

**The David and Barbara Pryor Center
for
Arkansas Oral and Visual History**

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Arkansas Memories Project

Wayne Cranford

Interviewed by Kris Katrosh

January 5, 2012

Little Rock, Arkansas

Objective

Oral history is a collection of an individual's memories and opinions. As such, it is subject to the innate fallibility of memory and is susceptible to inaccuracy. All researchers using these interviews should be aware of this reality and are encouraged to seek corroborating documentation when using any oral history interview.

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Transcript Methodology

The Pryor Center recognizes that we cannot reproduce the spoken word in a written document; however, we strive to produce a transcript that represents the characteristics and unique qualities of the interviewee's speech pattern, style of speech, regional dialect, and personality. For the first twenty minutes of the interview, we attempt to transcribe verbatim all words and utterances that are spoken, such as uhs and ahs, false starts, and repetitions. Some of these elements are omitted after the first twenty minutes to improve readability.

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 16th Edition*. We employ the following guidelines for consistency and readability:

- Em dashes separate repeated/false starts and incomplete/redirected sentences.
- Ellipses indicate the interruption of one speaker by another.
- Italics identify foreign words or terms and words emphasized by the speaker.
- Question marks enclose proper nouns for which we cannot verify the spelling and words that we cannot understand with certainty.

- Brackets enclose
 - italicized annotations of nonverbal sounds, such as laughter, and audible sounds, such as a doorbell ringing;
 - annotations for clarification and identification; and
 - standard English spelling of informal words.
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

Citation Information

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Kris Katrosh interviewed Wayne Cranford on January 5, 2012, in Little Rock, Arkansas.

[00:00:00]

Kris Katrosh: This is an interview recorded by the Barbara and David Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History. The interviewer is Kris Katrosh. The interviewee is Wayne Cranford, and the recording is taking place at Wayne Cranford's home in Little Rock, Arkansas, on the fifth day of January 2012. Uh—Mr. Cranford, you will receive a copy of all materials, including a full transcript, to review. Once approved, the interview will be made publicly accessible on the Pryor Center website and archived with other public available sources. If you agree with this statement, please say so now, and we'll proceed with the interview.

Wayne Cranford: Yes, I agree.

KK: Okay, thank you. All right, starting with the Arkansas Business Hall of Fame—um—what did you think—uh—that the longevity of your company might be when you first started? Did you have any sense that you would last fifty years or more?

WC: Probably not. Uh—actually, I didn't really think about it, I think, at that time. But—uh—if anyone had asked me that question, I—I would probably have had reason to doubt that we would. [*Laughter*]

[00:01:17] KK: And why is that?

WC: Well, it—it's—it's just really difficult to start any business, and—uh—
with economic conditions changing and—uh—things like that, you
never know.

KK: Yeah. Yeah, exactly. Do you—do you—did you see yourself as a
driven, ambitious person when you started out?

WC: Yes, I guess so.

KK: Mh-hmm.

WC: Uh—growing up in a small town I think makes you want to do well
and—uh—not necessarily have the chance to leave that small town but
to—um—do well.

KK: Mh-hmm, mh-hmm.

WC: That wasn't very good. [*Laughs*]

KK: That's okay, we can—well, let's do another version of it, and I'll ask a
different way.

Bruce Perry: But before we go [*laughs*] this is—we need to fix this.

KK: What?

BP: He's—we need some makeup.

KK: Oh, I'm sorry.

WC: Oh.

KK: You've got a little bit of shine on you.

[Tape stopped]

[00:02:26] KK: Okay, great. Well—uh—let's just kind of start that over
so that—uh—you look better while you do it. So—uh—1961, when the
agency started—uh—were you—did you have any nervousness about,

you know, how well you might do, or did you—did you just kind of have confidence that you were gonna be a fifty-year company?

WC: Well, I think we were too young to know any better, and—uh—so, we had plenty of confidence, and—uh—things worked out pretty quickly so that—uh—we—uh—we got a good start.

KK: Mh-hmm.

WC: That makes a difference.

[00:03:11] KK: As you went along, did you—uh—well, certainly—first—speakin' of when you first started, did you—did you feel like that—uh—was it even in your mind what the company might be like in twenty, thirty, forty years?

WC: Well, yes, yes—or especially ten years or maybe twenty years—uh—and—uh—we—we pretty well accomplished our goals and—along the way.

