

Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History
Special Collections Department
University of Arkansas Libraries
365 N. McIlroy Ave.
Fayetteville, AR 72701
(479) 575-5330

This oral history interview is based on the memories and opinions of the subject being interviewed. As such, it is subject to the innate fallibility of memory and is susceptible to inaccuracy. All researchers using this interview should be aware of this reality and are encouraged to seek corroborating documentation when using any oral history interview.

Arkansas Democrat Project

Interview with

Jim Allen
Telephone Interview
1 February 2007

Interviewer: Jerry McConnell

Jerry McConnell: This is Jerry McConnell. This is February 1, 2007. I'm here in my home in Greenwood, Arkansas, and I'm preparing to interview Jim Allen in New York City [New York], for the Pryor [Center for Arkansas] Oral and Visual History at the University of Arkansas [Fayetteville on the history of the *Arkansas Democrat* and [Arkansas] *Democrat-Gazette*. The first thing I need to do, Jim, is ask you if I have your permission to make this interview and turn the tape over to the Pryor archives?

Jim Allen: Yes, you do, Jerry.

JM: Okay. Now, then, Jim, give me your full name.

JA: James Richard Allen.

JM: James Richard. Okay. And where were you born, Jim?

JA: I was born in Dallas, Texas.

JM: Oh, you were?

JA: Nineteen forty-nine.

JM: What day in 1949? What day?

JA: November 8, 1949.

JM: Okay. How did you happen to be born in Dallas, Texas?

JA: Well, my father, Jack Allen, and my mother, Mary Allen, resided there and then I was born. I had a sister and an older brother and a younger brother. Then the family moved to Little Rock when I was five years old.

JM: Okay. What did your father do?

JA: He originally worked for the Missouri-Pacific Railroad as a claims inspector, and he later joined Glens Falls Insurance Company, where he was a claims adjuster for many years.

JM: Okay. Jim, now, as I understand it, you're now working for an oil production company in New York City. Before that, you had worked at a very high position in a big trucking company. Is that correct?

JA: That's right. I am senior vice president of corporate communications for Hess Corporation in New York.

JM: Okay.

JA: We're a large oil and [natural] gas exploration company. We also have some downstream operations here on the East Coast with filling stations and convenience stores. Prior to that, I worked for twenty years for a company called CNF in Palo Alto, California, which is the old Consolidated Freightways truck line.

JM: Okay.

JA: We kind of morphed over years into a logistics and trucking and airfreight company. But I was twenty years there. I actually retired in October of 2005 and then I got asked to come to New York, and I decided to do it.

JM: Okay. Very good. Well, we'll work up to that again. Now, let's go back—work you up to the *Democrat*. First, tell me where you went to school.

JA: I went—well, elementary schools—I went to Pulaski Heights Elementary and Pulaski Heights Junior High in Little Rock and then I went to Little Rock Central High School. Then I had a couple of college careers—one right out of high school, which I didn't do very well at what was then LRU—Little Rock University.

JM: Yes. Okay.

JA: After a brief tenure in the army, I came back and then it was UALR [University of Arkansas, Little Rock], which I believe it is now. And I graduated from there.

JM: Yes. Do you remember what year you graduated?

JA: 1974.

JM: Okay. And you graduated from Central what year?

JA: 1968.

JM: 1968. Okay. You had the same track record—and that's neither here or there—as my wife, though—the same three schools. [Laughter] She attended Pulaski Heights Elementary and Junior High, and Central.

JA: Is that right? I'll be darned.

JM: Okay. So what did you do after you graduated from UALR? Just tell me how

you got to the *Democrat*.

JA: Well, that's actually a long and interesting story, but I guess that's what this is about.

JM: Yes, it is.

JA: My association with the *Democrat* goes back to when I was a child, actually.

JM: Okay.

JA: One—our family was always *Democrat* subscribers.

JM: Yes.

JA: That's back when it was an afternoon newspaper. But I had a paper route in junior high school—a *Democrat* paper route.

JM: Yes.

JA: Then when I was in high school I supported myself by working in the print room in the back of the *Democrat* stuffing Sunday sections—you know, they had the pre-run Sunday section . . .

JM: Yes.

JA: . . . with the news section that came off. I worked with a guy named Babe. I can't remember his last name. Literally, we'd just work all night stuffing sections for binding and then delivery on Sunday morning.

JM: Yes.

JA: Then when I was in college, right after I got out of high school, I worked in the circulation department as a district circulation manager.

JM: Okay.

JA: I worked for a guy named Frank Simpson, and there was another guy named—

well, I can't remember all these guys' names. But Frank Simpson was the circulation—this was all before Mr. [Walter] Hussman [Jr.] bought the paper.

JM: Yes. Right.

JA: So it goes back quite a few years. That led up to—I'd had this long association with the paper. I was in journalism school out at UALR, and because I knew some people on the floor of the paper—I remember talking with Bob McCord and talking with you, but it was really more [with] Ralph Patrick.

JM: Okay.

JA: Before I graduated from school, I had a job working on the desk as a clerk.

JM: Okay.

JA: My supervisor was a woman named Mabel Berry.

JM: Oh, yes.

JA: Between Mabel and a city editor named Nancy Miller—and Ralph—they really taught me how to be a newspaperman—back in those days. But that's kind of the quick journey there. My history with the *Democrat* goes back a long time. Then I got a job as clerk, and after that, I believe you hired me as my first reporting job after I graduated.

JM: Okay. Do you remember what year you started as a clerk?

JA: I started as a clerk in 1973 or right around—maybe 1974, but probably 1973.

JM: Okay. And as a clerk I assume you typed up obits [obituaries] and . . . ?

JA: I took obits over the phone.

JM: Probably took dictation and . . .

JA: Took dictation from the field, did obits—would actually sometimes have to go

around to the funeral homes—driving a car and collect some of them back in those days.

JM: Okay.

JA: And just generally do whatever the editors needed me to do. It was a classic clerk's job.

JM: When did you go to work as a reporter? When did I hire you as a reporter?

JA: That would've been, I'd say, in March or April of 1974.

JM: Okay.

JA: You hired me as a general assignment reporter, and my first job—I believe you were managing editor at that time.

JM: Right. Yes.

JA: I guess I reported to Ralph Patrick, Larry Gordon, and Nancy Miller. They were the desk editors—city editors.

JM: Yes. Okay.

JA: My first job, like so many before me, was working the night police beat—night and weekend police beat.

JM: Okay. How did that go?

JA: [Laughs] Well, it was interesting. There was a longtime police reporter there, Bob Sallee—great guy.

JM: Yes.

JA: Great guy. I think he eventually—you know, he had a long career with the *Democrat*, if I remember right.

JM: Yes.

