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Arkansas Democrat Project

Interview with

Wayne Cranford
Little Rock, Arkansas
4 June 2005

Interviewer: Phyllis Brandon

[This is an interview with Wayne Cranford, conducted by Phyllis Brandon, for the Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History's project on the *Arkansas Democrat*.]

Phyllis Brandon: Please tell me your name.

Wayne Cranford: Wayne Cranford.

PB: And where you were born?

WC: I was born at Bald Knob, Arkansas.

PB: And when?

WC: January 1, 1933.

PB: Where did you go to high school?

WC: At Bald Knob High School.

PB: What did you do in high school?

WC: Well, I didn't really study very much, but I was valedictorian. I did a lot. I was manager of the football team. I worked on the school annual [yearbook]. Just ordinary, small-town things.

PB: You didn't work on the newspaper?

WC: We didn't have one. I started one later. [Laughs] When I went back to teach there, I started, for the first time, the high school newspaper.

PB: How tall are you?

WC: Six-six. [Six feet, six inches]

PB: And when did you get to be so tall?

WC: I don't really remember. I think it was after I finished college. [Laughs]

PB: But you didn't get to be this tall when you were manager of the football team.

WC: Oh, no. I was only fourteen.

PB: So you graduated from Bald Knob High School. Then what did you do?

WC: I went to Harding [University, Searcy, Arkansas] for my first year because it was so close to home. [Laughs] Then I transferred that summer to ASTC at Conway.

PB: Arkansas State Teachers College at Conway.

WC: Right.

PB: Which is now the University of Central Arkansas [Conway].

WC: Right.

PB: So you went there three years? Did you graduate from there?

WC: I graduated from there, but I only went there two years.

PB: Oh. You graduated from college in three years—is that what you're telling me?

WC: Yes.

PB: What was your degree in?

WC: Journalism.

PB: Journalism.

WC: BSE [Bachelor's of Science in Education] which meant I had to do practice teaching. So, actually, I went two years and a couple of summers—one of which was after I had taught school one year—to do my practice teaching.

PB: I see. So after you finished that, what did you do? You went back to practice teach? Is that what you're saying?

WC: No, I went back to college to do my practice teaching one summer, and then graduated that summer.

PB: Yes.

WC: Officially graduated.

PB: Yes. Then what did you do?

WC: Then I went back to Bald Knob and taught for the second year.

PB: At where?

WC: At Bald Knob High School.

PB: Bald Knob High School.

WC: Yes. Then that summer . . .

PB: Is that when you started the newspaper?

WC: The first year.

PB: The first year. You did that the first year?

WC: Yes. The summer after my first year of teaching, I took over, from a friend, an ice cream parlor, and ran it for the summer. I came out even. No profit whatsoever. [Laughs]

PB: Even is a good thing sometimes.

WC: Then the second year, after I had taught during the school year, I got a job in Newport, Arkansas, as editor of the *Newport Daily Independent*.

PB: Was that a daily newspaper?

WC: Yes. That's what I did that summer. I was considering staying there a while, but I decided to go back and teach for the third year. Then, immediately after the third year, I came to Little Rock.

PB: Moved to Little Rock.

WC: Yes. Fifty years ago this year.

PB: This spring. Yes. So what made you come to Little Rock?

WC: I couldn't afford to teach. I felt like there were more opportunities in Little Rock.

PB: But did you get a job?

WC: Yes.

PB: Doing what?

WC: At the *Arkansas Democrat*. Foolishly, I went through an employment agency. I found out later [laughs], of course, that wasn't necessary. The employment man—I think his name was Runyan—they don't even have employment agencies anymore, do they?

PB: Yes.

WC: Do they?

PB: Yes.

WC: But I think this guy, Mr. Runyan, called. I remember he called Mr. Ed Liske on the phone, sent me down there, and Mr. Liske interviewed me, and I started to work the next day.

PB: For how much?

WC: Oh, I don't remember. Very little. I really don't remember.

PB: Forty or fifty dollars a week?

WC: Something like that. Yes. By the week. Yes.

PB: Did they pay you in cash?

