

*Gazette* Project

Interview with

Brenda Tirey  
Little Rock, Arkansas  
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Interviewer: Ernest Dumas

Ernest Dumas: This is Ernie Dumas, and I am at the home of Brenda Tirey, T-I-R-E-Y. And Brenda was a *Gazette* reporter for quite a number of years and is now – what is your title now with the Circuit Court?

BT: I am now an intake officer for the 9<sup>th</sup> Division Probate Court. I work for Judge Mary McGowan on involuntary commitments for treatment of mental illness and drug and alcohol addiction.

ED: Brenda, one thing I need to do before we go any further is get your acknowledgment that you understand that this interview is being taped and will be transcribed and the transcript, eventually, will be part of the University of Arkansas archives and will be available for scholarly research or whatever. It will be a public document, eventually, and you understand that and acquiesce in that.

BT: Yes, I understand.

ED: Okay. Brenda if you could – let's start with a chronology of your life. If you could go back to where and when you were born and your parents and something about your early life.

BT: I was born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on July 7, 1939. My parents lived in Oklahoma City only a few months after that. I lived in different towns in

Oklahoma until I was seven. I lived in Sayre, Ada, and Okmulgee.

ED: Sayre, is that S-A-Y-R-E?

BT: S-A-Y-R-E, down near the Texas panhandle in southwestern Oklahoma, and Ada and Okmulgee, which are in sort of east central Oklahoma.

ED: Okmulgee, O-K-M-U-L-G-E-E. And what were your parents' names?

BT: My mother was Fanny Byrd Fuller Tirey, and my father was Thomas Edgar Tirey. My mother was a high school English teacher, and she taught – most of the time that I knew her. And my father mostly worked as a pharmacist, but not as a college-trained pharmacist—but someone who learned on the job. He also worked on off-shore oil rigs, and he worked with for the Winthrop drug company.

ED: Did you grow up in Oklahoma?

BT: I went through the first grade in Okmulgee, and then we moved to Fort Smith, Arkansas, the summer before I entered the second grade. I went all through public schools in Fort Smith from second grade on, and I went to the junior college there for two years.

ED: Did your mother teach at Fort Smith?

BT: She taught 11<sup>th</sup> grade English at the high school in Fort Smith.

ED: Were you in classes with your mother?

BT: No, I wasn't in class with her. When I was in Fort Smith, there was a white high school and a black high school, Fort Smith and Lincoln, so I was in the same school that she taught in, but not in the classroom.

ED: Was that on purpose? I mean, was that by arrangement, that you didn't take her

class?

BT: Well, probably.

ED: She probably arranged that.

BT: I don't know that anyone requested it, but I imagine the people who did the scheduling knew it would be not a good policy to put me her class.

ED: Didn't have any experiences like Mike Trimble when he was in high school with his mother at Bauxite?

BT: His mother was a teacher? No.

ED: She was his English teacher. Don't have any of those kind of stories to tell?

BT: No, no. I think I was probably not always a joy to Mother. I was frequently late for school.

ED: Well, did you get an interest in journalism in high school?

BT: I did. Well, actually, maybe before high school. When I was in grade school junior high, we lived right across the street from a family that had five daughters who were all much older than I was, and one of them was a reporter for the Fort Smith paper. And, always, I thought she was having great fun. She was always going off on adventures with the sheriff, chasing fugitives down the river bank, and things like that. And I thought, "Well, that looks like an exciting life."

ED: That would have been the *Fort Smith Southwest American*?

BT: She worked for the *Southwest American* newspaper in Fort Smith. Her name was Mary Lou Jones. She married someone from Boston – who was at Fort Chaffee and moved to Boston – and never, as far as I know, wrote for a newspaper again

after Fort Smith. Then in junior high school, I actually wrote articles for the student paper. In high school, I took journalism for two years and was on the staff of the school paper. We had a three-person editorial board, and I was one of the three.

ED: You weren't the editor of the paper there?

BT: No, that was the editorship of the paper.

ED: The editorial board?

BT: Yes.

ED: They didn't have a single editor, but just the editorial review?

BT: They didn't have a single editor in my senior year, just an editorial board. But no, I was not the editor.

ED: Well, did you decide then that this was going to be your career?

BT: Well, not exactly then. I always had said that that would be a fairly good career choice, when I told my father that I was thinking of that, he said, well, he knew a man once who was a newspaper reporter, but now he was servicing cigarette machines." [Laughs] He didn't think there was much future in being a reporter.

ED: And he was right. [Laughter]

BT: Working for a newspaper, he said, that guy didn't come to any good at all, but I decided that I actually wanted to see more of the world than I thought I could by being a journalist. I wanted to be a diplomat or work overseas for the government or get some sort of job that would carry me overseas, so I went to American University. The last two years of college, I went to American University to

major in international relations.

ED: Before you went to American University, you went to Fort Smith . . .

BT: Fort Smith Junior College, for two years.

ED: Fort Smith Junior College.

BT: It later was called Westark Community College, and now University of Arkansas Fort Smith.

ED: Then after two years there . . .

BT: Went to American University.

ED: You transferred to American University. Why did you choose American University? Is that because of their international relations program?

BT: Because of their international studies school. I was active in a Methodist church then – it is a Methodist affiliated school – and I just read about this school of international studies and I got a national Methodist scholarship to go there, which I then promptly lost by not keeping my B-grade average, by just kind of going to Washington and doing all the stuff to do there and not concentrating on school.

ED: You cut a lot of classes?

BT: Well, I didn't do a lot of studying. I didn't do as much studying as it would have behooved me to do, but I learned quite a lot, by just hanging out, doing different things. You had to keep a certain grade average to stay in the school of international studies, also. It was in 1959-1961 that I was in school there, but actually my degree was awarded in 1962. The school said for the men in this School of International Service that there were all these careers, and the women

could be secretaries or clerks in embassies, or something like that. It was like a 1950s career model for the future and that killed that.

ED: Yes.

BT: So, then, I got a dual major in international relations and organizations and journalism or something like a minor in journalism. I took some journalism courses. They created that kind of major for me. Because I got there near the end of my college career, they realized that I did not have the kind of courses I needed, having transferred, of course, from junior college with no plan of classes . . .

ED: No major [            ].

