

Northwest Arkansas Oral History Project  
Wanda Jeraldean Finley Roe Interview Abstract  
June 11, 2018

Interviewee	Wanda Jeraldean Finley Roe
Year of birth	1920
Place of birth	Batesville, Independence County, Arkansas
Interviewer	Camille Hatcher
Interview date	2018-06-11
Interview location	Roe home; Pea Ridge, Benton County, Arkansas
Keywords	Roe, Wanda Jeraldean Finley Clinton, Bill Clinton, Hillary Finley, Melvin Gauldin, Mike Walton, M. Douglas Walton, Sam Hatcher, Camille Bali Foreman, Little River County, Arkansas Norfolk Baxter County, Arkansas Pea Ridge Benton County, Arkansas Lyric Theater; Norfolk, Baxter County, Arkansas Wolf House; Norfolk, Baxter County, Arkansas Arkansas Gifted and Talented State Board Arkansas Humanities Council (Organization) AAUW (Organization) Delta Kappa Gamma (Organization) Democratic Party National Women’s Hall of Fame; Seneca Falls, New York Northwest Arkansas Community College Agent Orange Arkansas Nicknames Arkansas state government Education Politics Schools “Souls Aflame” (film)
Description	<p>Wanda Jeraldean Finley Roe’s life is a testament of her dedication to the Arts and Education. Born in 1920, she spent much of her childhood in Norfolk Arkansas. As a young girl she, and others in that community, appeared in the first moving picture made in Arkansas, ‘Souls Aflame.’ Roe calls her childhood “happy and innocent’, working at the theater owned by Dad and learning fashion from Mother.</p> <p>Roe graduated from college with a degree in Art and Drama and taught in schools around Arkansas including Viola, Foreman and Pea Ridge. Roe discussed changes she experienced, and</p>

	<p>embraced, in her years teaching. She pointed to the addition of art programs and increased focus on special needs and gifted students. Her interest in these led Governor Clinton to appoint her to the Gifted and Talented State Board. Roe continues her long-time participation in educational organizations including Delta Kappa Gamma, AAUW, Arkansas Humanities Council and National Women's Hall of Fame.</p> <p>Roe is proud of the many talented students she taught. She pays tribute to her student, and future political cartoonist, Mike Gauldin. Roe, herself an accomplished artist, has received awards for her paintings and poems. A favorite memory is spending her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on an art excursion in Bali with artist, M. Doug Walton.</p> <p>An avid traveler, Roe has visited every state and many countries. Yet Arkansas is home. She wishes it were called the 'Diamond State' and that more Arkansas citizens knew, by 1881 edict, they should refer to themselves as Arkansawyers not Arkansans.</p> <p>Roe shared stories of her family's achievements: her husband as superintendent of the Pea Ridge (AR) schools and member of the Quorum Court; her son a Vietnam veteran and skydiver who finished a master's degree; her daughter as her traveling companion and government lawyer in Little Rock; an adored granddaughter and 15 great-grandchildren.</p>
Duration	109 minutes
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Questions or Comments	<a href="https://nwaoralhistory.org">https://nwaoralhistory.org</a>
Interview sidebar	Roe's work as part of the Arkansas Democratic Party led to a two-week volunteer opportunity at the Clinton White House. For several days she handled the 'Hot Line', fielding calls. One call came from a man in Denver. He called to apologize for cussing at Clinton. When he told Roe he had written a song, she got him to sing it for her over the phone. [01:45:00]