Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: Thuy Vo Dang
Interviewer: Tom Phan
Date: May 22, 2013
Location: Irvine, California
Sub-collection: Thuy Vo Dang Oral Histories
Length of Interview: 01:32:08

Time Log

Audio [Track 1]

00:01:13   Tom Phan talks about his hometown Nha Trang in Vietnam.
00:04:39   He talks about his parents and his grandparents.
00:07:16   He talks about going to boarding school in Da Lat and studying for the Vietnamese and French baccalaureate exams.
00:11:20   He discusses his siblings.
00:14:15   He talks about his brother’s involvement with the military.
00:16:30   He explains fleeing the boarding school in Da Lat to get back to Nha Trang.
00:18:31   He talks about his family fleeing to Saigon.
00:26:05   He talks about passing his baccalaureate exams.
00:27:45   He explains having to spend the night in jail in Saigon, and his family traveling from Saigon to Guam.
00:33:23   He talks about working for minimum wage in the United States.
00:34:03   He recalls traveling from Guam to Camp Pendleton.
00:37:15   He talks about the thirteen families from Vietnam that sought spiritual guidance from his brother the priest, and their families special bond through the years.
00:39:42   He talks about he and his sibling’s first jobs in the United States and working for minimum wage.
00:41:56   He talks about his life as a university student.
00:45:34   He talks about the importance of spiritual life for Vietnamese.
He explains the difference of spiritual life in Vietnam and in the United States.

He explains how his family and the thirteen families built the first Vietnamese Catholic church in Dallas.

He talks about how he met his wife, Susie.

Audio [Track 2]

He recalls classmates from his childhood and what happened to one of them.

He talks about meeting and marrying Susie.

He talks about his parent’s disapproval of his marriage to Susie because she was Buddhist.

He discusses his first job at Electronic Data Systems.

He talks about developing his own company, Customer Focus International, and worldwide business travel.

He discusses the high rate of divorce among retirees in Japan and his own experiences of early retirement on his marriage.

He recalls speaking at banking symposiums.

He talks about his role as a parent, and spending time with his family.

He talks about how his son Ryan approached him and his wife about starting a restaurant business together, and the details of the business.

He mentions Customer Focus International’s shareholders.

He discusses his colleagues and friendships with people of different ethnicities.

He recalls experiences as a minority.

He discusses his thoughts about how Vietnamese-Americans contribute and integrate into American society.

Audio [Track 3]

He explains political views.
He talks about communicating with his children.

He discusses when Susie found out she was pregnant with twins, and about the kids in the past and present.

He encourages his children to listen to the Vietnamese American Oral History Project interviews.

Tom and Thuy wrap up the interview.