BT: I had no plan of classes and courses in junior college. There was no counseling. You just kind of went to school, picked the teachers and classes you liked. They didn't really have a counseling program. We took what we wanted to. Most of the kids went on to the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville or to Arkansas Tech or somewhere like that, which was fairly close. So I didn't have the requirements for any kind of degree that they offered at American University, so I had to go to summer school and get some requirements, some extra courses to graduate. Then I took all these government job tests and was offered a fairly low-level job at the Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] and so I decided that maybe I could go overseas if I worked for them. I had to wait for a security clearance, so I came home to Fort Smith and worked for the *Fort Smith Times Record*. In high school I had worked for the Fort Smith newspaper, taking football scores on Friday

nights, writing high school football games, because they needed a high school journalist to do that. So I came back, and I got a job as a reporter for the Fort Smith paper right after I got out of college, right after I had finished all my summer school classes.

ED: Had you worked at the CIA while you were in school?

BT: No.

ED: This is afterwards?

BT: Yes.

ED: You went to work for the CIA after the Fort Smith?

BT: Yes. I took tests my senior year of college for all these government jobs, and that was the only one that I got. I didn't pass the foreign service test, but I did pass for a fairly low-level job at the CIA but it took a while to get a security clearance. While I was waiting, I came and worked at the Fort Smith paper about ten months.

ED: Okay.

BT: Then I got the job. I went back to Washington. I hated the job I had at CIA. Didn't stay long.

ED: This is in D.C. that you had the job?

BT: Well, at the headquarters. The CIA headquarters were in Langley, Virginia, right outside Washington.

ED: Virginia.

BT: So I worked there for about ten or eleven months, and then I got a job for a

lobbyist. The girlfriend of a friend of mine had worked for this fellow who was a lobbyist, an old Chicago newspaper man named John Redding.

ED: R-E-D-D-I-N-G.

BT: Yes. He was a lobbyist for the Virgin Islands legislature. He was their man in Washington and for various other groups, the National Council for Industrial Peace, which was a labor support organization that worked against right-to-work laws, to abolish right-to-work laws. It probably doesn't exist anymore.

ED: It may still be.

BT: But those were his two big clients. He also was co-writing a bunch of books with congressmen who were considering themselves part of the "New Frontier." It was John Kennedy's first term in office, and he brought in the "New Frontier," and there were some congressmen, you know, who wrote books about their part in the Kennedy programs. Mr. Redding also had done publicity for a visit by the king of Afghanistan who obviously they don't have that anymore in Afghanistan. Anyway, Mr. Redding was an interesting old guy, and he was going to get me a job as the Washington correspondent for some Virgin Islands newspaper that was owned by Reynolds Metal Company, which has a big operation on one of the Virgin Islands. But then this reporter for the *San Juan Star* [Puerto Rico], who had used Mr. Redding as a good source, got mad when he found out about it and said that he would prevent me from ever getting White House press credentials because of my association with Mr. Redding. It turned out to be really kind of messy, and I couldn't get the job that I really wanted. I was just kind of working

at this PR office as an office person. So then I decided it was lots more fun working for a newspaper than any of these things I was doing in Washington. I had a friend, a man I had worked with in Fort Smith. We agreed that the Fort Smith newspaper was pretty bad, that we hadn't liked working there. I was a reporter, but I didn't have a car, so I had to do all my reporting from inside the office, you know, by taking calls and going down to the chamber of commerce office to get press releases. Van Buren was my beat, and I never could get to Van Buren, because I didn't have a car. [Laughs]

ED: Well, you could have walked across the bridge. What is it about three miles over there?

BT: Could have walked across the bridge. Yes. Well, once they did lend me a car so that I could go to some school that burned down in Kibler. The advertising department had rejected the car because it was one of those stick shifts on the steering wheel, and it wouldn't stay in second gear. You would put it in second gear and it would just fall back down. It was hard to get to Kibler, which was on that mountain road on the way to Fayetteville. [Laughs]

ED: Couldn't stay in second gear?

BT: It wouldn't stay in second gear unless you held it. So, yes, that was kind of unfortunate.

ED: So you decided to get into journalism.

BT: I decided to go back. When I worked for the Fort Smith paper, we had heard that the *Pine Bluff Commercial* was really a good newspaper. We heard that that was

a swell newspaper.

ED: It was in those days.

BT: That was when Patrick Owens had gotten this Nieman Fellowship, and he was kind of admired for that. We just heard in Fort Smith that Pine Bluff was the place to go, as far as Arkansas newspapers go. So I called Bob Giesler, a former *Times-Record* staff member working in Pine Bluff.

ED: Bob Giesler. G-I-E-S-L-E-R.

BT: Yes.

ED: I had forgotten about Bob Giesler. He had been a copy editor at the *Arkansas Gazette* back in the early 1960s.

BT: He may have gone from Pine Bluff to the *Gazette*.

ED: I'd forgotten, but he is another one that I need to mention to Roy Reed that we need to interview.

BT: He went to the *Miami Herald*, I think. He may be back in Fort Smith. It seems that I read that name as being like spokesman for someone, like the city.

ED: Giesler, I vaguely remember. Big, big . . .

BT: Big guy.

ED: Big fellow, big broad shoulders.

BT: He was from a Catholic family in Fort Smith, and he and his wife, Kathleen, had about four kids, I think.

ED: So he was at Pine Bluff at that time?

BT: He had told me about Pine Bluff, and I am not sure that he was there. By the time

I got there, he'd gone. He may have gone to the *Gazette*. I don't know where he went. This was in . . .

ED: 1962 or so?

BT: 1963 at that point. Bob said, "Well, send in your application." And then he called and he said, "Well, you know, you sent in your application to this one guy, but he's been fired," or demoted or something, "go ahead and send in another application because they hired this guy from *The New York Times* who was down here during the newspaper strike, Gene Foreman."

ED: Gene Foreman.

BT: They had hired Gene Foreman. He had come down to work for them during the newspaper strike and they fired their old managing editor, Jimmy Atkinson, and asked Gene to stay, and he agreed to stay. And Owens was still at Harvard or somewhere.

ED: Patrick J. Owens was on a Nieman Fellowship.

BT: At Harvard.

ED: At Harvard.

BT: And Foreman had run things while Owens was at Harvard, I guess. So I came down and worked for Gene Foreman. They didn't have any reporting openings, and I had never worked as a copy editor, but I took a job opening on the copy desk, and I came down in the summer of 1963.

ED: As the copy editor.

BT: A copy editor. Now I wanted to be a reporter. They had a city editor who didn't

think that women should be reporters, but . . .

ED: Who was that city editor?

BT: Bill Miles was his name.

ED: Bill Miles. I remember Bill Miles. M-I-L-E-S.