JA: But Bob Sallee was the main police reporter, and he taught me how to do that and get in with the cops and get the information. He taught me how to stay at the police department because he said the [Arkansas] *Gazette*, which was our big competitor—they never—they just showed up when they had to, but they didn't keep anybody downstairs in the police building.

JM: Yes.

JA: They were too good for that, I guess.

JM Yes.

JA: So Sallee taught me how to hang out with the cops and—a great time. You know, I used to appear in lineups all the time down there. [Laughter] You know, the police would have the press guys appear in lineups.

JM: Put you as one of the decoys in there?

JA: Yes, as a decoy. It was kind of fun, but you always wondered if they picked you [laughs], what would happen? [Laughter]

JM: Yes.

JA: So you learned the street side of life. I grew up from not a wealthy family, so I had a lot of experience with the street life. But then there's the other part of life that you see—the criminal element and all of that. So you cover murders, and you get to see that element of it, Jerry.

JM: Yes. How long did you stay on the police beat?

JA: Well, it's been thirty-five years. So I would say—I was at the *Democrat* from 1974 to 1977—about a year on the police beat.

JM: Okay.

JA: I would've stayed on the police beat, I'd say—from the police beat I moved up to the courthouse and helped covered the courts.

JM: The county courthouse?

JA: The county courthouse. Now, what was the name of that judge—famous judge back there?

JM: Well, let's see—could've been Bill Kirby or . . .

JA: Yes. Judge Kirby was this crusty old racist judge. I remember just how appallingly racist he was, even back in those days.

JM: Yes.

JA: Then I did—from the courthouse beat I went over to North Little Rock and covered North Little Rock City Hall with a mayor named Eddie Powell, who had just been elected—a young, dapper kind of guy.

JM: Yes.

JA: [I] wrote a column on North Little Rock politics. I really enjoyed that beat. That was probably one of my more fun adventures, covering North Little Rock politics.

JM: Yes. Okay.

JA: That kind of got me going on the political side and then, you know—you've got to remember, Jerry—I'm sure you do—but, you know, being a reporter at the *Democrat* meant doing anything that had to be done and covering any type of story that had to be covered.

JM: Yes.

JA: So while we had beats, we also pulled and helped in other things. We had disasters and tornados, crime sprees.

JM: Yes.

JA: So we all pitched in and helped during that time.

JM: Okay. One thing I want to ask—do you remember any significant stories you worked on—anything that really sticks out in your mind?

JA: Well, there were a few. I guess one of the more dramatic stories I covered was this tornado in Cabot, which would've been in probably 1976 or 1977. I can't remember the year. There were multiple deaths down there, and just devastation.

JM: Yes.

JA: But myself—and there was a photographer—a big, old, lunky guy—I'm going to say that his name was Robert Ike Wilson.

JM: No, Robert Ike Thomas.

JA: Robert Ike Thomas.

JM: Yes. Okay.

JA: We went down there, and there was a whole *team* of reporters that went down there. But I was walking around and, actually—Ralph Patrick later asked me to write a first-person story because I helped uncover the body of a family—I actually found the body.

JM: Yes. Okay.

JA: And it was kind of a bloody mess, and the staff later gave me something called “the bloody shoe award.”

JM: Oh, God! [Laughter]

JA: That was kind of grisly, but that was a big story.

JM: Yes.

JA: Before the end of my *Democrat* career, I became heavily involved writing about Arkansas Power and Light Company, which—and covering the regulatory hearings of a young attorney general named Bill Clinton, who was opposing rate increases by AP&L. I spent probably my last year of my—nine months or year of my life [at the *Democrat*] covering these AP&L rate hearings and all the—you know, it was a big chain—these big utilities, like the gas company and AP&L used to just get blanket approval—whatever they wanted for the rates.

JM: Yes.

JA: This young attorney general named Bill Clinton actually started opposing rate increases, and it really changed the dynamics of the relationship between the utilities and the rate-payers or the customers.

JM: Yes.

JA: And it was a big sea change. I mean, Arkansas utility rates, I understand, are still pretty high on a relative basis, and that was a big change. I covered those stories quite a bit. I did some feature-writing. I remember a story I wrote about a sheriff up in—I believe it was Siloam Springs—who won the International Liars' Contest.

JM: Yes. [Laughs]

JA: He was a professional liar. [Laughs] So I went up and did an interview with him, and that was a good feature story.

JM: Yes.

JA: What else did I do? I covered the [Arkansas] Razorbacks.

JM: Yes.

JA: Again, it was that spirit of—you kind of used whatever we wanted, so I remember working with the—gosh, I can't remember—he was younger than me—a guy named Kim Brazzell.

JM: Yes.

JA: I don't know whatever happens to these guys. But then there was the legendary enigmatic guy, Fred Morrow, who, to this day—I think about that guy all the time. He was an amazing, amazing man.

JM: Yes.

JA: And I don't know whatever—if I remember, he went out west and was going to be a sportswriter out there, but he has kind of drifted off the landscape with me.

JM: Yes. Well, I interviewed him. I believe he's in Loveland, Colorado, now.

JA: Loveland. That's out west.

JM: Yes. He went to Denver and worked for the *Rocky Mountain News* for a long time . . .

JA: Yes.

JM: . . . and wound up getting involved in racing—horse racing, dog racing—[laughs].

JA: Oh, yes. [Laughs] But I remember Fred Morrow and one of the Lancaster brothers—was it Bill or Bob—worked . . .?

JM: Bob worked at the *Democrat*.

JA: Bob.

JM: Yes.

JA: Bob Lancaster, Fred Morrow and David Terrell were, I thought, the best pure writers on the *Democrat* during that time.

JM: They were pretty damn good.

JA: They were pretty damn good.

JM: Yes, they were.

JA: And I always marveled at that scrappy little newspaper that had such talent.

JM: Yes.

JA: You remember what—we didn't get paid a lot of money back in those days.

JM: I know that. [Laughs]

JA: We had a good crew when I was there.

JM: Tell me what you remember about the newspaper—the building itself or anything. What was it like working at the *Democrat* at that time?

JA: Well, you know, it's—again, I'd been in that building since I was a young man working back in the printing section of the building. You know, I don't know where the printing presses are today. But, again, I kind of grew up on that side.

JM: Yes.

JA: [I] went down the spiral staircases that used to be behind the copy desk and into the newsroom. I did it kind of backwards from most of the people who would come to work there and then they'd learn to go upstairs to the print shop—where they used to set type.

JM: Yes.

JA: When I was there, they were just ending the typesetting days.

JM: Yes.

JA: It probably was in the last year that I was there they did away with the old typesetting.

JM: And went to cold type.

JA: To see the way those guys used to do that—remember they'd set it in reverse type?

JM: Yes.

