Introduction: The attached narration was authored by Joseph E. Murray, M.D.* and Nobel Prize winner for performing the first kidney transplants in 1954. He did this interview with Marilyn C. Link in 1997. Dr. Murray’s wife is Virginia (Bobby) Link Murray, niece of Edwin A. Link.

Dr. Murray recorded this as a tribute to the work of J. Seward Johnson, Sr. and Edwin A. Link and so people reading it would know of the early history of Harbor Branch/FAU and its relationship with the Smithsonian Institution. Corrections and inserts were made by Marilyn Link.

Since this time two sons of Dr. & Mrs. Murray have joined the Link Foundation as Special Advisors-Dr. Richard Murray** and J. Link Murray. The last paragraph in this narration was a quote from Dr. Joseph Murray whose vision and expertise are valued by all the Murray and Link Families.

*Deceased, Joseph E. Murray, 11/26/2012

**Richard W. Murray, Ph.D., Director, Ocean Science Division of the National Science Foundation
March 21, 1997

Marilyn - Did I send you a copy of this? I try to keep family threatened up to date, just for the fun of it. Joe 5/20/92

Marilyn, Bobby and I are seated in Marilyn’s living room in Vero Beach, Florida, and I am asking Marilyn to give a chronology of Linkport and how it emerged into HarborBranch and the relationship and the beginning of Ed Link to Seward Johnson, and I’m just going to have her reminisce and tell it as she remembers it. Marilyn...

Ed Link and Seward Johnson met in the early 60’s. Both of them were trustees at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and enjoyed the association with the institution and each other. They saw each other during the 60’s and also ended up docking their boats, Seward’s Ocean Pearl and Ed’s Sea Diver, at John Perry’s Oceanographic Institution in Riviera Beach, Florida. This was in the late 1960’s and they worked together with John Perry as well as with the Smithsonian Institution through a grant that Seward gave the Smithsonian in 1968 and through some funds that Ed also gave the Smithsonian in the 1960’s. After John Perry’s operations became more extensive, he asked Seward and Ed if they could find another docking place for their boats because of his own needs for utilization of his docks and his shop. But prior to this, Ed and John Perry built the Perry-Link Deep Diver there at John Perry’s site. So that was the sub that they were utilizing for expeditions in the late 1960’s. After Ed searched around, during part of 1968 and 1969, he looked at several sites in the Vero Beach area. He was acquainted with two couples who lived there, one being Ed and Mary Boots and the other being Joe and Betty Ermn. Both of them lived in Vero Beach and he knew Ed Boots through his aviation work in years past. So he looked at two or three sites in Vero Beach and came across what is now the Linkport site and HarborBranch Institution location. He found out that there were two owners of this site with a channel which was 200 feet wide and about one-half to one-quarter of a mile long. One of the owners wanted to sell out and, at that point, the name of their corporation was Indian River Minerals Corporation. Ed obtained a lawyer in Vero Beach,
and the other partner that wanted to sell out had a Ft. Pierce lawyer, and they signed an
agreement on or about July 6, 1969, where Ed purchased the owner's share of Indian River
Minerals Corporation. The primary asset of Indian River Minerals Corporation was the land and
the channel. In addition, Ed bought another 1% of the other partner's interest in the company,
so that Ed would be the controlling stockholder at 51%. Ed also purchased the
mortgage U.S. Steel had on the property so it was free and clear.

At that time, Ed was President and stockholder of Sea Diver Corporation, which was a
Subchapter S corporation. Seward Johnson was the founder of several foundations, Atlantic
Foundation being the largest, as well as several smaller foundations which he would eventually
turn over to his children. However, Seward at that time, in 1969, left his boat, the Ocean Pearl,
in the Palm Beach area, as he was living in Hope Sound. Later on, in 1970, Seward moved his
boat to Linkport so both the Sea Diver and the Ocean Pearl were based there. The other
corporation that became part of the organization then was the Smithsonian Institution. The
Smithsonian Institution had been an organization that both Seward and Ed had worked with
and, as I mentioned earlier, Seward had given the Smithsonian a substantial amount of money
in 1968 as a gift for them to do oceanographic work, and it was only natural that they would be
working with Ed and Seward in the development of oceanographic programs.