BT: Well, he didn't think that women should do . . .

ED: Reporting.

BT: Although, he did – eventually, I guess. Maybe he thought they could do certain things, but he didn't think they could do other things. He told me he didn't want me to be a reporter. He didn't think that I really should be a reporter or that any woman should be a reporter, I think. He said if I wanted to be a reporter, I had to learn to take pictures, take photographs. I had no idea how to take photographs. We had these big box cameras. These big, old graphics . . .

ED: The old speed graphics and crown graphics.

BT: Speed graphics. Bill Miles told me, "Well, if you can learn to take pictures, we will consider you for a reporter." Some old guy called up and said his tree had exploded. Miles says, "Well, you can go out and get a story and a picture from this guy with his tree exploded." Gerald Conklin was the photographer there, and Gerald showed me how to use the camera.

ED: Gerald Congleton, wasn't it?

BT: Gerald Congleton, yes, that's it.

ED: C-O-N-G-L-E-T-O-N.

BT: You think it's Congleton instead of Conklin?

ED: I think it's Congleton.

BT: I think you're right.

ED: Yes. Congleton. He is another one that we will need to check on.

BT: Anyway, so he got me this camera, and he showed me how to push it, and I got out there, and I forgot everything he'd told me.

ED: They were complicated cameras.

BT: They were complicated.

ED: You had to have this slide you had to put in.

BT: I know.

ED: I was always – I had the same experience. You have to get ready to take the picture, and you had to do all these things, get it focused, and then you had to be sure you pulled this little slide out.

BT: And push all these buttons, push this, and I don't know.

ED: And take the picture and then push the slide back in and take the film out and reverse it. Yes, it was a complicated thing.

BT: I pushed every button and did everything I could think of on the camera, and I took the whole roll of film. When I got back only one picture turned out. One picture, but it was a wonderful picture. It was a beautiful picture of this old guy with this exploded tree. And there I was with this exploded tree photo.

ED: Exploded tree.

BT: And then he – yes. I think they thought it was hit by lightning, but the old man didn't.

ED: Did lightning strike it?

BT: Apparently so. There was no explanation. [Laughs] There was no explanation for this tree being exploded.

ED: The tree had exploded.

BT: That was kind of the consensus of the law enforcement people, I think – the tree just exploded. Someone may have put dynamite in it or something, I don't know, but it wasn't blackened. It stumped people.

ED: Well, those are the kinds of stories that papers like Pine Bluff and smaller weeklies and daily papers thrive on. Weird-looking vegetables and big snakes.

BT: Oh, Patrick J. Owens had a policy about the vegetables and snakes. [Laughs]

ED: What was the policy?

BT: If someone came in with a big vegetable or a big snake – the next picture – it would have to be bigger than the last one we ran.

ED: Okay.

BT: So if someone had a twenty-pound turnip, the next one would have to be at least twenty pounds and one ounce. If someone had a six-foot rattlesnake, the next one would have to be six feet and a half inch.

ED: Otherwise, they would not be published in the paper.

BT: It would not be published. He set a standard that it had to be bigger than the last one, whatever it was – had to be more fantastic.

ED: I guess the theory is that eventually you would get to the point where there wouldn't be anymore.

BT: I think that, yes, I think that we would soon reach that point.

ED: Over at the *Daily News*, I mean, we used to do that, too. Somebody would pull up out front with a pick up truck, and I would have to go out with a speed graphic. Later, they made Polaroid cameras – and take pictures of some guy holding up a big, old rattlesnake or moccasin. If anybody came to town, took the trouble to come to town, and go up to the *Daily News*, we would take that picture and run it in the paper.

BT: Really.

ED: Weird, big gourds.

BT: Owens established standards for the *Commercial* in that kind of thing. Also, Miles didn't think I could cover anything serious. Then he gave me an assignment about the Democratic boss in Jefferson County – there had been something about some kind of election scandal. People were saying someone did something with the ballots. I can't even remember now what it was. Something was wrong with the ballots, and it was illegal. The Democratic party had been doing this. Bill Miles told me, "Now, he won't tell – he won't talk. He won't tell you anything. He'll say nothing was wrong, but you have to go ask him. Go ask him." So I called, and I went down there. And I asked if the party did whatever the report was, and he said, "Well, yes, we did." He came out and confessed to all that stuff.

ED: On the record?

BT: But he had an explanation for why they had to do it that way, but Bill Miles was

just astounded that Pete Brewster said that. Garland “Pete” Brewster was the guy’s name.

ED: Garland “Pete” Brewster.

BT: So I got to be a reporter by taking the exploded tree picture and by getting Garland Pete Brewster to admit election fraud.

ED: So he decided that if you could do that, if a woman could do that, she could be a reporter.

BT: I could be a reporter, yes. Sheer luck, I think.

ED: So you became what – a general assignment reporter for the *Commercial*? Or did you have a beat?

BT: Well, everyone had a beat. I had the Pine Bluff City Hall, and was general assignment reporter and school board reporter.

ED: All at the same time? You covered the city council, the school board and whatever came through the door?

BT: Yes.

ED: Bill Miles was the city editor, right?

BT: He was when I first went to work there, and then he left. I can’t remember where he went. John Thompson became the city editor.

ED: Who was later with the *North Little Rock Times*?

BT: But he went from Pine Bluff to the *Miami Herald* and then to the *North Little Rock Times*.

ED: And Patrick Owens was the executive editor?

BT: He was the executive editor.

ED: Shortly after you returned, after you went to work there, Patrick J. Owens returned from his Nieman Fellowship.

BT: Yes. He came back a few months after leave.

ED: [From] Harvard.

BT: Yes.

ED: And he became the – he was the overall executive . . .

BT: He was the executive editor and then Gene Foreman was the managing editor.

ED: Executive editor.

BT: Although they had very different styles of management and didn't really get along.

ED: Yes.

BT: While Owens was in Harvard, too, they had hired a young man named Paul Greenberg to write the editorials while he was away. Owens came back and started writing editorials. Although Greenberg stayed, too, although I think Greenberg kind of chafed under being second.

ED: Well, you can understand why. I guess Owens was a . . .

BT: Also, Owens had a totally different management style from either Greenberg or Foreman.

ED: Oh, yes.

BT: Both were very organized and very logical, and Owens was just kind of “shoot from the hip,” and very smart and very instinctive. Foreman was an instinctive

journalist, too. But very different, very different style from them.