JA: Also, it was a big transition. When I came there I started out on an old-style typewriter—a manual typewriter. We would write our stories in triplicate. They used to have that copy paper, and it's kind of a little color here, but you always knew you were a reporter because you'd always have the copy paper ink on you.

JM: The carbon. Yes.

JA: The carbon paper on your fingers all the time.

JM: Yes.

JA: And later they got some kind of fancy form that was all built in [note: was it NCR paper—no carbon required]. But when I first started there, you had to literally assemble three pieces of white typing paper between two pieces of carbon paper.

JM: Yes.

JA: During my tenure there, they upgraded to an IBM [International Business Machines] Selectric typewriters. And I guess it would've been kind of a precursor to computers, but if I remember, it was some kind of scanning—you'd type your . . .

JM: Yes.

JA: It was like a special ink on the IBM Selectric typewriters. They would scan it somehow and then the city desk would get it.

JM: Yes. In fact, there was a machine—as I remember it—they probably had a

technical name, but we called it a scanner. You put your copy in there and scanned it, and that put it—it either printed out a tape one way to get it in the computer, or—and eventually it just went directly into the computer. But I think they first had to print out a tape, and the tape ran through either a Linotype machine or later went up into the computer. But, yes, you were right there when all the transition was going on from hot type to cold type . . .

JA: Yes.

JM: . . . and typewriters to computers . . .

JA: Right.

JM: . . . and all that jazz.

JA: Now, I remember it being a very traditional newsroom setup. You know, you had your horseshoe copy desk, and they were always scurrying back to the printer's side of it. Then you had your city desk. And there was an array of reporters sitting in rows of desks that faced Ralph Patrick and his austere glare from time to time.

JM: Yes.

JA: And everyone was kind of sitting right there in front of you. It was very messy. Everybody's desk was littered with paper. It was very chaotic.

JM: Yes.

JA: It was almost like two worlds: you had the early-morning world before deadline.

JM: Yes.

JA: Then you had the—after-the-first-edition-came-out world, which was more relaxed.

JM: Yes.

JA: I remember we all had to come to work pretty early. Like, 7:00 a.m. was a good starting time for most of us, especially if we were general assignment.

JM: Yes.

JA: And we'd have to—you know, we'd do two things: one, anything breaking news from the night—we'd play catch-up with.

JM: Yes.

JA: Then we'd have to chase—if the *Gazette* had a scoop on us, which they did sometimes, but not that often. I always thought the *Gazette* chased us. So it was like—if I remember right, when I went to work there, the deadline was probably 1:30 [p.m.], and when I left there, it was probably 11:00 [a.m.].

JM: Yes.

JA: There was this deadline compression, which was—if you were my age—I was twenty-five at the time—it was like an adrenaline high.

JM: Yes. [Laughter]

JA: It was a lot of fun, and then it would just die out. You'd go downtown and get a little lunch and come back and then you'd chase the longer, more in-depth or your investigative, or even feature stories, so it was a little more relaxed.

JM: Yes. What else do you remember about the people who worked there while you were there?

JA: Well, people—let's kind of start from the top. I remember Mr. McCord, who was—I believe he had been a longtime journalist and connected with papers in North Little Rock.

JM: Yes.

JA: I think he was still connected to North Little Rock papers when he was editor of the *Democrat*, but I couldn't be sure.

JM: I think maybe he had sold out by then.

JA: He was the godhead figure of the editorial page—a white-haired man—sat in his big office, and [I] didn't have much to do with him, really.

JM: Yes.

JA: You were much more active. You sat—you had an office right outside his office, if I remember correct.

JM: Yes. Right.

JA: I always remember you as being this tall, kind of frisky-haired man who loved to wear striped shirts.

JM: Yes. [Laughs]

JA: You had a lot of striped shirts. I remember that.

JM: That sounds right. Yes.

JA: And, of course, your job was managing the newsroom and its budget. I had more contact with Ralph Patrick, as I said.

JM: Yes.

JA: Ralph was—I saw him, oh, I don't know, maybe eight or nine years ago on a trip to Atlanta [Georgia].

JM: Yes.

JA: We had lunch. He hadn't changed much. He had gray hair then back when I was there because he was older. But Ralph taught me skills that I still use every day

in the corporate world as a writer.

JM: Yes.

JA: He's what I used to call a good pencil editor.

JM: Yes.

JA: Ralph was always kind of a guiding light for me. He could be gruff and rough, but he wasn't mean or anything like that. As a matter of fact, he was a very, very nice man.

JM: Yes.

JA: He used to have good parties over at his house.

JM: Yes.

JA: Ralph was a very nice man, and he could—he had to corral a bunch of wild people. The *Democrat* didn't—their staff—and I guess you have played a big hand in this—it was much more free-spirited and much more creative and less tied down than I would say the *Gazette* people were. And as a result—you know, it's like taming a bunch of wild colts.

JM: [Laughs] Yes.

JA: We had guys like me and—you know, the *Democrat* would take risks on people like me, and there was Steele Hays, I think—guys that came right out of—it was a mix. They had a lot of guys coming in right out of college.

JM: Yes.

JA: And they had more true-blue guys, like Bill Husted, who was, I guess, a features and an investigative, all-around reporter. He later became a city editor. I always thought he missed his calling there. He should've stayed a reporter. [Laughs]

Bill was always, I thought, a better reporter than an editor. But that's just me being critical.

JM: Yes. Well, I think he thinks the same thing, too.

JA: But he was a great guy and a great journalist. Remember there was this—I'm a short-statured fellow, and there was another one there named John Rice or . . .

JM: Oh, Gary Rice.

JA: Gary Rice. John Rice AP [Associated Press] was a guy I worked with.

JM: Yes.

JA: Gary Rice, who was this—he was always stirring up shit . . .

JM: Yes.

JA: . . . [laughs] if I may use profanity. He was always working on some story or another that would get these big, giant headlines.

JM: Yes.

JA: Then he'd go on to the next one.

JM: Yes.

JA: He was quite a reporter. Who else was there? We had Amanda on the copy desk. I don't remember. I think she later married Bill.

JM: Yes, they did marry.

JA: Gosh. We had this guy—I always called him “the general.” But he wrote the editorials. He was this very conservative guy named Hawkins.

JM: David Hawkins. Yes.

JA: Gosh, I can't believe I can remember all these guys—kind of a red-haired guy . . .
.?

JM: Yes.

JA: And there was a cartoonist. Of course, the worst job in Arkansas journalism was being a cartoonist, if your name wasn't George Fisher [*Arkansas Gazette's* cartoonist].

JM: Yes. [Laughs]

JA: And that guy's name was Deb or . . .

JM: No, Jon—you're thinking of two different guys there—Jon Kennedy was the . . .

JA: Oh, Jon Kennedy was the *Democrat* [cartoonist], but there was another guy in there.

JM: Deb Polston.