In 1969, the tax reform act was changed so that Seward could take one of his
foundations and turn it into an operating foundation. He chose HarborBranch Foundation
because he thought that was an appropriate name for the site at Linkport and told Ed that he
would like to put more money into HarborBranch Foundation and develop an extensive science
and ocean engineering program there at that site. Ed readily welcomed Seward and his
interest in developing an oceanographic institution that would be known as well as Woods Hole
and Scripps. Even though the tax reform act was passed in 1969, it took Seward's lawyer
until November of 1971 to get a tax free, exempt status for the HarborBranch Foundation. In
the meantime, the Sea Diver Corporation and the Smithsonian Institute were the employers of
the people working at the Linkport site, developing science programs in aquaculture and basic
studies of the Indian River lagoon, which was the intracoastal waterway between Melbourne
and West Palm Beach. Ed was further developing the Johnson Sea Link class of submersibles at this time
period 1969-71.

The first employees of HarborBranch were a group of four and the first payroll was in
November, 1971. Prior to that, in January 1971, the Johnson Sea Link submersible No. 1 was
launched and was owned by the Smithsonian Institution. After time went on, the Smithsonian
continued to have an operation at the Linkport site, and HarborBranch became the primary
organization and the leader of the scientific and engineering programs. They also acquired the
Johnson Sea Link submersible from the Smithsonian, and Ed had previously given all his
interest in the Smithsonian in early 1971, and Seward had given the Smithsonian more funds to
develop the Johnson Sea Link navigation and other auxiliary equipment. So the gift that Ed
gave the Smithsonian was valued at $400,000 and then, as I said, Seward's money helped to
further develop that and all the Smithsonian employees and all but two Sea Diver employees
were transferred to the HarborBranch payroll.

To clarify the proceeding further, I will read from the chronology from Marion Link's
book, Windows in the Sea, beginning with 1967-1968. I mentioned that Ed and John Perry had
developed the Perry Link Deep Diver. As it turned out, it was launched in March of 1967 in
Riviera Beach, Florida. In 1967-1968, there were a series of Deep Diver trips to the depths of
1200 feet in the Gulf Stream off the Florida coast and in the Bahama waters, including the mile
deep tongue of the ocean carrying marine scientists for observation and exploration included
are saturation dives and lock-out dives at 430 ft. and 700 ft. These dives were sponsored and
paid for by the Sea Diver Corporation, which Ed owned, by the Smithsonian Institution through
their gift from Seward Johnson, and by the National Geographic. The National Geographic
documented several of these dives in previous publications. July of 1969, Sea Diver moves to
new location acquired for development of Linkport, a marine science center on the Indian River
inland waterway between Vero Beach and Fort Pierce, Florida. In the fall of 1969, Ed Link begins design and construction of a second small submersible with an aluminum alloy hull in a 4 inch thick transparent acrylic observation chamber. It became known to laymen as the bubble sub, although it wasn’t plastic, it was acrylic and was 4 inches thick. Later Johnson-Sea-Link Class Submersibles.

In the fall of 1970, HarborBranch Foundation, which was not formally established until November 1971, began construction of the marine laboratory now known as the Johnson Laboratory on the site at what was then called Linkport. The small submarine owned by the Smithsonian on January 29, 1971, was christened Johnson-Sea-Link in honor of its donors, Edwin A. Link and J. Seward Johnson. It was commissioned to the Smithsonian Institution to be available to universities and scientific institutions for marine research. Prior to this time, the sub was known as Sea Link but, as indicated in Marian’s chronology, it was christened in honor of both Ed and Seward, Johnson-Sea-Link and is now known as the Johnson-Sea-Link Class Submersibles. The original thought that both Ed and Seward had in establishing a facility in Florida was to further enhance marine science activities through good engineering design and oceanographic tools. The prime tool which Ed had developed at that time was the Johnson Sea Link Submersible. There was no other institution at that point that was interested in doing what Seward liked to call “underwater oceanography at the continental shelf levels”, particularly from the surface down to 1000 feet (which is what the Johnson Sea Link Submersibles were designed for). Today, in 1997, they are certified to go 3000 feet.