ED: Owens as executive editor, primarily wrote editorials, but still managed the overall editorial and news product.

BT: He wrote editorials, yes, but still ran the overall operation.

ED: What kind of an editor was Gene Foreman?

BT: Well, he was . . .

ED: He was the managing editor.

BT: Yes, he was the managing editor, but he came up with many of the story ideas, and he just had great instinct for news and for a good story and for the questions to ask. He was just great to work for in that sense. He was not warm. He was always, you know, a little distant. He had a funny sense of humor, just kind of quirky sense of humor and just had great story ideas, and he was just a stickler for details and getting everything right.

ED: Details and accuracy.

BT: Yes.

ED: Precision in words.

BT: Yes. It was just a wonderful place to learn journalism. The *Pine Bluff Commercial* was in those days.

ED: It was. It was the great training ground for the *Gazette*. For about twenty-five years that's where the *Arkansas Gazette* got many, if not most, of its reporters and copy editors, from the *Pine Bluff Commercial*.

BT: Yes.

ED: There was a steady stream of people like you who went from the *Pine Bluff Commercial* to the *Gazette*, and then, of course, you had people like Gene Foreman and Patrick J. Owens, who had worked at the *Gazette* and then later went to the *Pine Bluff Commercial* and then left there and went other places.

BT: Owens actually came back to the *Gazette*.

ED: He came back to the *Gazette* and then went on to other places. We will come back to Owens maybe a little later because Owens and you crisscrossed your whole life.

BT: Patrick Owens and, to a lesser extent, Foreman. I would see Foreman. I would keep track of Foreman.

ED: So you were a reporter at the Pine Bluff from about 1963?

BT: For three years.

ED: For three years.

BT: 1966.

ED: Until 1966. And then what did you do?

BT: I was kind of tired of Pine Bluff, and I got mad one time. Bob Lancaster edited my story, which was exactly what he should have done, but I got mad, and I decided I was going to go somewhere else.

ED: Well, now, what was bad about Bob Lancaster? Did he . . . ?

BT: He was just sitting in as city editor sometimes.

ED: Was he a reporter?

BT: He was a reporter and a columnist. He was sports reporter when I first went

there. He had dropped out of Southern State College.

ED: Southern State, later South Arkansas University.

BT: And was working there as a sports reporter and then became just a regular reporter and then he was sometimes city editor.

ED: Who else was there? Had Tucker Steinmetz made it to the *Pine Bluff Commercial* during that period?

BT: No, but he was at the *Democrat* when I got there. I said I knew Tucker, but I think he came to the *Pine Bluff Commercial* after I left.

ED: Oh, after you left. Because he was at the *Democrat* and the *Pine Bluff Commercial* and the *Gazette*. He was another one of those that made all those papers.

BT: Yes. He was at the *Democrat* when I was I was there.

ED: Okay, let's go back to your story then. You said you got mad at Bob Lancaster over the way he edited one of your stories. You remember the story?

BT: Yes. It was about the first man killed in Vietnam from southeast Arkansas. I did a terrible job on it because I went down there, and I was afraid to talk to the family. They were all just . . .

ED: Broken up?

BT: Broken up, and they had them all cloistered, and I tried to talk to these guys from the Army, who wouldn't talk. You know, they sent this whole military escort, and they wouldn't tell me anything. So I had to just go and listen to the service, and I should have just gone ahead and just approached the family, which I did not

do just out of sheer shyness, I guess, or being uncomfortable about it. I just kind of wrote a bunch of opinions, and Lancaster took them out. [Laughs]

ED: He took out the opinions?

BT: Took them out. He just totally rewrote it and I got really mad at him. I told John Thompson, "I am just going to quit." And John said, "Now, Brenda, I don't think you want to quit unless you have another job." And I said, "I guess not."  
[Laughs] I said, "I guess you are right there." When I was hired at the *Pine Bluff Commercial*, my salary was seventy-five dollars a week.

ED: That was your first salary? When you were first hired?

BT: Well, yes. That [was] the first salary, and that was for a fifty-hour week.  
[Laughs]

ED: Fifty-hour week?

BT: Or something like that. What was it? We called [it] Chinese overtime. Your week included ten hours of overtime, for which you were paid half pay.  
[Laughter] That was your work week.

ED: Somehow that passed muster with the federal wage and hour people?

BT: Yes, it passed muster with the federal wage and hour division because it was designed for people who had fluctuating work weeks. So, yes, it was perfectly legal, apparently. I think I did maybe get a little settlement once, because it turned out that you weren't supposed to work women more than eight hours a day.

ED: So how many days a week did you work?

BT: Six, I think.

ED: Six days a week and ten hours a day.

BT: Yes. [Laughs] Something like that. Something like that. I may be a little hazy on the details, yes but I remember that our pay check included ten hours of overtime for which we were paid half the rate that we were paid for the other forty. Maybe it was a five-day, maybe it was a five-day week, but it was ten hours a day, though.

ED: I remember hearing about the Chinese overtime.

BT: I think it was a ten-hour day that we were supposed to work.

ED: I never could understand how they got away with that.

BT: It was legal for people who worked fluctuating work weeks.

ED: And everybody worked a fluctuating work week by design.

BT: Yes, absolutely. That was their thing, but it turned out to be illegal for women, and so I got some kind of little piddling check once, I think, after got to Louisville, Kentucky.

ED: So you didn't quit over the Lancaster-butchered story?

BT: No, but I did start looking around. I wrote a letter to the *Louisville Courier Journal*, which needed copy editors, so I got a copy editing job there in 1966, thanks to a nice recommendation from John Thompson.

ED: 1966, you went to *Louisville Courier Journal* as a copy editor?

BT: I went to Louisville and left there in 1970. I worked there from 1966 to 1970.

ED: So you worked at Louisville four years. Were you a copy editor all that time?

BT: I was copy editor for a year and a half, I guess. And then I worked in the southern Indiana bureau.

ED: As a reporter?

BT: Yes.

ED: Where was the southern Indiana bureau?

BT: It was several places. Southern Indiana is right across the Ohio River from Louisville, and they had offices in New Albany and Jeffersonville, which are the county seats of two counties right across the river.

ED: Indiana or Ohio?

BT: Indiana. It's across the Ohio River. The Ohio River separates Kentucky and Indiana.

ED: And Ohio was pretty close by, too, wasn't it?

BT: Well, Cincinnati is a ways down the road.

ED: Right, yes. Okay. I have to get my geography straight.