[00:03:37] KK: Well, that's pretty forward thinking for a pretty young person gettin' started in business to have a—a thought of where you might want to be in ten years. Uh—that—does that mean you were—a—a—an ambitious person?

WC: Yes, I guess so.

KK: Mh-hmm. What do you think drove that desire to succeed?

WC: I don't know. I just—uh—I think part of it is being from a small town, and you come to the city, and you—uh—you really want to work harder to succeed.

[00:04:11] KK: Hmm. You feel like you wanted to prove yourself

somewhat?

WC: Yes.

KK: Mh-hmm. Can you put that in a statement? 'Cause they won't hear my questions.

WC: Uh—I'm not thinking—uh . . .

KK: No, that's fine. That's fine. Um—so now, you went to college and—and came back to Bald Knob before you ever got into the advertising business. Talk a little bit about—uh—coming back home and—and teaching.

[00:04:45] WC: Well [*clears throat*—uh—my father died when I was a sophomore in college, and I was about seventeen. And—uh—I felt the need to hurry on through college, and—uh—so I was able to finish in three years and—uh—to help my mother and younger brother. And—uh—actually, I was so young that it was difficult to find a job with a major in journalism and a minor in English—uh—anywhere else other than—uh—teaching. So I . . .

KK: Hmm.

WC: . . . did teach journalism and English in my hometown of Bald Knob.

KK: Mh-hmm, mh-hmm. Uh—and—and—uh—are you—are you known at—at your work or were you known at work for being strict with language?

WC: Yes, I guess so. Uh—Jim Johnson always said I could spot a semicolon at fifty yards. [*KK laughs*] But—uh—it—it is important, of course . . .

KK: Yeah.

WC: . . . the use of good grammar and punctuation, and—and I am a stickler for it, I'm—I'll admit.

[00:05:58] KK: Mh-hmm. Well, and it's also important within your—your firm—I mean, within the industry that you're in, clearly.

WC: Yes.

KK: I mean, you—you're staking your reputation on the words that you present.

WC: Yes.

KK: Yeah.

WC: Even—even though now we see—uh—network—uh—news anchors making—uh—really bad grammatical errors.

KK: Yeah, exactly. It shocks me sometimes.

WC: Yeah.

KK: And mispronunciations as well.

WC: Right. I always say it's because they—their teacher didn't teach 'em how to diagram sentences.

KK: [*Laughs*] That's a lost art, isn't it?

WC: Yes.

[00:06:41] KK: Um—tell us a little bit about working for a Little Rock newspaper at the time that—the period of time that you did. What was going on in the—in the world? What was journalism like?

WC: Well—uh—course, there were no computers, and—uh—telephone communication was even a lot more difficult than it is now. But—uh—I came to work—I came to Little Rock and—uh—started work at the

Arkansas Democrat as a police reporter.

KK: Mh-hmm.

WC: And—uh—before I knew it, I was on the state desk as assistant state editor, and then shortly after that, I worked in the *Sunday Magazine*. Bob McCord published a wonderful *Sunday Magazine* as part of the *Democrat* at that time.

[00:07:32] KK: Mh-hmm. And did you find that, you know, having good teachers—uh—in—in, you know, grammar school through high school and then having good instruction in English and journalism in college that all that carried over into being successful in journalism?

WC: Definitely. I had—I had some good teachers, and I can remember the name of every one I've ever had. Um—but I especially had good English teachers in both junior high school and senior high school. And—uh—that was invaluable.

[00:08:08] KK: Yeah, absolutely. So why did you move from journalism to public relations and advertising? What—why did you want to make that move?

WC: Probably the difference in salaries. Uh—young people, you know, are constantly trying to move up the salary scale, and—uh—I'm sure that was the reason at the time.

KK: But wasn't there some risk that you wouldn't make more salary, starting a new company?

WC: Uh—that's not what you asked me.

KK: Oh, I'm sorry. [*Laughter*] No, it isn't. [*Laughter*] So—well, when

you got in—when you got into public relations . . .

WC: You swayed from . . . [Laughs]

KK: I did. When you got into public relations and advertising, you didn't have your own agency at first. Is that right?

WC: Oh, no. Oh, no.

[00:08:59] KK: Right. Tell me about your s . . .

WC: Yeah.

KK: . . . a little bit about your—your start-up in—in public relations and advertising.

WC: Okay.

KK: Who did you work for?

WC: Yeah. Well, I—I left—uh—journalism per se to go into public relations at the Chamber—Little Rock Chamber of Commerce.

KK: Hmm.