WC: Yes. You went down to an office on the first floor, and a lady down there standing outside paid you in a little cash envelope.

PB: So you were a reporter.

WC: Yes, I was a reporter. My first beat was police reporter.

PB: In those days, the *Democrat* hours were—you went to work . . .

WC: Early in the morning.

PB: Seven-thirty in the morning.

WC: Yes. As I said, my first assignment was police reporter. The person who had done that before was C. C. Allard, who, at one time, had been editor of the Sunday magazine. But he was supposed to train me in [laughs] how to be a reporter. I did this police reporter beat, and then later the city hall beat, too. In fact, Bud Lemke was the city hall reporter most of the time that I was the police reporter. And being a police reporter was good because it helped me to learn my way all around Little Rock immediately. I had just moved here, and I learned all the shortcuts and all the through streets, and where other things were by running around following police report things. [Laughs]

PB: So how long were you at the *Democrat*?

WC: Well, let me think—a little over a year, I think. After I was the police reporter, I was promoted to assistant state editor. A young man named Rod Powers was the

state editor, and we all sat around the big desk with the city editor, who was Marcus George. I mostly wrote obituaries that were called in from all over the state, but occasionally there'd be another story. So I was assistant state editor.

PB: How did you feel about the quality of the newspaper during that time?

WC: Well, I had always read it from childhood, so I was pretty impressed. I thought it was just about as good a newspaper as any, anywhere.

PB: It came out in the afternoon.

WC: It came out in the afternoon. We had always read the *Gazette* in the morning and the *Democrat* in the afternoon. I saw certain advantages of having an afternoon newspaper. I always loved the way that in Little Rock they would sell the *Democrat* on the streets, and sometimes they'd even have special editions.

Anyway, while I was assistant state editor, Bob McCord had already started a rather new Sunday magazine, and hired me as a writer for the Sunday magazine.

In a very, very small room, Bob McCord, Roberta Martin, a young woman named Julia—I believe her last name was Naylor—and I had a desk, and put out what we thought was the best Sunday magazine that we had ever seen, or have seen since.

Will Counts was the photographer. He and I had gone to college together. We were fraternity brothers. He had come to work for the *Democrat* by that time.

PB: And he was what?

WC: A photographer. He became really quite well-known as a photojournalist and photographer on a national basis. But he worked with us on the Sunday magazine and did some other photography for the city desk, so he was in there a lot in this

little bitty room.

PB: Was it warm in that room in the summer?

WC: Oh, quite warm. Quite warm.

PB: There was no air-conditioning . . .

WC: We could raise the windows, though.

PB: [Laughs] There was no air-conditioning.

WC: No air-conditioning. No, no. [Laughs] None at all.

PB: Okay. But something else beckoned you to go to another job.

WC: Right. I really enjoyed working at the Sunday magazine, and I learned a *lot* from Bob McCord. Well, I learned a lot while I was working at the *Democrat* from Marcus George and others, but I really learned a lot from Bob McCord. So, suddenly, I was offered a job as director of public relations for the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce. Bob promised me that if I wanted to take that job, I could still do freelance stories for the magazine, which I did continue to do for a couple of years—three or four, maybe. Will Counts, by that time, had gone on to Indiana to get his master's degree in photojournalism, and later, I think, he got his doctorate. Rodney Worthington became the photographer who worked with me on the stories. Among the stories were—for example, one of our first ones was going to Piggott, Arkansas, where they were filming [the motion picture] *A Face in the Crowd* [1957]. It was Lee Remick's first movie. She was eighteen years old. The director was Elia Kazan. It was a great experience. We did a fabulous feature in Pangburn, Arkansas, on a boy scout who had saved another kid's life,

and got the Medal of Honor from the Boy Scouts of America. Things like that.

PB: So you went on, though, to the Chamber. What were you doing over there? You were writing stories there, too?

WC: Oh, yes. I was director of public relations, which meant that I put out all the communications for the Chamber—the membership bulletin, which I think was monthly, and stories, as you said—events. And I got to know all the community leaders in Little Rock.

PB: Where was the Chamber of Commerce office located?