BT: But, I mean, it is not all that far. I once did go on an assignment to Cincinnati. In Kentucky, there is a city in Kentucky right across from Cincinnati – Covington, Kentucky.

ED: So you did about two and a half years as a reporter in the Southern Indiana bureau?

BT: Yes.

ED: What kind of stories did you do?

BT: Just general stories.

ED: Did you live there?

BT: I did not live there. I lived in Louisville at the time.

ED: How far away was that? It's just right across the river?

BT: It is just like going to North Little Rock.

ED: Okay.

BT: I mean it's just right across the river. In fact, I would go to Bloomington. We covered Indiana University a lot. I went to Bloomington a lot, actually. Eventually we had a Bloomington bureau, but until we got that I covered it. And we had an Indianapolis bureau.

ED: What did you think of the *Louisville Courier Journal*? Did you enjoy that four years?

BT: No, I was just miserable there for the four years. Being a copy editor involved weird hours, from, like, either four until one or five until two in the morning. It was a very isolated life. I never knew many people there. I was the only woman on the copy desk, and I didn't enjoy it very much. The reporting was all right. It was interesting enough. It was just a general assignment thing. You know politics, city government, just anything. Like a dispute with the Amish. The Amish wouldn't wear these little red triangles for slow-moving vehicles on their buggies because they considered it the sign of the beast. So the police arrested them up in this Amish area, where I went to meet the Amish people, and I interviewed and kept up with the family of one of the sailors on the *Pueblo* that was captured by Korea. One of the crew on the *Pueblo* was from southern

Indiana.

ED: Right.

BT: I covered his family all during that crisis.

ED: Was there anything about the paper or staff or the organization or the tradition, anything about the *Courier Journal* that made it not a good place for you to work?

BT: It was probably partly my fault. The *Pine Bluff Commercial* was a very close-knit place. The *Courier Journal* was just a bigger place. After I got there they had a rule that you had to have a master's degree in journalism to get a job there.

ED: Oh, really?

BT: Yes.

ED: I never heard of such a rule in any paper. A master's degree in journalism?

BT: Yes. To get a job there.

ED: I think a better rule would be that anybody with a master's degree should not be allowed to work for the newspaper. [Laughter]

BT: Yes. They would get these kids out of Columbia and different places, you know, Indiana, Purdue.

ED: At that time the *Louisville Courier Journal* was still run by the family?

BT: Yes. By the Bingham.

ED: The Bingham family. B-I-N-G-H-A-M.

BT: And, yes, it was a good newspaper.

ED: Yes, it was one of the great newspapers.

BT: It was a good newspaper. It had good story coverage. I just never got a handle on Louisville and just always felt kind of outside.

ED: So you worked from 1966 to 1970, and then in 1970 . . .

BT: I came to the *Arkansas Democrat*. I called Gene Foreman.

ED: Who by that time had left Pine Bluff.

BT: Had left Pine Bluff and was editor of the *Arkansas Democrat*.

ED: He was the managing editor.

BT: Managing editor there. I called him and wanted a job and they had an opening for Little Rock City Hall.

ED: So you came back in 1970 as the city hall reporter for the *Arkansas Democrat*. Well, tell me about that. How long were you at the *Democrat*? That's 1970.

BT: I was there until 1976. I worked there for six years.

ED: Sixteen years?

BT: Six years.

ED: Six years.

BT: 1970 to 1976.

ED: 1976, okay. But Foreman was only there a short time. Foreman was managing editor at that time. It was not long after that that Foreman left and went to the . . .

BT: Not a real long time after that. No, it was like a year or so.

ED: He went from there to the *Newsday* on Long Island.

BT: Yes.

ED: He became an editor of *Newsday* on Long Island. So you covered city hall. Who

was the city manager?

BT: Jack Meriwether.

ED: Jack Meriwether was the city manager.

BT: That was actually fun, covering city hall. I enjoyed it.

ED: Who was the city hall reporter for the *Gazette* at that time?

BT: Jay Huddleston.

ED: Jay Huddleston. I'd forgotten about Jay Huddleston. Where is he now?

BT: He used to call me when he would come to town every now and then. He was living up around Cotter raising pigs.

ED: That's right.

BT: And writing some for the paper – one of the papers up there. He came down here and I haven't heard from him in several years now, but I used to hear from him just about every time he came down. A couple of times he came over here.

ED: Big country boy.

BT: Big kind of guy. Real country. Proud of being country.

ED: Yes. I mean, he was a very bright guy, very sharp guy.

BT: Yes.

ED: So you covered city hall, and Jack Meriwether was city manager. That would have been a fun place to work.

BT: Yes, it was, yes.

ED: Meriwether as city manager.

BT: Yes, he was city manager, and Ralph Patrick was my city editor.

ED: How long were you at city hall?

BT: I can't remember. It was maybe a couple of years. It must have been nearly two years because [Dale] Bumpers's second term was in 1972? Right.

ED: Governor Bumpers, 1972. He was re-elected that year.

BT: Yes, so that was when I started covering state politics first. They decided they were going to do round-robin beats and I switched from Little Rock City Hall to North Little Rock. The editor decided they were going to switch all the beats.

ED: At intervals.

BT: At intervals. Yes. This was going to be good. You wouldn't get in a rut. You wouldn't get too close to your sources or burned out on your sources. You would learn about everything and could, you know, cover anything. It was one of those ideas that editors decided to try every so often. I was at North Little Rock before state government, at the last month's Casey Laman was mayor.

ED: And John Woodruff was the *Gazette* reporter over there at that time.

BT: Yes.

ED: So, you . . .

BT: I replaced Lynda Zimmer in North Little Rock. Laman liked neither Woodruff nor Lynda Zimmer, so he talked to me at first. Lynda was just in constant trouble in North Little Rock, and they thought her life was in danger at one point with Laman hating her.

ED: She'd been covering Casey Laman, the North Little Rock City Hall, for the *Democrat*.

BT: For the *Democrat*, yes.

ED: So, you succeeded her over there.

BT: Yes, I did. I worked there, and I wanted to cover state government, and I thought, you know, that's really where the excitement was. But that was my idea, anyway, that was the apex of what you should strive for. I lobbied around for whenever there was an opening on the state government beat.

ED: So when did you go out to the Capitol?

BT: I covered Dale Bumpers's 1972 campaign and then went out there.

ED: So you started off covering city hall at the *Democrat* and then . . .

BT: First, I covered Little Rock City Hall, and then I covered North Little Rock City Hall and then I covered the capitol.