JA: Polston.

JM: Yes, Deb.

JA: He used to write—he used to draw. He'd do his work as a *Democrat* cartoonist, but then if I remember right, he had a sideline. He'd do, like, lurid cartoons [laughs] and sell them as a sideline business.

JM: Yes. I don't know. It's possible.

JA: Larry Gordon was an assistant city editor.

JM: Yes.

JA: Larry was—I'd never in my life met anybody who smoked more cigarettes than that—I've never met anybody to this day who smoked more cigarettes than Larry Gordon did.

JM: Yes.

JA: He would come to work every afternoon—he kind of worked the late shift—and

he would come to work, and he would have four packs of cigarettes.

JM: Oh, boy.

JA: And he'd stack them up on his desk there.

JM: Yes.

JA: He would smoke them all. And he'd come in the next day with four packs of cigarettes.

JM: Yes.

JA: Of course, [in] those days you could smoke in the newsroom. Probably most people *did* smoke, if I remember right.

JM: Yes.

JA: I'm trying to remember other people. Dorothy Palmer—Doty Palmer, who was my girlfriend for a number of years.

JM: Yes.

JA: But she was a features writer. I think she worked in the women's section. I don't know what they call it now, but it was the women's section back then. Then there was this long-haired, frenetic—kind of an angry guy named Roger Armbruster.

JM: Yes.

JA: Armbrust or Armbruster?

JM: Now it's Armbrust. Armbrust.

JA: Armbrust. Roger Armbrust. He covered city hall. He was always an exciting guy. I remember him.

JM: Yes.

JA: Who else? Carol Gordon was the copy desk chief.

JM: Carol. Yes. Carol Stogsdill.

JA: Her and Kirkendall.

JM: Mike Kirkendall. Yes.

JA: A bunch of them went up to the *Chicago Tribune*.

JM: Yes.

JA: That was probably about the time I left and went to the Associated Press in 1977.

JM: Yes.

JA: By the way, I went to the AP—do you know why I went to the AP?

JM: No.

JA: Because Bob McCord wouldn't give me a raise.

JM: Oh, is that right? [Laughs]

JA: I remember people had gotten a raise—we didn't make much money. I think I started at the *Democrat* making \$125 a week, and this was when I became a reporter. Before that, I was an hourly employee.

JM: Yes.

JA: But I was making \$125 a week, and this was after I—when I graduated from college—I'd had the GI Bill, and I worked one night a week as a bartender at a restaurant called the Leather Bottle. I made about \$100 a night there.

JM: Yes.

JA: Then I had this weird job working for a tuxedo rental place that—a store called Lou Hoffman's.

JM: Yes.

JA: I had all these collections of jobs, and I was making about \$800 or \$900 a month

between the GI Bill and all these jobs. Then I took this huge pay cut [laughs] when I went to work with the *Democrat* . . .

JM: Yes. [Laughs]

JA: . . . making \$125 a week. I eventually made it up to \$145 a week, which, you know—single and no bills—it wasn't bad.

JM: Yes.

JA: I wasn't hurting. I could eat and drink.

JM: Yes.

JA: Then I remember one time when I didn't get a raise, and I knew it hadn't been performance because I hadn't gotten in trouble or anything.

JM: Yes.

JA: I went in and asked Bob McCord—I said, “How come everybody got a raise this year, but I didn't?” He said, “Well, everybody else asked for one and you *didn't*.” [Laughs] That always sat wrong with me a little bit.

JM: Yes.

JA: Then I became friends with Harry King, who was the news editor at the AP.

JM: Yes.

JA: Harry was a horse player [one who places bets on horse racing] and I was, too, over at Oaklawn [Park, Hot Springs]. Through a bunch of—Bob [John Robert] Starr had left. He had retired at the AP. So between Harry King and a guy named Rob Dalton, they hired me from the *Democrat* because I was all in love with the politics. I had the capitol beat out there working with Bill Simmons

JM: Yes. Okay.

JA: And I guess Bill may still be there.

JM: Bill is at the *Democrat-Gazette* now, and he is in charge of capitol coverage and political coverage. He is sort of their political editor now.

JA: Oh, good.

JM: He retired from the AP. And, in fact, I think he was bureau chief until he retired, and then he took the job with the *Democrat-Gazette*. And Robert Shaw replaced him. Robert had worked at the AP for years, but he, liked some of them, started out in sports over at the *Gazette*. [Laughs]

JA: Yes.

JM: I want to go on to your work with the AP and everything, but what kind of a newspaper was the *Democrat* when you were there? How did you feel about it as a newspaper?

JA: I loved it. I read it online [on the Internet] today. It's not the same paper, I don't think, but I guess that comes with being a monopoly, so to speak. I liked the scrappiness of the paper. I loved working with the people. We were a unique collection of staff at that time. We all got along well. We literally partied together every night after work. We'd all be back the next day and then we'd party all weekend together as a group.

JM: Yes.

JA: It was a fabulous scrappy newspaper that—you know, I think the world today misses the competitive nature of having two newspapers—both pretty good papers—in one small market like Little Rock. You still get that here in New York with the tabloids competing with each other. But it was very exciting. There was

always a lot of news. And for a town like—you know, it's a small state and a rural state. I mean, Arkansas probably has less than two million people today. I live in a place that's got that in my *neighborhood*.

JM: Yes. [Laughs]

JA: But there was always a lot of news. You know, always—the police department was always acting up. The courts were always acting up. There were always sleazy politicians, and a lot of huckster business people would come through there.

JM: Yes.

JA: And this was like—the bond market—you had the Stephenses, who were very responsible and respectable people, but this was back in the days when Little Rock as a bond market started taking off. So you had a whole lot of shady characters who would come in and out, you know, with diamond pinky rings and fancy parties.

JM: Yes.

JA: And they'd try and buy their way into Little Rock that way. So those were colorful characters. Then there are the politicians—legislators.

JM: Yes.

JA: Napoleon Bonaparte Murphy from down in south Arkansas—I mean, just incredible. If you had to come up with these names for a novel, you probably couldn't do it.

JM: Yes. [Laughs] I think you're right.

JA: But there were several characters.

JM: Yes.

JA: The *Democrat* was the afternoon newspaper. I always thought on the news side, they were on an equal basis with the *Gazette*. The *Gazette* was the so-called “Gray Lady,” newspaper of record, *The New York Times* of Arkansas, and all that. And they obviously had a lot more money than the *Democrat* did. But they didn’t have what we now call the entrepreneurial spirit.

JM: Yes.

JA: You know, the scrappiness. And we didn’t have to go lurid—we covered legitimate news, and I always gave you a lot of credit for that because you had the uphill task of fighting a morning newspaper that had deadlines—easier deadlines and that kind of thing.

JM: Yes.

