

3-5-2010

Interview No. 1622

Michael Fushille M.D.

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Recommended Citation

Interview with Michael Fushille M.D. by Barbara Dent, 2010, "Interview No. 1622," Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Michael Fushille, M.D.

Interviewer: Barbara Dent

Project: El Paso Medical History

Location: El Paso, TX

Date of Interview: March 5, 2010

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Transcript No.: 1622

Transcriber / Summary: Jose Miguel Leyva

Dr. Michael Fushille was born in Jersey City, NJ, on October 26, 1923. He attended Jesuit College in Jersey City in 1941. Dr. Fushille's parents married in 1920. His father was from Austria-Hungary and moved to the United States around 1900. His mother was from Mountain Top, PA. She was from the coal mining area, the second of thirteen children. His maternal grandfather was coincidentally also from the same region of Austria-Hungary. Dr. Fushille met his wife, Isabel, in Switzerland in 1953, while attending medical school. He describes the process of getting into medical school, and trying to keep his G.I. benefits. Dr. Fushille enlisted in the Navy before the war and was accepted, but was told to remain in school because they had no place for him. He eventually served on an aircraft carrier during WWII, where he faced hurricanes, fires, and kamikaze attacks by the Japanese. Dr. Fushille served in the combat information center on the carrier as a radar technician. He finished his medical exams in 1957, before returning to New Jersey to complete his internship; by this time he and his wife already had 2 children. After finishing his medical training, the mayor of Jersey City asked him to serve in the House of Representatives, but he turned it down. Dr. Fushille came to El Paso after his residency and became a partner with Dr. Taylor in 1962, because Taylor had had a heart attack. Taylor died in 1967, leaving Fushille alone with the practice. Dr. Fushille also worked at Thomason General Hospital, the first eye doctor there. He worked with the other eye doctors in El Paso to create the Great Plains Lions Eye Bank and perform glaucoma screenings. Though he helped create the Eye Bank, he was never invited to be a member of the Lion's Club. Dr. Fushille describes his relationships and interactions with many different eye doctors, and his continued emphasis on performing glaucoma screenings for the community.

Length of interview 91 minutes

Length of Transcript n/a