WC: At 115 West Sixth, right next door to Schrader Photographers, which was *really* prestigious at that time.

PB: How long were you at the Chamber?

WC: And across the street from the Lafayette Hotel, where my friends at the Chamber and I would go to lunch every day and have a bowl of vegetable soup and cornbread. Our total check each would be something like fifteen cents. [Laughs]

PB: What was that year?

WC: That was 1956.

PB: 1956.

WC: Yes.

PB: So you stayed at the Chamber learning the city some more and the people of the city.

WC: Yes—the community leaders. I got to be friends with Bill Bowen and people like that. Everett Tucker was the director of industrial development—all the

community leaders. Brick Lile . . .

PB: Because they were all members of the Chamber of Commerce.

WC: And officers. Officers, directors, and committee chairmen. They were in this group of real leaders in the community.

PB: Later, or at that time?

WC: Both—then and later, too. But I think in probably early 1957—yes, early 1957—I was offered a job at the *Gazette* as a copy editor. When I told Mr. Liske that I was leaving, he didn't really like it—no, no that wasn't Mr. Liske. Mr. Liske didn't like it when I was going to the Chamber of Commerce. At the Chamber of Commerce they were very nice, and knew that I would be a good friend to the Chamber at the *Gazette*. I really enjoyed working as a copy editor—and I started working at the *Gazette* at night while I was still working during the day at the Chamber of Commerce. But this was only for about two weeks because when I accepted the job at the *Gazette*, it was with the understanding that I could continue with my plans to go to New York on a little vacation.

PB: Quote, unquote.

WC: Yes—after those two weeks, working at night. So, as I said, I really, really enjoyed working at that copy desk writing headlines and editing copy and everything. But at the end of the two weeks, I went on to New York with some friends—my first trip to New York. While I was there in New York, I got a call from Marcus George, who had a friend who had an advertising agency who wanted to hire me, sight unseen, on Marcus's recommendation. The salary was

so phenomenal compared to what I'd been making at the *Democrat* and the *Gazette* and the Chamber of Commerce, I said, "Okay!" [Laughs] After my vacation in New York, I came back and . . .

PB: So, the vacation was to attend something, wasn't it? Or that's too early.

WC: No, it was just . . .

PB: Okay, that was later.

WC: Yes. Just some college friends seeing New York for the first time. Maybe a couple of plays, but just seeing New York.

PB: Yes.

WC: So I accepted the job over the phone [laughs] talking to Marcus, and I came back and started to work for Tom Hockersmith. I thoroughly enjoyed that, and learned a lot again. [Laughs] I learned a great deal. I remember that was during the 1957 [integration] crisis at [Little Rock] Central High [School]. A lot of the people who were with television networks were here covering that event. They'd sometimes come up to our offices for different reasons, and come for information about [Orval] Faubus.

PB: Now, what do you mean, information about Faubus?

WC: Well, Hockersmith had done the advertising for his campaign and after he became governor—did certain public relations things.

PB: Was he consulted during this school crisis?

WC: Oh, yes.

PB: And what was his place in the community, the Hockersmith Agency?

WC: Well, Tom had come back here from Yale [University] and started an advertising agency. He pretty quickly got some *very* important accounts with the state—what was called Publicity and Parks at that time. It's now Parks and Tourism. The Arkansas Industrial Development Commission, which had just been begun by Faubus with Winthrop Rockefeller as chairman—Oaklawn Jockey Club—we had some really good, fun, interesting accounts. I was pretty much the only copywriter, but also an account executive.

PB: And making more money than you thought was ever possible.

WC: Oh, yes. That's when I bought a [Ford] Thunderbird—that year they first came out. It was a navy blue convertible. Oh, it was gorgeous. I was living the life of a bachelor in the “big city.”

PB: So what was next? There was another step coming.

WC: Yes. Well, the next step . . .

PB: Hockersmith hired somebody else?

