of WWII on campus life; recalls hearing of Pearl Harbor during a movie on Chimes Street; husband's military record; Military Balls; football games; dorm rules for women; Nora Neal Power; Pleasant Hall; AWS; Atorian Club; Purple Jackets; majoring in Philosophy; Dr. Carmichael; memorable professors; alerts T. Harry Williams to errors in Huey Long book.

Tape 629

Carmouche's family history; father a Chevrolet dealer; the Great Depression; Office of Price Administration; parents' education; mother went to Randolph-Macon; financial strain during Depression; mother taught school; Carmouche attended public schools; use of French; father's involvement in politics; family anti-Long; Peltier family and politics; Thibodaux High School; favorite subjects; registration at LSU; special freshman philosophy course; Dr. Meier; Literary Club at Thibodaux High; worked for Dr. Earl Klein, head of the Social Welfare Department; worked for the Law Institute while in law school; mother made outfits for her to wear for sorority rush; John and Corinne Duffy; playing bridge with T. Harry Williams; zoology; The Playhouse on Chimes Street; sneaking out of the window of Pleasant Hall after curfew to get food from The Playhouse; Baker's on Chimes and Sitman's drugstore; Johnny Kidd and his orchestra at The Playhouse; Highland Hall, Annie Boyd Hall, Grace King Hall; roomed with Mary Poynter Schwing from Plaquemine her freshman year; Southwestern; sister went to LSU, then to Touro in New Orleans for nursing training; telephones in dorms; tea dances at Field House; dances at Gym-Armory; decision to pledge Kappa Kappa Gamma; Churchill sisters; Carmouche's daughter pledged Theta; initiation; Dagers and Samurai; her late husband, Eddie Carmouche, a "big man on campus"; did not date him while at LSU; Laurie Martin; how she met her husband; has made scrapbooks, microfilm copies of which are in the McNeese archives; College of Commerce; Lambda Chi Alpha; husband a participant in D-Day; husband graduated

from University of Virginia Law School and then studied Louisiana Law at Tulane; George Pugh and Bill Wilson in law school with her; Wilson asked her if she would become Carmouche's law partner in Lake Charles; married about five or six months after setting up practice together; so poor they had to borrow money for the wedding ring; DKE was Kappa's brother fraternity, but Carmouche didn't date them; dated Joe Bill Jackson for a time; comments on various fraternities; Heidelberg Hotel; Brechtel's; Cotton Club; Houston Carnes in Math department; recalls various professors; Carnes would let her use his status as an account holder at Dalton's to buy silk stockings, which were hard to find during wartime; playing pool at the Faculty Club; Carmouche quits school for a time before getting her master's; worked as secretary at Thompson Machinery Company; returned to LSU on a teaching fellowship; taught and failed football player Holley Heard; Dr. Alden Powell; recalls various deans; Nuremberg; was in law school and served as an office with Edwin Edwards; tutored Lon Tyndall while in law school; Carmouche makes Law Review; works at Law Institute; campus rules

Tape 676

Sources of entertainment in Thibodaux; worked for father in summers and after school at Chevrolet agency; Mardi Gras; eating habits during Depression; Carmouche a graduate of Soule's Business College in New Orleans; job at Office of Price Administration; lived in garage apartment on Chimes; her experience as one of very few women in law school; served as secretary and treasurer in law school; Edwin Edwards and Clemmie Romero; Candy Picou; Carmouche invited to join Phi Kappa Phi; Law Review; Mrs. Daggett; Jay Denson Smith; Dale Bennett; Mel Dakin; Nina Pugh; Pioneer Building, now City Hall, in Lake Charles; Liskow and Lewis; her future husband left a red rose on her desk the first morning they worked together; veterans exempted from bar exam; recalls homes they lived in; husband's work on Tidelands case for thesis turned into article for Tulane Law Review; Victor Sachse; Carmouches had four children in three and a half years, but she kept practicing law; worked for ten years, then stopped; Eddie then joined by John Camp and firm becomes Camp-Carmouche; Calcasieu Marine Bank; Senator Larry Bankston once part of Carmouche firm; discusses state of firm today; branch offices in Alexandria, Lafayette now closed, but New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Washington office still running; Earl Long; old Charleston hotel; husband stumped for Earl Long, her family displeased; T. A. Thompson; Carlos Spaht; Bill Dodd; barbecues and rides to the polls; husband ran for delegate to convention; Democratic State Central Committee; he argued with Leander Perez over symbol for party; Perez "boss" in several parishes; Carmouche's father once Commissioner of Finance in Thibodaux; Carmouche ran for City Council in the 60s; Carmouches traveled a lot; attended party given by Charles and Diana in England; attended parties given by Armand Hammer of Occidental Petroleum; Good Government Group; Alfred Roberts; Dick Watson; Carmouche lost council election in second primary; relieved because she doesn't think she is well-suited to politics; prominent client Mrs. Matilda Gray of Lake Charles; Gray introduced them to Armand Hammer; Hammer Galleries in New York; Fabergé and other Russian jewelry and art collected and displayed by Victor Hammer; Armand Hammer allows them to buy stock in Occidental, which they later sold; had they kept it, they would have made far more money later; Daumier exhibit at Smithsonian; Lord Mountbatten; United World College Fund; Prince Charles; fundraising trip to England; saw the ship Mary Rose; trips to Italy and France; John Mecom; Sam Recile; trip to Russia; professor guide detained for some time at border; mink hats; Normandy; LSU Foundation; Charlie Roberts; fundraising; Pat Landry and Bill Silva; investment of endowment.

TAPES: 3 (T628, T629, T676)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 2 hours, 15 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 116 pages

RESTRICTIONS: None