WC: And—um—after—uh—after I left that job, I worked briefly at the *Arkansas Gazette* and then was hired—uh—by an advertising agency—uh—Tom Hockersmith and Associates, and worked there several years before I started my own agency.

[00:09:39] KK: Hmm, I gotcha. So you had quite a bit of on-the-ground training within public relations and advertising before you ever tried to launch out on your own.

WC: Well . . .

Joy Endicott: I'm sorry. We need to—uh—someone's phone dinged.

KK: Somebody have a phone on?

JE: I—I heard a message received with a ding.

WC: Hmm.

KK: Mine's completely off.

JE: Okay.

WC: Mine is, too.

KK: That leaves you, Bruce.

JE: [*Unclear words*] need to check.

BP: I don't think—I thought I turned it off.

JE: I just heard the message ding.

BP: No, I'm off.

KK: You're off completely?

BP: Yes, sir.

WC: I know this is just awful. What can I do to . . .

KK: No! No, no, no, because we're only—they're only gonna use, like, two sentences out of this whole thing. They don't all have to be diamonds, and—and—and you've said plenty of good stuff as it is. Just straighten up—I'll move your tie right there.

WC: Yeah. Was this all right up here? I didn't . . .

KK: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

WC: I didn't have a good mirror.

[00:10:30] KK: No, it's fine. Uh—so you—you worked in public relations and advertising, and then at some point you—you met—did you meet Jim Johnson ahead of wanting to start this agency, and how did you guys meet?

WC: Well—uh—I knew of Jim Johnson. He was a student at the University of Arkansas and had won a poster contest sponsored by two of our clients, AIDC—now it'd be—uh—AEDC and—uh—Publicity and Parks, now Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. And—um—Jim's design was the best one, including entries from one or two of his teachers at . . .

KK: Yeah.

WC: . . . at Fayetteville. And—uh—I never had met him, but I knew of his work, and—uh—he graduated and went to work for Hallmark Cards in Kansas City and decided that he needed to come home or to I—to Ark—back to Arkansas.

KK: Mh-hmm.

[00:11:42] WC: And—uh—at that point I persuaded—uh—my boss to hire him as another art director, and that's when I really got to know him. We've been friends every s—ever since. Never a cross word. And we're still friends.

KK: Well, that's a pretty big thing in itself. It's hard to stay friends with somebody you—you're in business with for a long time, I think. Or it can be.

WC: Yes.

[00:12:10] KK: I'm—this is really great that you were able to do it. All right, well, let's talk a little bit about—uh—you know—uh—how you and Jim de—started—decided to start an agency and what it was like having an agency in the early [19]60s. You can just—you know, in

brief, very briefly.

WC: Well, to be recognized as an agency by the media, you had to have three clients. And—uh—we had—we barely had three. We had an insurance company and two ladies' dress shops. And—uh—that gave—that made us an agency. And—uh . . .

KK: Just kinda grew from there, huh?

WC: Yes.

[00:12:51] KK: Yeah. So you only had these three little clients. How did you go from that to being much larger?

WC: Well, one of the biggest breaks we ever had was the—uh—Senator Fulbright reelection campaign in 1962. And—uh—we worked with him again in—six years after that and then six years after that. And—uh—that gave us a really good start with—um—credibility and—uh—that sort of thing in the business community.

[00:13:25] KK: Did that also lead to other political campaign work?

WC: Yes, but eventually we—we decided to no longer handle any candidates. Uh—we—we handled—uh—campaign issues . . .

KK: Yeah.

WC: . . . but not—uh—candidates.

KK: Mh-hmm. Okay. Uh—I—it was so interesting that earlier you were demonstrating your ringtone to me. Uh—you know, and then you were—you were—course, you started your agency in the [19]60s. Do you—do you see any kind of relation or parallel or even—uh—uh—or even parity between *Mad Men* and the way you operated an agency in

the [19]60s?

WC: Very much so. [KK laughs] The timing—uh—was exactly the same and—uh—of course, there's a difference in New York and Little Rock but—uh—uh—most things in *Mad Men*—uh—pretty much like it was.

[00:14:28] KK: So even the—both the positive and the negative that you see in *Mad Men* were—were kind of reflected in the advertising industry in those days?

WC: Yes.

KK: Be . . .

WC: Definitely.

KK: Because it seemed that it was really a—a—a man's world, a patriarchal . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . system. Is that—was that true at that time?