ED: And you went to the Capitol when Dale Bumpers won a second term as governor.

BT: Second-term election. I started covering the campaign and then went on.

ED: Who else was there for the *Democrat*? Was that a two-person bureau out there then?

BT: Yes, it was, and I am trying to remember.

ED: It wasn't Al May, was it?

BT: No, it was Tom Jordan.

ED: Tom Jordan, yes. So you and Tom Jordan were the team at the Capitol, and for the *Gazette* at that time I guess it was Doug Smith and I. It was the four of us, I guess, at the Capitol. And who was the editor at the *Democrat*? Foreman was no longer the editor, was he?

BT: No. Ralph Patrick was the city editor. I guess Bob McCord was-- was he the managing editor?

ED: Yes, I guess Bob McCord was probably the managing editor.

BT: He was the editor, but who was the . . . ?

ED: How about Jerry McConnell?

BT: Jerry McConnell. Yes, he was the managing editor. Bob McCord was really editor of the editorial page but was overall editor.

ED: Yes, he was kind of the editor.

BT: And then McConnell was the managing editor and Ralph Patrick was the city editor, who actually I worked for.

ED: And then Tucker Steinmetz was assistant city editor.

BT: Assistant city editor when I first got there, and then he went to the *Gazette*.

ED: George Douthit had been the Capitol reporter.

BT: And he was still there.

ED: Was he still there then? They kind of ran him off.

BT: Yes, he resigned.

ED: He got mad.

BT: Well, he went to work for Orval Faibus as Faibus's campaign press secretary in the 1970 campaign. That's how I got to the Capitol.

ED: 1972.

BT: George left in a fit of pique or, I don't know, was forced out. I don't know the details.

ED: As I recall I had a story that morning that George didn't have and somebody – Tucker Steinmetz or Ralph Patrick – I think it was Tucker Steinmetz who said something to him about it. And George just exploded. He had been out at the Capitol for many years for the *Democrat* and just pitched a fit.

BT: Yes, he became Faubus's press secretary. That job opened up and I got it.

ED: Well, I remember there were . . .

BT: Bobby Forrester.

ED: She had been out there.

BT: She had also been out there at the state capitol.

ED: Except she never was assigned to cover the Capitol full time.

BT: She was working more as the business editor.

ED: Yes. She'd come out help cover the legislature, but she never was a Capitol reporter. There had been a succession of *Democrat* reporters out there. Well, was the *Democrat* a good, fun place during that period?

BT: It was, yes.

ED: As much as the *Pine Bluff Commercial*?

BT: Not as much as the *Pine Bluff Commercial* because it was a bigger staff and because we were such an underdog to the *Gazette* at that time. We didn't have the experienced reporters, and we didn't have the prestige. People liked to get things broken in the *Gazette*, [ ] grudge against the *Gazette* and who would give the *Democrat* stuff because they didn't like the *Gazette*. There were more, it seemed, who wanted their stories in the *Gazette*. They liked that. Especially out

in the state. The *Democrat* just didn't have enough circulation out in the state then. People out in the state didn't care much about the *Democrat* one way or the other.

ED: Well, so, you were at the Capitol three or four years at that time?

BT: Yes. I left in – in four years I went to work for the *Arkansas Gazette*, which had been my idea of the most wonderful place to be in Arkansas journalism for some time.

ED: So for the *Democrat* you covered the legislature and state agencies, a pretty big beat.

BT: Yes, a big beat.

ED: In 1976, you went to work for the *Gazette*. How did that happen? How did you come to work at the *Gazette*?

BT: I had applied for the *Gazette* before I went to Louisville. And I had applied for the *Gazette* while I was at Pine Bluff and A.R. Nelson wouldn't hire me. They said, "A.R. Nelson, the *Gazette* managing editor, will not hire women reporters," and it was true. I applied for a job and talked to A.R. Nelson. Pat Owens was working at the *Gazette* as an editorial writer. I saw him when I came up here, and he said, "You know, he won't hire you, but you can go talk to him." And sure enough, he wouldn't.

ED: I think we had one female reporter all those years.

BT: Matilda Tuohey.

ED: Matilda Tuohey and she had been there before Nelson became managing editor,

and later Ginger Shiras.

[End of Tape 1, Side 1]

[Beginning of Tape 1, Side 2]

ED: Okay, this is side two with Brenda Tirey. So pick up where you where you left off.

BT: Oh, I had applied for a job at the *Gazette* back when I was trying to leave the *Pine Bluff Commercial* and had an interview with A.R. Nelson, but he didn't hire me.

ED: Did he say, "We don't want to hire women?"

BT: He did not say that. He did indicate some reservations about women being able to do a reporting job. I remember that, but he did not say that we are not going to hire women. They just never offered me a job. And he did have some obvious reservations about women in the newsroom or women news reporters. I think women were copy editors.

ED: Yes, we had from time to time a female copy editor – not many of those while Nelson was editor.

BT: He was not as overt about it as Bill Miles, but he was more subtle. But he was certainly a stern person and one that I couldn't talk to easily.

ED: But by 1976, Nelson had retired, I think he about 1972 or 1973, somewhere along in there. Bob Douglas was, by that time, the managing editor.

BT: Yes, he was the managing editor, and Tucker Steinmetz and Carrick Patterson were an investigative team.

ED: And Jimmy Jones.

BT: And Jimmy Jones. And Tucker, or Jimmy, I think, told me that I should go and apply for a job at the *Gazette*. And I did.

ED: Now Tucker had been at the *Pine Bluff Commercial*?

BT: He'd been at the *Pine Bluff Commercial*. I had met him at Pine Bluff just when I went back to visit, but I am not sure that I worked with him. If I did it was right at the end of my time. I did work for him when he was assistant city editor at the *Democrat*.

ED: So they recommended that you apply, and you came up and had an interview with Douglas.

BT: I came up and met Douglas, and he offered me the job and I was thrilled. I was delighted. I couldn't wait. Because the *Democrat* had just sold to Walter Hussman. [Laughs]

ED: That's right.

BT: I was thinking how I could get out of there anyway.

ED: We were at the Capitol together. Doug Smith and I for the *Gazette* and you and Tom Jordan for the *Democrat*. And the news came, and I think one of you – you or Tom Jordan, one or the other – called back to the newsroom or got a call from Tucker Steinmetz or somebody – no, it wouldn't have been Tucker at that time – but somebody and found out that the paper had just been sold to Walter Hussman.