WC: Yes, at my insistence, Tom hired a young art director named Jim Johnson, who was graduating from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. He had won a poster contest sponsored by AIDC, the Arkansas Industrial Development Commission, and Parks and Tourism, for posters for Arkansas. He had won first place—even winning over his art teacher's entry. I had met him, and I thought that we needed another art director. We had one art director, but I persuaded Tom to hire this young man, Jim Johnson, as an art director. By that time, we had moved from the old Pyramid building to what was called the Adkins building,

next door to the *Democrat*. Do you know the building I mean?

PB: Yes.

WC: I think it's the one where Walter's office is.

PB: Walter Hussman's [Jr.] office is now located there. Yes.

WC: We hired an interior designer, and had some really "swish" offices. I worked there, then, for about four years. Finally, I decided that Jim and I could start our own agency. It was not too easy to convince him [laughs] to leave a good job and take a chance. We did, and we started Cranford Johnson, Inc., in October of 1961.

PB: And where were your offices?

WC: They were at Third and Center in what was called the Southern Equitable building.

PB: How did Tom Hockersmith take that?

WC: Well, I never did really talk with him about it after resigning. [Laughs]

PB: He spent a lot of time away from the agency, right?

WC: Yes.

PB: He was a big sailor, and he was gone a lot.

WC: Yes, he was gone quite a lot. And that's one reason that we left, because we were . . .

PB: Doing all the work. Right?

WC: Pretty much, yes. But Tom was a real gentleman at all times, and if I had run into and talked with him, I'm sure he would have been very nice. I mean that.

PB: So you went over there. Did you have any accounts, people to represent?

WC: Well, yes! We had three accounts. At that time, you had to have three accounts to be recognized by the media as an advertising agency.

PB: All right. What were those three accounts?

WC: Our accounts were Southern Equitable Life Insurance Company, in whose building we were, Irma Dumas Dress Shop in North Little Rock's Park Hill, and Garnette Mullis, which was a ladies dress shop in Pine Bluff. Those were our three qualifying accounts.

PB: Had you met Frances [Anderson?] at this point?

WC: No.

PB: No. Okay. All right. How did it go those first years at the agency? You were placing ads in both the *Gazette* and the *Democrat*. . . .

WC: Oh, yes.

PB: . . . for your clients. And did you get some more clients?

WC: Yes. The first year we were in business—no, no about a year after we had been in business—just struggling—we were successful in getting the First National Bank account.

PB: Who was president of First National then?

WC: Finley Vinson. And Mr. J. V. Satterfield was still chairman of the board.

PB: J. V. Satterfield.

WC: J. V. Satterfield. That's right. We won that account.

PB: With competitive presentations, right?

WC: I don't remember. I don't think so. I think we just made a presentation, and were hired. I don't remember any competitive presentations on that.

PB: Okay.

WC: But it was a pretty high-profile account, and . . .

PB: A very *active* account, too.

WC: Oh, yes. We had the front page of the business section of the *Gazette* every Sunday.

PB: Front page—you mean an ad on the front page that was, what?

WC: Yes, a quarter-page ad on the front page of the business section of the *Gazette*—a very high-profile place to be. Also, we started using outdoor [billboards] creatively for the first time around here.

PB: With Jim Johnson and Dick Lankford designing the posters for the billboards.

WC: One of the more notable ones was “Save like the Dickens,” which won a national Obie Award that year. Anyway, right after that, because of, I think, the First National Bank, and certain people being on its board, like Pat Mehaffy, I got a call from Judge Mehaffy asking if we would be interested in talking with Senator [J. William] Fulbright about his campaign which was coming up in 1962. I said yes, so he said, “Well, what you've got to do is go out—I want you to go meet Bill Darby at the National Old Line building,” which was a beautiful, new building across the street from the state capitol. So I did that. I had an interview with him, and then he sent me to see Jack Pickens. Neither of these men, really, I'd ever met. So he sent me to see Jack Pickens, whose offices were in the

Gazette building. It was Jack Pickens, I believe, who said, “Okay, you’ve got the account. Senator [James William] and Mrs. Fulbright are going to be in town next week. I want you to meet them.” So I did, and we got started working immediately. He won that election easily.

PB: Who was his opponent?

WC: I don’t remember. I’d have to look that up, but it was probably someone not very well-known.