WC: Right, right. You didn't see very many—uh—women being anything except secretaries and—uh—uh—bookkeeping and that sort of thing, but . . .

KK: Hmm.

WC: . . . apparently—I mean, eventually—uh—they were recognized as copywriters and—uh—and—and now, of course, account executives and man—in management. Uh—but yes, at that time, it was pretty much a man's world.

[00:15:16] KK: Mh-hmm. Yeah. Good. Uh—so what did you do to convince—uh—Senator Bill Fulbright's campaign to use this new

agency for their campaign? How did you do that?

WC: Well, I was recommended by—uh—a federal judge named Judge Pat Mehaffy, and he talked with—uh—Mr. Bill Darby and—uh—Mr. Jack Pickens. And—uh—I think the three of them—uh—decided that after an interview—uh—that we could do the job, even though we were—at that time our agency was only about three months old.

KK: Mh-hmm. Wow, that's amazing. What a break. You must be very thankful for that opportunity.

WC: Yes.

[00:16:08] KK: Um—this question says that you also worked with governors, including—uh—uh—Governor and President Clinton. And one—they—they're asking, you know, how that relationship went. Did you have a relationship with Bill Clinton?

WC: Oh, yes, I [*laughs*—I knew Bill Clinton in the Fulbright campaign. He was seventeen years old, and—uh—we—uh—knew each other ever since. And—uh—but through the years I've worked with seven different governors pretty closely.

[00:16:38] KK: Hmm. And what—what kind of things did you do? If you weren't managing the campaigns per se, what kinds of—uh—support did you provide?

WC: Well, worked for—uh—selling Arkansas for the tourism industry and—uh—also economic development. And then in some cases, education and—uh—uh—other—uh—fields like that.

KK: Mh-hmm. That must've been interesting as you went from governor

to governor, how those things might have changed and the emphasis might have changed.

WC: Yes. Then I was appointed—uh—chairman of the Governor's Mansion Commission, which—uh—I have been—I still am—uh—that and . . .

[00:17:18] KK: So—so how long have you been a Governor's Mansion Commission chairman?

WC: Chairman?

KK: Mh-hmm.

WC: Uh—I—I worked—uh—in the Governor's Mansion Association under Bill Clinton, and then—uh—Governor Tucker appointed me chairman of the commission. And—uh—then after Governor Huckabee became governor, I worked—uh—in that same capacity for a while and—uh—then resigned, and then—uh—Governor Beebe, when he became governor, appointed me chairman.

[00:17:57] KK: I've noticed that the grounds have greatly improved—uh—since—from about the time Beebe came into office forward. It may have been started before then but it—can you talk a little bit . . .

WC: Thank you.

KK: . . . about that?

WC: I'm—I'm glad you've noticed, and it was started—uh—primarily by Janet Huckabee. She deserves much, much credit for the work that she did as First Lady. Uh—it was completed after—uh—the Beebes—uh—came to the—I started to say White House. [*Laughter*]

KK: You can start with—you can just pick it up from "it was completed" . . .

WC: Uh—it was completed—uh—under Governor and Mrs. Beebe, and—
uh—it has made a great difference. The mansion is—is—uh—used by
hundreds of thousands of—uh—Arkansans and—and visitors from
other states every year. And—uh—the Beebes especially have been—
uh—gracious hosts.

[00:19:02] KK: Mh-hmm. Yeah, I've seen many events there. And so,
the addition to the building and the grounds were—were—were two
things you were heavily involved in.

WC: Well, yes, yes.

KK: Mh-hmm, mh-hmm.

WC: Yeah, when I first became interested in helping at the mansion—uh—
we realized the need for a big room—uh—for events like that.

[00:19:27] KK: Mh-hmm, mh-hmm. You know, your agency is
recognized as having a lot of long-term client relationships, a lot of
long-term clients. Can you speak to that at all in terms of, you know—
how—what did your company do? Did you do anything special, you
think, that may be different from others, or did you have a unique
approach to keep clients long term?

WC: Well—uh—I think—uh—mostly it's just hard work and—uh—trying real
hard to do the best job that you can for the client. And we have been
lucky, too. We've represented Oaklawn Jockey Club since the—the I—
uh—mid-[19]60s, and we represented Alltel—uh—for—uh—three—
three decades before it was sold to Verizon. And we've done work for
Parks and Tourism for about the same amount of time.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:31] KK: Very rewarding, no doubt, to have those kinds of relationships. So I understand that you were also pretty interested in how—in researching the history and the techniques of advertising. So research and advertising is an area that you have an interest. Can you speak to that a little bit? Is that a correct statement, first of all, that you're—not really? Okay.