JA: But the spirit was good, the people were good, and the quality of the journalism was excellent.

JM: Yes.

JA: That’s what I remember about the *Democrat*.

JM: Yes. They had a lot of great people who went through there.

JA: They sure did.

JM: And Carol, as you mentioned—a lot of them—Carol and Mike Kirkendall and Sheila Daniel all went to Chicago [Illinois] about the same time. I think maybe Mike went to the *Sun Times* in Chicago. But all three of those ended up at the *Los Angeles Times*.

JA: Oh, is that right?

JM: Yes, and Mike is still there.

JA: Is he still on the desk side of it?

JM: Yes, he's a copy editor, so to speak. And Carol—she got to be the assistant managing editor of the *L.A. Times*.

JA: Wow.

JM: She had the number two job out there for a while. She left, and she's now the vice president in charge of media relations for UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles].

JA: That's good.

JM: And Sheila is back [and] living on the river up—[laughs] on the White River.

JA: Oh, is that right?

JM: Yes. She bought her a cabin out on the White River. Nevertheless—so you thought that the *Democrat* was pretty competitive with the *Gazette* at that time?

JA: Yes, it was a different kind of journalism, in a way. We ceded the committee hearings and, you know, all the long, drawn-out kind of stuff.

JM: Yes.

JA: We didn't have the staff resources to cover everything they did.

JM: Yes.

JA: But I always thought that our coverage of Little Rock City Hall—and I'll give myself some credit—the North Little Rock City Hall . . .

JM: Yes.

JA: It was *different*. We chased stories that were more meaningful to our readers.

JM: Yes.

JA: There was a much stronger connection at the *Democrat* between the editors and the reporters and the readers than I thought there was at the *Gazette*.

JM: Yes.

JA: And the reason why I make that point, Jerry, is that the whole tone of the paper was different. From one—you know, I always thought we wrote news and we informed readers, and the *Gazette* was a little more preachy.

JM: Yes.

JA: They were a little bit looking down at their circulation.

JM: Yes.

JA: That may have come back to haunt them at the end of the day. I missed all that newspaper war stuff.

JM: Yes.

JA: I had already gone west by then.

JM: Yes, it's possible.

JA: But, you know—and maybe today the *Democrat*[-*Gazette*]—I think—when I go back and visit friends there, I still read the paper.

JM: Yes.

JA: And I think it still has that connection with the readers.

JM: Yes.

JA: So that part of the paper was very unique, I think, at that time.

JM: Yes. One other question—was James Scudder there when you were there?

JA: James Scudder sat next to me.

JM: Oh, did he?

JA: Him and his hemorrhoids sat next to me.

JM: Yes. Yes, okay. [Laughs]

JA: He used to sit on a squishy pillow.

JM: Yes.

JA: And I came to the paper. I think he had just returned from Harvard [University] on a Nieman . . .

JM: Nieman Fellowship.

JA: I can't remember if he went there while I was there or he had just come back. And Scudder was kind of a spiritual person.

JM: Yes.

JA: I guess that's the term we use today, but I guess back then it was *religious*.

JM: Yes.

JA: But a little bit of an unusual guy—kind of a weird duck. But James Scudder wrote the best newspaper lead that I've ever read . . .

JM: [Laughs]

JA: And, to this day, I've never read a newspaper lead that was better.

JM: I know what it is, but tell me.

JA: Okay. I can't remember the guy's name. He was that religious fanatic up in north Arkansas.

JM: I remember him.

JA: The Christ of the Ozarks.

JM: Gerald L. K. Smith.

JA: Gerald L. K. Smith. So when Gerald L. K. Smith died, James Scudder wrote a

lead that said, “Gerald L. K. Smith died yesterday at the feet of the only Jew he ever loved.”

JM: Yes. [Laughter] Yes.

JA: It was very close to that.

JM: Yes. Actually, I think the reason I remember this so specifically—“He was *buried* today at the foot of the statue of the only Jew he ever loved or liked,” and everything. Yes.

JA: I mean, that was just—that was terrific writing.

JM: Yes.

JA: That was great.

JM: The reason I remember that so vividly is that he wrote it, and they brought it to me and said, “Can we *say* this?” [Laughter] “Can we print this?” I had your reaction. I said, “Damn right. That’s the best lead I’ve ever seen.” [Laughter]

JA: Oh, man. I mean—and what a gem!

JM: Yes.

JA: And Bill Husted was a great writer like that.

JM: Yes, he was. He was a really good writer.

JA: He could capture a phrase. I wonder whatever happened to Bill.

JM: He’s . . .

JA: He was in the Northwest last time I heard.

JM: Well, he moved. He went to Atlanta [Georgia]. He and Amanda [Husted] both went to Atlanta and then they divorced, but Bill is still working for the—well, they’re both still working for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. Bill is sort of a

technology writer—columnist and everything—who is now syndicated. He is . . .

JA: I'll have to look him up on the Internet.

JM: Yes. He is syndicated all over the country.

JA: Now, is Ralph Patrick still working, or is he retired now?

JM: He has just retired. He retired within the last year.

JA: He must've been at the *Constitution* for twenty years.

JM: Yes, he was there quite a while.

JA: When did you retire, Jerry?

JM: I retired at the start of 1992.

JA: 1992.

JM: So I've been retired for a while now.

JA: So you're a gentleman farmer, huh?

JM: Yes, sort of—a rock farmer.

JA: Yes. [Laughter]

JM: I live on top of a hill with lots of rocks, but nevertheless—okay. Well, you were there when Hussman bought the paper.

JA: I was.

JM: Yes. Okay.

JA: Hussman was about twelve years old when he bought the paper. [Note: JA is being facetious here—Hussman was actually twenty-seven]

JM: Yes. [Laughter] Do you . . .?

JA: Well, I—we didn't know anything about him except he had a weird nickname, "Boo," which was kind of a southern aristocracy kind of name

JM: Yes.

JA: I always—I don't remember that much about it at the time, but it was, like, WEHCO Media.

JM: Yes, WEHCO. W-E-H-C-O. Yes, that was . . .

JA: They got their start down in south Arkansas.

JM: Right.

JA: I remember him [as] more of a television station owner, for some reason.

JM: Well, I don't—they owned some cable networks and everything, and they did own one television station between Shreveport [Louisiana] and Texarkana [Arkansas], which served both cities and everything.

JA: Yes.

JM: I don't think he ever owned one in Little Rock, although the old people did. K. A. [Kuno August] Engel and then his nephews, Marcus George and Stanley Berry, owned Channel 11 there in Little Rock, or were part owners, at any rate.

JA: Yes.

JM: But nothing in particular you remember about the transition that sticks out?

JA: Well, I remember—it had more of an effect on the business side of the paper than it did, I think, on the newsroom.

JM: Yes.