PB: Yes, someone who just sort of came out of the woodwork for that.

WC: Yes. Then, right after that, some of my friends in the Jaycees . . .

PB: Junior Chamber of Commerce.

WC: Junior Chamber of Commerce, which, now, I think, is officially named Jaycees, hired us to produce the national Ten Outstanding Young Men program, which was going to be in Little Rock for the first time ever and the last time, I think. So we did do that. It was pretty high-profile, too, as was Senator Fulbright’s campaign. [Laughs] We were really lucky.

PB: And you were placing media in both newspapers regularly?

WC: Yes.

PB: Did you have good relations with the *Democrat* and the *Gazette*?

WC: Oh, yes. At that time, any client—we would buy the same size ad in both newspapers.

PB: Were they the same price?

WC: Pretty much, as I recall.

PB: Pretty much.

WC: The *Gazette* might have been a little bit higher, but not much.

PB: Yes. So then you moved through the 1960s, adding accounts and growing the agency.

WC: Yes.

PB: And watching the *Democrat* and the *Gazette* from the sidelines.

WC: Yes.

PB: You did the same thing in the 1970s, right?

WC: Right.

PB: You were handling more political accounts?

WC: Right.

PB: Until, all of a sudden, you said, “We’re not going to handle anymore.”

WC: Yes.

PB: Any more candidates, right?

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[Beginning of Tape 1, Side 2]

WC: We handled issues, but no more candidates. This was eventually—this was maybe fifteen or twenty years later.

PB: Right. Did you handle Fulbright’s losing campaign?

WC: Yes.

PB: To Dale Bumpers.

WC: Yes. We handled three campaigns for Senator Fulbright.

PB: Yes.

WC: We handled one or two for [U.S. Representative] Wilbur Mills.

PB: Yes.

WC: One for Faubus, even.

PB: Just one?

WC: Yes, after we'd left Hockersmith. Yes, just one. And then—well, when he [Faubus] ran and Bumpers was elected—we represented Hays McClerkin, who was Speaker of the House that year [campaigning for governor]. A lot of other interesting accounts, too. We represented Oren Harris for Congress. Oh, the man from the Pine Bluff area—Congressman W. F. Norrell. And then when he died, we represented his wife, Catherine Norrell, and became good friends with her, and *all* these people.

PB: What was your favorite account?

WC: Favorite account to work on? I think probably Middle South Utilities.

PB: Oh, really?

WC: Which we got, by the way, in competitive presentations with New Orleans agencies and others, before we got the Arkansas Power and Light account. By that time, we had opened an office in Memphis. We had a big bank in Memphis . . .

PB: National Bank of Commerce?

WC: Yes—because, primarily, of Wayne Pyeatt, whom I'd worked with at First National Bank here. He had become president of National Bank of Commerce in

Memphis. So we had an office in Memphis for ten years. It was in the 100 North Main building, and I remember looking out the window one day, and Martin Luther King [Jr.] was leading the garbage workers up to city hall.

PB: The strike. Yes.

WC: Then we had an office in New Orleans for about four years. Later we had an office in Shreveport [Louisiana]. And we had an office at one time in Raleigh, North Carolina. We have an office in northwest Arkansas now.

PB: Okay, let's talk about the newspapers.

WC: Yes.

PB: At a point, we had, all of a sudden, a newspaper war.

WC: Yes.

PB: We have Hugh Patterson and the *Gazette* tooth and toenail with Walter Hussman [Jr.] at the *Democrat*. Now, the *Democrat* had led off with that by switching from an afternoon newspaper to a morning paper.

WC: Yes. By the way, just prior to that, though, Bob McCord had become editor of the *Democrat* . . .

PB: Right.

WC: . . . after Walter Hussman [Jr.] had bought it.

PB: Yes. And Walter bought the newspaper from . . .

WC: Stanley Berry and Marcus George.

PB: Marcus George, after their uncle, [K.] August Engel, had died.

WC: Engel. Yes. Right.

PB: And he left them the paper. But the paper was sinking.

WC: Right. But I remember Mr. Engel in his office downstairs, as well as Ed Liske in his office. All those old-timers.