In this concept, Seward and Ed wanted to tie engineering and science closer together so that the engineers and scientists could work side by side. Although Woods Hole had an engineering program as did other institutions, there was really no organization that gave equal status and attention financially to both the engineering group and the scientists. This was their overall concept. They also, although both in their 70’s, wanted to remain active not passive Board members -- the selfish reason why they wanted to establish a new institution. Another
reason that Seward and Ed had this concept of working at levels from the surface to the continental shelf was that Woods Hole had the Alvin and was adequately covering the deep, deep ocean, as was the Triest in the Navy and possibly other government organizations also covering the deep, deep oceans. They did not want to get into duplicating efforts.

After Ed and Seward moved their boats to the Linkport site, John Perry continued his association and friendship with them. He had his own company, Perry Oceanographics, which was further developing submersibles for industry primarily and sale to other organizations that could use submersibles in their work. He, therefore, had a very successful oceanographic company, as well as other interests in other areas such as a housing company, etc. John Perry also had an island over in the Bahamas. Seward Johnson eventually (in the 1970's) bought an island in the Bahamas just south of John Perry's. Their friendship and association continued on

-- John Perry, Seward Johnson, and Ed Link.

Although Ed's early interests were in underwater archeology and treasure hunting, which he did for a hobby after his early retirement (in his mid-50's) from the Link Company, Ed saw a need to have equipment that allowed man to work in the sea for extended periods of time in order to do any work including archeological finds and scientific efforts. I think, as Bobby just said, Ed's engineering skills and interests led him and challenged him to design equipment that could sustain efforts of the man in sea for longer periods of time. His interest in man in sea included lock-out diving, which is how he got interested in Duke University which had a series of programs in helium/oxygen diving.

HarborBranch today is an image of its leadership with Seward Johnson, Jr., Rick Herman, and the division Directors. Ed died in 1981 and Seward died in 1983. Prior to that, however, professional managers were coming in, being hired by HarborBranch, and were making their own mark in the organization. There were probably about 150 people employed there when Ed and Seward were alive. Now there are probably 225 people employed, in 1997.
From their start with marine science and ocean engineering, both groups are still very active. The marine operations group is further active and well known for their professional operation of ships and subs that other organizations in the government use. HarborBranch is developing through the interest and leadership of its current leaders beginning with Seward Johnson, Jr. Aquaculture has become an even bigger part of HarborBranch and is probably one of the bigger needs of the future because of the need for food, as the depletion of natural food in the seas becomes a reality. The aquaculture program has also been funded through both state and national grants because of the worldwide need for fish farming techniques.

The one thing that HarborBranch should focus on in the future, in my opinion, is to continue their expertise in the operation of ships and subs, even though there might be lean years. They should continue, however, so that they are known as experts in that area, and until they have equally strong engineering and marine science programs, working together as scientists and engineers. Then, I think, programs such as aquaculture (actually started back in the 1970's, when Ed and Seward were alive and knew that aquaculture was a coming need for the United States and the world) and other areas should be moved into the forefront by HarborBranch and their leadership. I do have a concern, however, that HarborBranch will get into too many different areas causing them to not do any of them well which may drain their resources. At the moment, 60% of their funding comes from outside sources and the other 40% or so comes from their own endowment and from the Johnson families and the various Johnson charitable trusts. If HarborBranch tries to be too many things to too many people, they may find themselves in trouble along the way. As all of us know, funding is very important.