JA: You know, we were just kid reporters, so we didn't know—I mean, I wouldn't have known whether they cut your newsroom budget or not, Jerry.

JM: Yes. Right. I understand.

JA: The politics of the newsroom were more over bylines than they were over

budgets.

JM: [Laughs] Yes, I understand. That's the way it *should* be.

JA: Yes, that's the way it *should* be.

JM: Yes.

JA: So I don't know—I don't remember it having much of an impact. I think, even at that tender age, we were glad—we always thought the—the Engel family had owned the paper for, what, eighty years or something?

JM: Yes.

JA: And, you know, the business side of the paper was kind of behind the times.

JM: Yes.

JA: And they were—the whole decline in circulation because of the afternoon papers .

...

JM: Yes.

JA: And the demographics of society's living was starting to change right about that time. I can't remember what the circulation was, but it probably would've been around 80,000 or 90,000 when I was there.

JM: Oh, it was probably a little less than that, maybe.

JA: Yes. But I remember thinking that, you know, the Hussman family had *money*.

JM: Yes.

JA: And they were journalists. They came from a journalism background.

JM: Yes.

JA: I think they owned the Hot Springs paper and a Texarkana paper, and maybe something like Magnolia or something.

JM: Yes, and El Dorado.

JA: And El Dorado. That's what it was. So it didn't have that much of an impact on us.

JM: Yes.

JA: And, lo and behold, look what happened—it turned out to be good for the *Democrat*, anyway.

JM: Okay. All right. Now, go on to the AP. How long were you with the AP? How long were you with them in Little Rock?

JA: Oh, I was in the AP in Little Rock from April of 1977 to May of 1980.

JM: Okay.

JA: At which time I had transferred to the San Francisco [California] bureau.

JM: Okay.

JA: And I spent my time in Little Rock at the bottom of the barrel of the AP, which was pretty good—a pretty good job, anyway. I like the wire service a lot, Jerry.

JM: Yes.

JA: It was just—just crank out story after story—but the speed—I was always a better reporter than a writer, in my opinion. I mean, I could write well enough, but I was a better reporter than a writer. And working the desk at the AP was much more—it was *better* for me, I'll put it that way. From a career standpoint.

JM: Yes.

JA: *And* I got to cover politics, which was what I wanted to do. I was able to go out and work with Bill Simmons and cover the [Bill] Clinton Administration and do all that. I ended up with *two* references in the Clinton biography [*My Life*], which

I'm kind of proud of. [Laughs]

JM: All right.

JA: Neither one by name . . .

JM: Yes.

JA: . . . but both by mention as an AP reporter. One was a story I wrote about a guy—a weird turkey farmer named Monroe Schwarzlose.

JM: Yes.

JA: That's the traditional spelling of Schwarzlose, by the way.

JM: Yes.

JA: And I was writing a story—he was running for governor, and he held a news conference which nobody went to but *me*. He was criticizing Clinton over this energy program. Bill Clinton had brought in a bunch of people from outside that were going to change the world. Bill was always more of an idea man than a manager.

JM: Yes.

JA: You know, an idea a minute. But he was going to change the world with all these energy policies, and they came up with this program that was going to supply cords of wood to the elderly and the poor in rural Arkansas.

JM: Yes.

JA: They hired about eight people to run this program. And after one year, they delivered one cord of wood.

JM: [Laughs]

JA: So I went up and interviewed Monroe Schwarzlose and took a picture of Monroe

standing next to the one woodpile that was delivered through this Clinton program.

JM: [Laughs]

JA: And the story ran in *The New York Times*, and it got a lot of coverage. Bill Clinton mentioned that in his biography after he left the presidency.

JM: Yes.

JA: One of the reasons—with “Cubans and car tags” [reference to the controversial issue of President Jimmy Carter sending the Cuban refugees to be contained at Fort Chaffee and the significant increase in car registration fees, which was the platform on which Frank White ran his campaign]—that was one of the reasons he was defeated [by White] for governor after one term.

JM: Yes.

JA: I liked covering the AP. I got to cover the Arkansas Razorbacks a lot, which is a team I still follow to this day . . .

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Beginning of Tape 1, Side 2]

JM: Okay. This is Jerry McConnell here again—side two of this tape. I’m here with Jim Allen. Jim, I think that you were talking about you had covered the Razorbacks some while you were with the AP in Little Rock.

JA: Yes. I was always a sports enthusiast, so I was able to cover the Razorbacks, both in football and basketball. That’s all that mattered, really, back in those days.

JM: Yes. Then you went to transfer to San Francisco. When was this—1980 or . . .?

JA: 1980. Yes.

JM: Okay.

JA: I had recently gotten married for the first time in 1980 to Virginia, my wife. I remember we were sitting on—I had put in for a transfer. You know, AP is around the world, and you kind of take advantage of it.

JM: Yes.

JA: And, as I said, I had lived in Arkansas almost all my life and worked there. I had put in for a transfer, and the AP was very supportive. I thought I was going to go to the East Coast. I figured I'd go to New York or Boston [Massachusetts] or Baltimore [Maryland]—you know, somewhere on the East Coast.

JM: Yes.

JA: I remember sitting in my apartment—I lived down on 7th Street in the Quapaw Quarter—sitting at home one night, and the AP called me and said, “We have a job open in San Francisco. Do you want to go to work there, and can you report there in a week?” And I said, “Yes.”

JM: [Laughter]. Yes.

JA: I literally was gone in a week.

JM: Yes.

JA: I'll tell you an interesting story about that transition, Jerry.

JM: Yes.

JA: It's got to do with learning and confidence in yourself.

JM: Yes.

JA: So here I was—I was AP, but I was basically an Arkansas newspaper guy, right?

JM: Yes.

JA: And I went out there to the AP in San Francisco—a big city. You’ve got the *Chronicle* and the *Examiner* and Herb Caen and all these big names.

JM: Yes.

JA: The AP had a big roster of really great national reporters that I’d been reading for three or four years. I was scared to death whether I was going to be able to match their quality—whether I was *good enough*. I had a little crisis of confidence. I went out there, and in very short order—there was, like, lots of big news stories out there. They had the continuing stories of the George Moscone and Harvey Milk killings, and Mayor [Diane] Feinstein, who’s now [a] senator—they had all that. [Editor’s note: George Moscone, mayor of San Francisco, and city supervisor Harvey Milk were murdered by former board of supervisors member Dan White in 1978.] Just a variety of stories about that. I was as good or better than anybody out there. And probably that more than anything, you know, came from being at the *Democrat* and learning the arts of the trade and how to be a newspaper reporter.

JM: Yes.

JA: I was so pleased to learn that I was just as good as they were. [Laughs]

JM: Yes. Yes, that’s good. Yes, that always makes you feel good and feel more capable and know you can do the job.