PB: And they were old, old-timers. [Laughter]

WC: They were. Yes.

PB: Yes, right, as far as we were concerned. [Laughter]

WC: Yes. I wonder if they were as old as we thought they were! [Laughs]

PB: Yes. They were probably as old as we are now.

WC: Yes.

PB: How did that affect the agency in placing advertisements?

WC: Well, before the newspaper war started . . .

PB: Before the *Democrat* became a morning paper.

WC: Yes, that's right. We had been hired by the *Arkansas Gazette*. We were their agency. We did institutional ads for them, primarily.

PB: Billboards?

WC: Yes, some, and television. By that time, everybody was using television. By the way, we created the first local color television ad in Arkansas.

PB: For . . .?

WC: It was for First National Bank. But the *Gazette* had hired us to be their agency, and we were for a number of years, even after Gannett had come in.

PB: Acquired the *Gazette*.

WC: Yes. But your question, "How did that affect . . .?"

PB: Placing advertising.

WC: “. . .placing advertising?” Not at all. We still used the *Democrat* pretty much equally as the *Gazette*. And in some cases, some clients used the *Democrat* exclusively. Some used the *Gazette* exclusively, too. [Laughs]

PB: Yes. What about the rates? Did you find that the rates varied from client to client, and from . . .?

WC: Well, yes. If a client would authorize us to sign a contract for using so many inches during a certain period of time, they got a better rate.

PB: Especially in the *Democrat*. Walter Hussman was trying to sell the advertising.

WC: Yes. And I understand that Dillard’s [Department Store] really got a good deal, but we didn’t represent them. But during the newspaper war, so to speak, even though we worked for the *Gazette*, we maintained, I thought, a very good relationship with the *Democrat* as an advertiser.

PB: And you dealt with whom at the *Democrat* during that time?

WC: Different advertising representatives. And by that time, we had established a really active public relations department, and they dealt with, of course, the . . .

PB: Businessmen?

WC: No, the reporters and editors. They had very good relationships with them.

PB: I heard it—Okay. Where were we? We were talking about clients at the agency you had established. You had a multimillion-dollar agency by this point, right? You were barreling.

WC: Right. We were billing about \$70 million a year.

PB: And had how many employees?

WC: Around a hundred.

PB: And you had good relations with both papers?

WC: I believe so. Yes.

PB: Yes. With Hugh Patterson and Walter Hussman [Jr.] both?

WC: Yes. Walter and Ben were more personal friends—social friends, and were well aware that our company worked for the *Gazette*.

PB: But did Hugh Patterson take your advice during those days?

WC: No. Certainly not always. And a lot of that came out. It's no secret because it came out during the trial. I've forgotten now who filed a suit against whom.

PB: The *Gazette* filed [an antitrust lawsuit] against the *Democrat*.

WC: So in the course of—what they call discovery . . .

PB: A lot came out?

WC: It was obvious, too. In fact, Walter Hussman [Jr.] told me one time that he had read some of the memos written giving advice to Hugh that he obviously didn't follow [laughs], that he should have.

PB: Yes. Were you at the trial?

WC: I think I went one day, just once.

PB: You weren't there for the verdict?

WC: No.

PB: What was your position at the sale of the *Gazette* to Gannett?

WC: We still worked for the *Gazette*. We worked with the new publisher and the new

director of promotion.

PB: They [Gannett] brought in all their own people at the top level.

WC: Oh, yes. Some of the people they brought in were totally incompetent.

PB: How did you feel about the make-up of the front page for Gannett? Do you have any memories or thoughts about that?

WC: No. I remember they changed the numbers of columns or the widths of the columns, but we weren't involved in anything like that.

PB: Did they have a lot of feature stories on the front page?

WC: Yes, but we were just involved in promotions and . . .

PB: Trying to save them.

WC: Institutional ads and things like that.

PB: Yes.

WC: The free want-ads became a very important step, in retrospect.

PB: For the *Democrat* and Walter Hussman [Jr.].

WC: Yes.

PB: And that is one of the things the *Gazette* sued Hussman for.

WC: Right.

PB: You thought that was what?