BT: Of course, Jordan had worked for Hussman at Hot Springs, and Jordan was excitable.

ED: Jordan just exploded and said he would not work for him and he had to quit immediately. And I think he did.

BT: He went to Memphis.

ED: He went to the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*. Is that what spurred you to apply or had you already applied?

BT: All I knew about Hussman was the reputation of the Hussman papers in south Arkansas. What a lousy reputation they had. So, yes, I feared the worst when I heard, feared that it would be an awful place to work, you know. I figured skin-flintier than the *Democrat*, which was awfully skin-flinty to begin with.

ED: Right. And Tommy Jordan, who had been the star reporter for Hussman at Hot Springs was just frantic. He was beside himself that Hussman had bought the *Democrat* and, I guess, got that job almost immediately. So that kind of panicked you, too, I guess, to hear Jordan raving about him.

BT: Yes.

ED: Was that in the summer?

BT: I think it was.

ED: Fall of 1972.

BT: I think it was probably in the summer sometime.

ED: And so you came straight over to the *Gazette*, and did you go up to the Capitol at first? Courthouse?

BT: No, I went to the federal building.

ED: You went to the federal building. Jerol Garrison had left the *Gazette*, I guess.

That was his spot.

BT: I guess that was it. Who had been there? Diane Woodruff?

ED: No. Diane Woodruff had worked for the *Gazette*, but I am not sure she was on the federal building. She worked at the county courthouse for a while.

BT: Diane, yes. I filled in a little bit at the courthouse, too.

ED: I think maybe you replaced Jerol Garrison, who had been our federal building reporter for years and then went to, what, UALR [University of Arkansas, Little Rock], got a job at UALR.

BT: He didn't go straight to Entergy?

ED: No, he later went to Entergy, but I think he went to UALR first, but I am not certain about that. So you started off covering the federal building?

BT: Yes.

ED: And how long did you do that? Not very long.

BT: It seemed like not very long. It was just a matter of months.

ED: And then you went out to the Capitol?

BT: Yes. It seems that I filled in. I know I worked a little bit at the courthouse, but then I can't remember. I think it was just filling in for someone, that maybe George Bentley was on vacation or something like that. Has someone talked to Bentley?

ED: Yes, Bentley has been interviewed. I don't know who did it. So you worked from 1976 until 1991. So you worked at the *Gazette* for about fifteen years.

BT: Yes. Nearly fifteen years.

ED: You started off at the federal building very briefly and then before long, as I recall, you were at the State Capitol.

BT: Yes.

ED: After a few months.

BT: Yes. Within less than a year I was at the Capitol.

ED: How long did you cover the Capitol?

BT: Until 1986.

ED: I was out there.

BT: You were out there and Doug Smith.

ED: Doug Smith was out there.

BT: And Carol Griffiee.

ED: Carol Griffiee, so there were . . .

BT: Four of us.

ED: At one time four of us were out there.

BT: Yes. And Steele Hays.

ED: After I left in 1979.

BT: And David Terrell.

ED: David Terrell and Steele Hays were out there with you.

BT: After Doug left to write his book.

ED: Doug left to write a book, and Carol Griffiee was transferred, wasn't she?

BT: She had the federal beat, too, for a while. Yes. She was given like a beat.

ED: I am not sure.

BT: The college beat or something.

ED: How long were you at the Capitol then?

BT: Until 1986.

ED: So you covered Dale Bumpers for the *Democrat* and the *Gazette* and then David Pryor – part of the David Pryor administration-- and Bill Clinton and Frank White.

BT: Yes.

ED: How did those years stack up at the Capitol for the *Gazette*? Was that a fun time?

BT: It was for the most part. I think . . .

ED: There were some stressful periods. Some internal stuff.

BT: Yes, there were several periods of internal stuff. I certainly wasn't as good a reporter as you and Doug, I don't think. I enjoyed it because I thought state government was really interesting. Government involved people from all over the state.

ED: Outrageous people.

BT: Outrageous people, yes. The legislature was so outrageous. Maybe too much emphasis was put on outrageousness instead of other stuff that was going on, but I enjoyed covering state government. In retrospect it is always easier to think of what you might have done. I wish I would have dug a little harder on some things.

ED: You remember any good stories about Bill Clinton or the governors, or David Pryor or Frank White, or any particular stories that stand out? I remember you

did the SAWER story.

BT: The SAWER story, yes.

ED: In Bill Clinton's first term.

BT: They were giving energy-saving grants. They were going to pay poor people to saw down timber and sell it for firewood.

ED: Apparently in the national forests.

BT: Well, that turned out to be the problem. They couldn't find any place to cut this wood. They bought all these chain saws and such, but then finding a place to get this wood was a problem. It turned out that they spent a lot of money getting this thing set up, but then they couldn't find any wood to cut.

ED: Tens of thousands of dollars were spent.

BT: And no wood was ever cut.

ED: No wood was ever cut.

BT: Yes, that certainly hurt some people in the Clinton Administration.

ED: It was a great embarrassment to the Clinton Administration.

BT: It was really embarrassing to him and to Steve Smith. It was kind of Steve Smith's idea.

ED: Yes.

BT: He was the aide who was in charge of those kinds of programs.

ED: Heads rolled and Steve got fired by Clinton although not directly because of that.

BT: That didn't help.

ED: So in 1986 you went back to, what, general assignment reporter?

BT: No, I became an assistant city editor. An assistant editor got sick. Was it James Scudder? I forget who it was. No, Scudder was a reporter. There was an opening on the night city desk, and I filled in. I really kind of liked the job, and was pleasantly surprised that I could do it and I applied for it and got it. I was not happy at the Capitol anymore and I'm not sure why. It just got harder, and it turned out that I was just ready for a change. I never had thought that I wanted to be in a desk job again.

ED: Was Bill Shelton no longer the city editor?

BT: Max Brantley was.

ED: Max Brantley was the city editor.

BT: Max Brantley was the city editor, maybe that was it. Maybe he had been moved up. They needed someone to fill in, and so they had me filling in as the night city editor.

ED: This is before Gannett bought the paper.

BT: Before Gannett bought the paper.

ED: Was it as much fun after Gannett bought the paper?

BT: No, it wasn't as much fun after Gannett bought the paper. There were a succession of managers after Bob Douglas left, as the *Gazette* fought to survive, though I didn't see the end coming for quite a while. It was kind of strange. Who was that interim guy from Florida?

ED: You had McIlwain.

BT: McIlwain, before Gannett.