JA: Right. Right.

JM: Okay. How long were you with the AP at San Francisco?

JA: I was there from May of 1980—by the way, if I could backtrack . . .

JM: Sure.

JA: Just because—when I was at the AP, one of the great stories I covered was Elvis [Presley] and his funeral and death. [Editor’s note: Elvis Presley died on August 16, 1977.]

JM: Okay.

JA: And I just wanted to put it on the record. That was such a fun time. The story—I was working the AP desk, and this was back when they were working in that little, tiny room right next door to the *Democrat*.

JM: Yes.

JA: And it was Sunday, about 6:30 at night, and the phone rang, and all [I was] doing was sitting there doing nothing. As a matter of fact, I had already gone out and got a six pack of beer. David Terrell had brought me a six pack of beer because I got off work at about 9:00. It was about 6:30, and I was already about three beers into it.

JM: Yes. [Laughs]

JA: I was just maintaining—you just sit there waiting for anything to happen. And something happened. They called on the phone, and I’ll never forget. The desk in New York calls to us, “Get to Memphis [Tennessee] right this second. The King is dead.” [Reference to Elvis Presley]

JM: Yes.

JA: I went to Memphis.

JM: Yes.

JA: That was a big story I covered.

JM: Yes.

JA: Back to San Francisco—from May of 1980 to April of 1984, so almost four years at the AP in San Francisco—and that's when I decided to leave journalism, Jerry—for personal circumstances more than anything. San Francisco is a very expensive place to live, and my wife and I—she had gotten a job in the PR [public relations] department at Hewlett Packard down at Palo Alto.

JM: Yes.

JA: She was commuting. We wanted to start a family. We had been married four or five years, and we wanted to start a family.

JM: Yes.

JA: We just loved San Francisco—still do.

JM: Yes.

JA: Great city. And, you know, with the AP—I talked to their HR [human resources] department and talked to the executives back in New York, and they wanted me to stay and to go on to management track of the AP, which was good. But back in those days, you know, management track meant moving to Dubuque, Iowa, and being bureau chief for five years.

JM: Yes.

JA: Or Butte, Montana.

JM: Yes.

JA: Those are the places that they were offering me to go.

JM: Yes.

JA: Frankly, I'd gotten a taste of the big city [laughs] and I didn't want to move to Butte, Montana, to make \$20 more a week at the AP.

JM: Yes. I understand.

JA: I decided to leave journalism. I'll never forget. You know, I had to make this decision. What was I going to do? So I bought a fifth of scotch, and Virginia and I went up to a place up on the Sonoma coast called Jenner. J-E-N-N-E-R.

JM: Okay.

JA: And rented a place. It was right on the beach. It was probably February of 1984, and it was cold and windy and foggy. I remember I went out on that beach and drank about half a bottle of scotch and decided to leave journalism.

JM: Yes.

JA: And I did. So then I had to get a job. Back in those days, the path was kind of into corporate communications—what we call it now—what we called it then was just PR—corporate PR.

JM: Yes.

JA: SI made my rounds through the big corporations in San Francisco. STOCAL—Standard Oil of California, which is now Chevron, Bechtel, Pacific Telephone, PG&E [Pacific Gas and Electric], Bank of America, Wells Fargo Bank—those are the big corporations out there.

JM: Yes.

JA: I got job offers from Chevron and Bechtel.

JM: Yes.

JA: And because I liked the guy so much that ran the PR department at Bechtel, I went to work there, and made the transition. I was in charge of all the employee communications and the publishing at Bechtel Corporation.

JM: Yes.

JA: I went there from 1984 just for a couple of years and then I got recruited to this job down at Consolidated Freightways in Palo Alto. We were living in the city, and my wife was commuting to Palo Alto. By this time, we'd had a son. Then I got a job in Palo Alto, so we decided, "This is crazy, racing down the highway waving at each other in two cars every day."

JM: Yes.

JA: So I moved down to Palo Alto, where I stayed for twenty years.

JM: Yes. Okay.

JA: As a matter of fact, I *still* have a house in Palo Alto.

JM: Yes—with Consolidated Freightways or which is called—what?

JA: Yes. It went through some corporate name changes, but it was basically CF, or later it became CNF.

JM: CNF. Okay.

JA: [I] started out as the only PR guy there and eventually worked myself up into an executive management position.

JM: Yes.

JA: I stayed there, and I outlasted five chief executive officers—five CEOs.

JM: Is that right? [Laughs]

JA: I did something right. [Laughs]

JM: So what was your top position there?

JA: My top position was senior vice president of corporate communications.

JM: Okay.

JA: I was on the executive management team with five or six guys, and was at the top of the hierarchy, quite frankly.

JM: Yes.

JA: We managed the company.

JM: Yes.

JA: My responsibility was doing the traditional public relations role in a corporation, but by that time I had morphed into also a business manager where you were the high counsel to the CEO.

JM: Yes. I understand.

JA: Yes.

JM: Okay. So you were with them for how long?

JA: Twenty years.

JM: Twenty years. Okay. Then what happened?

JA: Well, it's kind of interesting. I decided to retire in October of 2005. Basically, in 2004 and early 2005, we had sold off probably sixty percent of our company to UPS [United Parcel Service].

JM: Yes.

JA: A lot of our logistics operation and our air freight company. So a lot of that we sold off—all of our international operations we sold to UPS.

JM: Yes.

JA: It kind of took the fun out of the job. We were just kind of back to being a little North American trucking company.

JM: Yes.

JA: And, frankly, when we sold all these businesses, our stock price escalated, so the entire management team just left. I mean, we all retired and let these young guys come in. You know, I was fifty-five or fifty-six at the time.

JM: Yes.

JA: As in any organization, there's a next generation waiting to move up.

JM: Yes.

JA: So these guys were in their early forties, and we gave them the company. And they're still doing good. They're doing well.

JM: Yes. Did you . . . ?

JA: Yes, I decided to retire. I wasn't really sure what I was going to do.

JM: Yes.

JA: I was literally on a beach with my cell phone in Hawaii, and my phone rang, and it was a friend of mine from New York who knew I had left the trucking company. We had worked together over the years. He owned a PR firm back here in New York, and he did a lot of work for our Emery Air Freight Company. But he said he [had] a client who was the CEO of this mid-sized oil company, and he said he had some communications issues—would I come back and talk with him? I did, and we hit it off. After a couple more rounds of interviews, he said, “Would [you] be willing to move to New York?” You know, I was fifty-six years old. My son was in college. I was engaged and about to be married for the second time.

JM: Yes.

JA: And you look around your front yard, and you have no reason for being in one

particular place.

JM: Yes.

JA: So I decided to start this new adventure in life at fifty-six, and [I] moved to Manhattan, and I'm loving it. It's a lot of fun.