WC: I thought it was smart. It was one of the turning points—one of the most important steps that was taken.

PB: And, of course, the problem with Dillard's—are you . . . ?

WC: I never was really familiar with that. We made presentations to Dillard's from

time to time for their “image advertising.” It had nothing to do with the daily local newspaper ads. So we really weren’t familiar with the Dillard’s situation between the *Democrat* and the *Gazette*.

PB: Okay. So it wasn’t too long after that, that the war was over, and this became a one-newspaper town.

WC: Yes.

PB: And you’ve got an agency that has half as many ads to place, right?

WC: Well, our billings were going up at the time. [Laughs] And they kept going up. We just sought out other media, I guess. And by that time, television had become a much more powerful force, and a much more expensive thing. Then, gradually, the newspaper rates went up. [Laughs]

PB: Considerably.

WC: Considerably, and justified.

PB: Yes. So at what point did you find Frances?

WC: Oh! Coincidentally, we were introduced by one of our first clients, Garnette Mullis.

PB: In Pine Bluff.

WC: In Pine Bluff. She introduced me to Frances [Anderson], who was home for the summer from her sophomore year at [Randolph-Macon Woman’s College]. A few years later, we were married.

PB: You had three sons.

WC: Yes.

PB: And now you have two sons in the advertising business.

WC: Well, really, all three of them are. [Jay, Ross, and Chris]

PB: Yes.

WC: My oldest son, Jay, is creative director for another advertising agency, Stone Ward. Our middle son, Ross, is Director of Strategic Planning at Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods. And our youngest son, Chris, is a filmmaker who does work for both those agencies and a lot of other companies, including some producers in Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago.

PB: And after the agency had gotten all these employees and everything, at a point, you decided to retire.

WC: Right.

PB: What year was that?

WC: That was 1993. I was sixty, and we had merged with the Woods brothers, [Wayne and Shelby Woods]. That was going so well, and it was just financially possible to retire a little early, so I did. [President] Bill Clinton appointed me chairman of the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts, which is part of the Kennedy Center. I had quite a bit of work to do there, which really kept me busy.

PB: Did you work in Clinton's campaign?

WC: Oh, yes. We did a lot of—I say “stuff” for the 1992 [presidential] campaign. Of course, the media consultants in New York did the television spots that ran nationally. We did a lot of fund-raising materials, promotions and activities. We even did some ads in New Hampshire before he was the nominee. So after it was

all over, we had really done quite a lot of work for the 1992 campaign. And we did the inauguration program, which was a very demanding and prestigious thing to do. [Laughs]

PB: Difficult, last-minute things to do.

WC: Yes.

PB: Clinton is known for his last-minute stuff. [Laughs]

WC: But after he approved it, Hillary [Rodham Clinton] had to approve it. [Laughs] But it turned out all right. And we did some other things after they were in the White House, from time to time. Our agency named Americorps, for example.

PB: Really? And Citicorp?

WC: Well, no, Americorps. And we started—well, Skip Rutherford was on our staff, so we were very much involved in the activities of the Clinton [Presidential] Library—first, getting it located in Little Rock. Second, fund-raising, and next, preparing for the grand opening, which was a big success. Except for the rain. And they've already passed in two or three months the total projected number of visitors for the whole first year.

PB: Yes. So how do you feel that the newspaper—the only newspaper in town—is doing?

WC: I'm very proud of the *Democrat-Gazette*. I sincerely feel like we have as good a newspaper as any city, certainly any city our size, in the country. And a better quality [newspaper] than in many of the cities larger than we are—the larger markets. Now, we are not a *New York Times* or a *Washington Post* or a *Los*

Angeles Times, but our paper is pretty good—I'm proud of it.

PB: Yes. What have I not asked you?

WC: About some of the people I remember at the *Democrat*.

PB: Okay.

WC: I mean, there were some characters. C. C. Allard was a real character. [Laughs]

His wife was an author, and he at one time had been *very* prominent as a journalist in Arkansas.

PB: What was his wife's name? Do you remember that?

WC: No, do you?