ED: Bill McIlwain

BT: Bill McIlwain

ED: M-C-I-L-W-A-I-N.

BT: Yes.

ED: He came along about 1982 or 1983, I guess, didn't he?

BT: Yes.

ED: After Bob Douglas went to Fayetteville. Then Carrick became the editor after Mcilwain left, I guess. Were you an assistant city editor up until the *Gazette* closed?

BT: I was moved to the copy desk by Moyer.

ED: Keith Moyer.

BT: Keith Moyer was the last editor.

ED: It was about the last year.

BT: I remember when the first Gannett editor, Walter Lundy, met with us the first time and said he'd worked at Detroit (*Free Press*) where there was a union and he knew how to fire people. I think I never relaxed again until after the *Gazette* closed.

ED: Any other characters you remember there at the *Gazette* years? You mentioned James Scudder, a person we have not talked about. He had won a Nieman Fellowship.

BT: He had won a Nieman.

ED: Extraordinarily bright guy, and he had been at the *Democrat*.

BT: He won his Nieman when he was, yes, at the *Democrat*.

ED: And then came over to the *Gazette* toward the end.

BT: As a reporter.

ED: Then he died of cancer.

BT: Died of cancer. He was a bright guy. Very bitter near the end, I think.

ED: Yes, well.

BT: But a really smart guy. An ex-Methodist minister.

ED: Yes. Beautiful writer. You were part of this Pine Bluff group. There was almost a fraternity of people from Pine Bluff, people who had that Pine Bluff experience.

BT: Pine Bluff.

ED: Tom Hamburger, Eric Black and Chuck Heinbockel.

BT: George Wells.

ED: George Wells and Kathy Wells, a lot of others. But Kathy never worked at the *Gazette*. A lot of people who worked there went through Pine Bluff.

BT: Yes, and Carol Matlack.

ED: Carol Matlack. There were quite a number of others, but there always seemed to be a special camaraderie.

BT: Lamar James.

ED: Lamar James. A special camaraderie among people who had those common experiences in Pine Bluff and the *Gazette*. Okay.

[Tape Stopped]

ED: Brenda, do you remember much about the last days of the *Gazette*? You were

there . . .

BT: The whole last year was very tense, because the competition was so fierce. If the *Democrat* got one little police item that we didn't get, you know, there would be hell to pay the next day. And we would blow things all out of proportion if we thought we had it first, it seemed.

ED: Both papers were doing that.

BT: Both papers were doing that. It was incredible. There was just a lot of pressure to beat the *Democrat*, to get it first, to get it best, to blow it up if you had it and they didn't. Then the rumors started flying about the *Gazette* going to close down or sell. There was just a whole lot of tension that last year at the *Gazette*.

ED: It was not such a pleasant place to work.

BT: It was not such a pleasant place to work.

ED: Particularly after . . .

BT: A lot of the people were still very pleasant, but it was harrowing. I don't think it was necessarily awful journalism, because both papers got a lot of news. But it was not, you know, the kind of journalism for which the *Gazette* earned its reputation.

ED: We were appalled at what we were doing ourselves.

BT: At what we were doing, yes.

ED: Appalled at what they were doing across town at the *Democrat*, but also appalled that we were responding to it. Sometimes we were trying to outdo them in some of these paltry stories. Let me ask you about working at the *Gazette*. You

worked at, what, five or six newspapers? You worked at Fort Smith. You worked at Pine Bluff. You worked at Louisville.

BT: And the *Democrat*.

ED: And the *Democrat*. Was the *Gazette*, do you think, a special, a different kind of place to work? Was there something unusual about the *Gazette*?

BT: Just growing up in Arkansas, and since the 1957 Pulitzer Prizes, and it was just the state paper. It was something that people who were in journalism aspired to. The *Gazette* was the standard. One reason I entered journalism or one reason journalism had its appeal was being able to tell the truth and inform people and kind of stand for something. Was it Martin Kirby who used to say, “The good, the true and the beautiful”? Maybe not always the beautiful. But that was Martin Kirby’s idea of what his newspaper was going to be. He was one of my *Democrat* colleagues. But the *Gazette* was the standard that everyone aspired to. I was just delighted to be able to work there. I was thrilled to get a job there.

ED: Of course, it was . . .

BT: It was always kind of quirky. There were always things you would have to do to please one editor, Bill Shelton, or some other editor. Shelton would always get interested in downtown stories that were in his old neighborhood or something, so I would have to cover all these really dull meetings – the Capitol Zoning District Commission that was supposed to help the neighborhood. But the reporting standards were still very high. They didn’t want it if it wasn’t news, you know.

ED: And they didn’t overplay things for their sensational value.

BT: No, no. The *Gazette* was non-sensational, although it certainly ran a lot of big stories and a lot of well-done stories.

ED: Was there an unusual camaraderie?

BT: Yes, there was. There was not nearly so much at the other papers I worked for. Because we have to be neutral observers, we don't get involved with news sources in a lot of other things, so journalists do associate with each other more, which is maybe both good and bad. You don't get to know as many people, but it also keeps you from getting too involved with sources and other things in the community. Or I always felt this way. I shouldn't get involved, you know, get too close to people whom I had to cover. I think the *Gazette* did have a camaraderie and a pride because it knew it was the best newspaper in the state. It had very high standards. It had very good reporting. You know the people who went from the *Gazette* to other excellent newspapers. Arkansas used to produce a lot of wonderful journalists. The *Gazette* staff had a great reputation.

ED: You think the *Gazette* affected the . . .

BT: Political climate of the state.

ED: Political climate of the state?

BT: Certainly, I think it did. I don't know if the political climate has changed because of the *Democrat*. The *Democrat* had a different philosophy, which certainly led to a lot meaner-spirited government. People who disagreed with the *Gazette* would, you know, want to react against the *Gazette* editorial policies or the *Gazette* recommendations for elections. They would want to do just the opposite.

I think the *Gazette* was really a civilizing influence in politics and public affairs, as our editorials sometimes noted.

ED: When the *Gazette* closed, you went to work then for the circuit court right?

BT: Well, it was actually nearly a year before I went to work for the court. I had just a variety of little part-time and temporary jobs. It took me a while to decide what I wanted to do, and it turned out that I really didn't want to continue in journalism.

ED: Okay.

BT: Which was probably what I thought I always wanted to do. If I hadn't been dragged kicking and screaming away from the *Gazette*, I guess I would still be doing it today.

ED: Okay. This should wrap it up. We may talk again later.

[End of Interview]