JM: Are you? Okay. What are you doing with them?

JA: I'm doing the same thing that I did at CNF. This is a publicly traded company, so we have all the SEC [Securities and Exchange Commission] reporting requirements and all the normal publications that a big company does.

JM: Yes.

JA: Basically, just being in the oil industry, we have a lot of concern and issues concerning social responsibility and environmental, so I've got the ear of the CEO on that in terms of counseling him and working with him. I'm basically doing the same thing I've always done in business.

JM: Yes. Okay.

JA: And I hope to be here for a few more years.

JM: Yes. Well, obviously [you're] doing very well. What's the name of the CEO?

JA: His name is John Hess.

JM: John Hess. Okay.

JA: Yes. He's son of the founder, Leon Hess.

JM: Okay. Leon was the founder? Is that correct?

JA: Yes, Leon was the founder of the company. He owned the New York Jets [professional football team] for a while when [Joe] Namath was [quarterback there].

JM: Oh.

JA: Very colorful company.

JM: Yes, I remember that name, yes, now. I knew I knew that name from somewhere.

JA: We're about a \$30 billion company. It's probably what they call mid-sized.

JM: Yes.

JA: It's probably the fifth largest oil company. And it's a lot of fun to learn a new industry at this stage of your life, you know?

JM: Did they used to go by the name of Amerada Hess or something?

JA: They were. They were Amerada Hess. They were Hess, and then in 1965 they bought a company called Amerada. Then it became Amerada Hess. Just last year they changed their name to Hess Corporation.

JM: Yes. Okay.

JA: Amerada was a Canadian company, and over the years we had sold all of our Canadian interests.

JM: Yes.

JA: So it's kind of silly to have that Canadian angle to your name.

JM: Yes. Okay. And your son is still in college?

JA: Yes in San Francisco in college. He's twenty-one and doing well.

JM: Yes.

JA: He's a musician.

JM: Oh, okay.

JA: He's trying to get some work done. He wants to move back to the Midwest or South at Middle Tennessee State University outside of Nashville, which is one of

the best music production [universities].

JM: Oh, okay.

JA: He's doing fine. And, like I said, I got married this last August.

JM: Oh, did you? Good. What's your wife's name?

JA: Her name is Susan.

JM: Okay.

JA: And just by coincidence, she's a New Yorker. I didn't meet her in New York.

JM: Yes. Okay. All right.

JA: We're enjoying our life and still keeping—we still have a house out in California that we're keeping.

JM: Okay.

JA: You don't get back there as much as you thought you would. [Laughs]

JM: You still visit Little Rock every now and then.

JA: Yes, I've still got good friends. I just went fishing with David Terrell probably three months ago.

JM: Oh, did you really?

JA: Delaware River.

JM: Okay.

JA: So a lot of these friendships stay intact. I've got some college buddies. But when I go back to Arkansas, I spend almost all my time up in Izard County.

JM: Yes.

JA: This is near the White River. It's actually—got some friends that own some property and houses up on the Big Piney Creek in Izard County near Calico Rock.

JM: Yes. Okay.

JA: I guess the White River is up there, so I go fishing a few times a year.

JM: That's pretty country up in there. Yes, I know David's a big fisherman. I think he goes fishing with Jamie Cox and Ernie Dumas. They go out, I think, at times and go places and do stuff and everything.

JA: I saw in the paper, the *Democrat*[-*Gazette*], where Jamie was just named a judge.

JM: Yes, he was. He was named circuit chancery judge in Fort Smith. In fact, we're supposed to—we're still real close to Jamie and Patti, his wife, who probably worked at the *Democrat* the same time you were there on the copy desk.

JA: At the end of it, yes. She worked on the copy desk.

JM: Yes.

JA: Patti Cox. I saw her just four or five years ago—she and her daughter came out to San Francisco and we had a nice dinner.

JM: Yes. Yes, she told me about that. Yes, she said that . . .

JA: Do you live in Greenwood?

JM: Yes.

JA: Oh, do you?

JM: Yes. I live in Greenwood. That was my old hometown.

JA: Oh, is that right?

JM: Yes. When I retired from Oklahoma City [Oklahoma], well, we—my father had left us this land here, and we came back and built a home here. We moved back to Greenwood. But I still get to Little Rock quite a bit and Fayetteville, too—a lot of it on this project. I just like to visit both places, too. Well, Jim, it sounds

like—and I know, in fact, that you have done real well. It sounds like you have had a heck of a career.

JA: I have. I've been very fortunate. You know, you're—it's funny how life works out. You go in directions you don't anticipate.

JM: Yes.

JA: You know, I still write. I still write every day.

JM: Do you?

JA: I write for shareholders and CEOs, so it's a little bit different. But it's the skills that I learned at the *Democrat* that I still use every day.

JM: Yes. Well, that's great.

JA: It's truly amazing.

JM: Yes. Anything else that you remember about your time at the *Democrat* that . . . ?

JA: Well, it's just that it was very rewarding, and I guess what lasts over time is how you feel about an event in your life many years afterwards.

JM: Yes.

JA: You know, I still have fond, fond memories of working at the *Democrat* and with all the people there that I worked with. And, you know, the *Democrat*[-*Gazette*] is still there, so it's doing well.

JM: Yes.

JA: And, again, I think that's a testament to its connection that it always had with the readers.

JM: Yes.

JA: But it's just a—it's a fond memory.

JM: Yes. Well, great. As I explained to you, you'll get a chance to edit this transcript [] you can change what you want to, or if you think of something you want to add—if you thought about somebody or some incident—something you just want added—just type it up and stick it on the end of it and mail it back to them.

JA: I'll do it, Jerry.

JM: Okay, Jim. I really appreciated and enjoyed this interview. Now, hold on just a minute. I'm going to cut off here, but I want to talk to you just a second. So thanks a lot.

JA: Before you turn it off, let me just thank *you* for doing this project and taking the time to do all these interviews. I haven't had time to read them, but I—David Terrell said he was going to send me a link to all the transcripts. He hasn't done it yet, but I . . .

JM: Well, what you can do is just go to the Pryor Center—P-R-Y-O-R—Pryor Center—and they will have several links there. But you can tell which link you ought to get onto, and there's one link that's got links to all the interviews for the *Gazette* Project, which is about finished, and the *Democrat* Project. We've got about—the *Democrat* Project has about twenty-eight interviews online already, and we've got several more ready to go online.

JA: Oh, I'll read them.

JM: So you can read them. And that's—and it's been a lot of fun. I've touched base with a lot of people, including you, that it's been nice to get back in touch with and talk to about the old days. So this has been a lot of fun, and I want to thank

you.

JA: Okay. Thank you. Talk to you later.

[End of Interview]

[Transcribed by Cheri Pearce]

[Edited by Rebecca Willhite]