PB: No, I don't

WC: But they were friends with Charlie Mae Simon and John Gould Fletcher, and all those people. And I learned a *lot* from so many of the people I met when I first came to Little Rock at the *Arkansas Democrat*. Especially Bob McCord.

PB: You had dinner with him last night. How was that?

WC: Oh, it was great. We had a wonderful visit.

PB: What did you talk about?

WC: A lot about the old times. [Laughs] He and I were both very devoted to Will Counts, who came *that* close to winning a Pulitzer Prize . . .

PB: And should have won a Pulitzer Prize.

WC: . . . for his coverage of the 1957 . . .

PB: Crisis.

WC: . . . [integration] crisis at Central High.

PB: Right.

WC: So we always talk about the old days and the people and what's happening now.

PB: Karr Shannon. Do you remember Karr Shannon?

WC: Vaguely, I do. He was a columnist at the time, and I remember seeing him a lot. I didn't really get to know him, but I do remember . . .

PB: Okay. And John Robert Starr, and your reaction to him.

WC: John Robert Starr was with the Associated Press, which had—and Bob told me this last night—that at that time, the newspapers had to furnish free space for the Associated Press in their building. The *Democrat* during the day, and the *Gazette* during the night. Did you know that?

PB: No, I didn't know that.

WC: They were forced to furnish this space.

PB: Well, it was a requirement of their membership, probably.

WC: Yes. That's right. To be a member of the Associated Press, the newspaper had to furnish office space for their people. Bob Starr was with the Associated Press, and that's how I first got to know him. I always got along fine with Bob Starr, even before he became [the *Democrat's* managing editor]. I mean, even after he became John Robert Starr [laughter]. He was very capable.

PB: Do you consider yourself a newspaper person, rather than a television or whatever person?

WC: Oh, yes. Sure.

PB: Do you think the Internet is going to replace newspapers?

WC: No. I hope not.

PB: Do you read any newspapers on the Internet?

WC: Yes.

PB: What do you read?

WC: I read a lot of things from *The New York Times*, mostly. A few from *The Washington Post*, but mostly *The New York Times*.

PB: Yes. Okay. What else did I not ask you that you've thought about?

WC: Well, the general atmosphere around the *Arkansas Democrat* during the 1950s. Do you remember we all usually had lunch at Walgreen's, right next door? It was at Fifth and Main, which was the heart of Arkansas at the time. It was just a great place to be, especially for a kid from Bald Knob. [Laughs] I really mean that.

PB: All right.

WC: And I did get to work for the *Democrat* several years in Atlantic City covering the Miss America Pageant. I forgot about that! [Laughter]

PB: In other words, when you met Frances, or after you'd just met her, you were covering her for the *Democrat*?

WC: Right. And only for the *Democrat*. I never did it for the *Gazette*. This was years after I'd left both of them.

PB: Yes.

WC: But I covered the Miss America Pageant for the *Democrat* with a story every day.

PB: Really?

WC: Yes. Every day during the week. The year that Frances became first runner-up,

of course, was the best series of stories that I did.

PB: Right.

WC: But the next year she went back as part of the Court of Honor, and I didn't go.

We were engaged by that time, and I stayed here. She wrote some stories for the *Democrat*, with a little help. [Laughs] She would call me with some notes, then I would write it, and it carried her byline.

PB: Oh, that's fun. That's fun. What about Bill Shelton? Did you know him?

WC: Not well at all. I certainly knew him and . . .

PB: Who did you deal with at the *Gazette*?

WC: At what period?

PB: Well, both periods—when you worked there, and then when you placed ads.

WC: When I worked there, it was strictly with A. R. Nelson—totally. And when I had to come back home from New York and tell him that I had accepted another job [laughs] while I was in New York, Mr. Nelson didn't like it at all.

PB: Well, that's very complimentary, though, because, you know, they might have said, "Oh, we're glad you're leaving!" But, instead, they . . .

WC: No, he was very gruff after I told him I had accepted the advertising agency job. But I didn't know Bill Shelton that well. You would have to call on him sometimes on behalf of a client, and he was always very professional.

[End of Tape 1, Side 2]

[End of Interview]

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