

Northwest Arkansas Oral History Project
 Patricia (Pat) Savage Interview Abstract
 January 16, 2019

Interviewee	Patricia (Pat) Savage
Year of birth	1942
Place of birth	Russellville, Pope County, Arkansas
Interviewer	Connie Fetters
Interview date	2019-01-16
Interview location	Kindley House; Gravette, Benton County, Arkansas
Keywords	<p>Savage, Patricia (Pat) Ford, Vernon Chester Ford, Virginia Harris Lansden, Blair Savage Faubus, Orval Rockefeller, Winthrop Walton, Sam Fetters, Connie Simmons Foods Tyson Foods Eudora, Chicot County, Arkansas Gravette, Benton County, Arkansas McGehee, Desha County, Arkansas Arkansas State Teachers College; Conway, Faulkner County, Arkansas First United Methodist Church; McGehee, Desha County, Arkansas University of Arkansas; Fayetteville, Washington County, Arkansas Adoption Chinese in Arkansas Education High school sports Plantations Recreation School integration Schools Segregation Small town life</p>
Description	<p>Patricia (Pat) Savage's interview is filled with wide-ranging stories that begin with her ancestors landing in New Amsterdam (New York) from the Netherlands, fighting in both the American Revolution and U.S. Civil War, and coming to Arkansas from South Carolina and Georgia. Additional family stories introduce listeners to her immediate, as she calls them, sports nuts family. Born in 1942, Savage grew up the daughter of a high school coach/teacher/principal (Vernon Chester Ford) and a 'good' mom (Virginia Harris Ford) who</p>

	<p>stayed at home most of Savage's young years. Dad's coaching career took the family to many Arkansas schools. Savage remembers she and her two brothers helping to wash football uniforms when they lived in McGehee, Arkansas. Two years after graduating from Arkansas State Teacher's College in Conway, Arkansas in 1960, Savage married another teacher/coach. Their three daughters and son always enjoyed sports. One daughter, Blair, had a successful career as a women's basketball player at the University of Arkansas. Both of Savage's 13-year-old granddaughters play sports. Family rivalry exists between those who are fans of Oklahoma State and University of Arkansas. Today, Savage and her brother have season Razorback baseball and basketball tickets.</p> <p>Savage remembers fun times growing up in Arkansas' small towns, including Pottsville, McGehee, and Eudora. She walked everywhere, went to lots of movies, visited the Arkansas Post National Park, and worshiped at the Methodist Church.</p> <p>Savage tells stories of another side to her childhood; that of growing up in a segregated South. While the children of the Chinese families who lived on the African American side of the tracks could go to the same schools she did, the African American students were educated in their own schools. She knew of students bussed over 50 miles, schools burned, and races who used separate fountains and restaurants. Old plantations that had used slaves were not far south of Eudora.</p> <p>Savage's career spanned 30 years of teaching elementary and math, much of it in Gravette. She retired in 2005. Savage tells of the school district's growth and changes to teacher responsibilities. She looks favorably on current changes, citing the district's opening up to "young teachers with innovative ideas...hiring people from Gravette, giving our kids a chance."</p> <p>Savage loves to say she lives in today's Arkansas. She gives credit to leaders for bringing needed changes: Sam Walton for putting Arkansas on the map; Governor Winthrop Rockefeller for promoting the State and changing how it is viewed; Governor Faubus for making teacher retirement possible; and the officers of Tyson and Simmons companies for providing jobs.</p> <p>While Savage is amazed at how many people want to come live in Arkansas, she is pleased they do and welcomes all.</p>
Duration	62 minutes
Audio File Format	MP3
Images	Yes
Producer	Northwest Arkansas Oral History Project
Copyright	Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History, University of Arkansas
Website URL	http://pryorcenter.uark.edu
Questions or Comments	https://nwaoralhistory.org

Interview sidebar	The first Saturday night after Savage moved to Eudora (1954) she was surprised to hear a siren go off at 9 pm. Friends told her that was to let the African American cotton workers know they had to be back on the side of the tracks where they lived until Monday morning unless they could prove they were domestics. [00:06:02]
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