Vietnamese American Oral History Project, UC Irvine

Narrator: TAM THANH NGUYEN

Interviewer: Sadegh Iranmanesh

Date: February 19, 2012

Location: Fountain Valley, California

Sub-Collection: Vietnamese American Experience Winter 2012

FIELD NOTES

On a Sunday night in February, I was warmly welcomed by Dr. Tam Thanh Nguyen into his lovely posh home. Tam appeared very casual in both attire and demeanor, as he insisted I refer to him as “Tam” rather than his formal name “Dr. Nguyen.” He wore jeans with a regular long sleeve shirt and was very accommodating, laid back and friendly as he welcomed me. He kindly offered me a beverage. As I was sipping my glass of water, I observed how high-end and clean his kitchen area was. I was also greeted by Tam’s cute little boys who were roaming around. It took a little while for Tam to get settled, as he seemed busy trying to calm the kids down and get his bearings. I could already tell this would be an informal style interview, which was fine by me because the mood would be casual and neither of us would have any reason to be nervous. The interview was conducted on his kitchen table. Present during the interview were the Narrator, Tam Thanh Nguyen, and the interviewer Sadegh Iranmanesh. We followed protocol and signed all consent and release forms prior to beginning. I took photos of the narrator and he was very accommodating throughout the entire process.

There was also a fish tank nearby, which ended up representing a light background noise throughout the interview. Aside from a few pauses due to family interruptions and my tape recorder SD card running out of space during the latter part of the talk, the interview went very smoothly. Tam was very open to discuss everything I asked. He seemed very comfortable and passionate about what he was sharing with me, which is a good sign because those characteristics lead to a great interview.

I thoroughly enjoyed my interview with Tam and I was glad that he felt the same. I think we talked about several topics which were relevant specifically to his life and to how he became a successful Vietnamese American serving the community and being president of several organizations vital to Vietnamese Americans in Southern California. It was an honor to be able to interview a man of great character and accomplishments such as that of Dr. Tam Thanh Nguyen.