WC: No.

KK: We won't talk about that.

WC: No, it was an area of emphasis that I had to eliminate from David's first . . .

KK: M'kay.

WC: . . . draft.

KK: No problem.

WC: It'd be difficult to answer.

[00:21:13] KK: Yeah. We're almost through these, by the way. What would you like to share briefly about your family? You know, you have not only a, you know, a spouse that was a Miss Arkansas and, I believe, a runner-up for Miss America. And you also have these three sons who have followed you into the business. Is there anything you'd like to say about that family?

WC: Well, yes. I'm proud of my family. I never could've done what I've done without my wife, Frances, as a very involved partner. All three of our sons are creative and in the business. And . . .

KK: Well, that's plen—that's about—really, that's about all you needed to say about it. But what we could maybe touch on again was I—'cause you brought up something really interesting. I think a lot of times in decades past, even though the men were the successful businesspersons, it's been our experience—many of these interviews that they felt there's no way they could've done it without their spouse and that their spouse played a much larger role than just running the family home. You—do you feel comfortable speaking about that? Was that true in your case?

WC: Yeah, yes, it was true. I think Frances has played a very important part in the success of our company in many ways.

[00:22:53] KK: And did it—is there a bit of pride or excitement or joy that you get out of seeing that your three sons have done a lot of different things in their careers and now have come back into your company? Can you talk about that?

WC: Yes, all three have worked in New York and Los Angeles and Washington, and we were pretty happy for them to come home.

[00:23:21] KK: I understand. So, in the latter stage of your career, what's been your primary role with CJRW?

WC: Well, I actually retired in 1993, and I still am on the executive committee at the agency and the board of directors and do work whenever I'm needed and called upon.

[00:23:51] KK: Is it exciting sometimes to come back and see what's been accomplished?

WC: Oh, yes. Yes. I can't think of anything else to say about this.

KK: No, that's fine. [*Laughter*] Clearly, the—your service on the—with the Arkansas Arts Center is well noted. But what I didn't know until I started doing this research for this interview was your service for the Kennedy Center. And I think that's quite remarkable. Can you speak a little bit about your board service?

[00:24:24] WC: Well, the—under Jeannette Rockefeller's chairmanship, I was first appointed to the board of trustees of the Arkansas Arts Center, and then later appointed to another term and Bill Clinton—or I ought to say President Clinton.

KK: That's fine, yeah.

WC: President Clinton appointed me chairman of the president's advisory Committee on the Arts, which works very closely with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington. And as chairman of that committee, I was an ex officio member of the board of trustees of the Kennedy Center.

[00:25:15] KK: That had to be so exciting. [*Laughs*] I can't imagine some of the wonderful conversations and people that you met in that role. Was that a rewarding experience for you?

WC: Oh, yes. [*Laughs*]

KK: What was most exciting for you about being involved in that? What was most interesting about it?

WC: I think the people that we met. Some of the most interesting people that I've known—well, that's not good.

KK: M'kay, you can start over.

[00:25:59] WC: The most interesting part of the work that I did with the Kennedy Center, I think, was the people that we got to meet. People from all over the country. My committee had representatives from almost every state, and we had many occasions to work with celebrities in the entertainment industry. And . . .

KK: [*Laughs*] That's [*Laughter*—it's tough, isn't it? [*Laughter*]

WC: Yes [*unclear words*]. [*KK laughs*]

[00:26:36] KK: Put you back on this side of the camera where you're more comfortable. [*Laughs*] But you know, why is it—you know, is it—was it nice to be an Arkansan—to be involved in something of national scope? It seems like it would be pretty nice to kind . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . of represent . . .

WC: It was actually a special thing, I think, to be an Arkansan. The people on my committee were all Clinton fans, and they enjoyed meeting someone who had known President Clinton so long and—yes, it was.

[00:27:17] KK: What kind of questions did they ask you about Clinton, or what did they like to hear . . .

WC: Oh God, every . . .

KK: Did they like to hear stories . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . from the governor days or . . .

WC: Yes. I can't tell you some of the things.

KK: Oh, of course not. [*Laughter*] You can't tell us everything. I understand that. But they must have enjoyed hearing about kind of the home-spun angle on Bill Clinton. You know, clearly a guy from Arkansas, but clearly a guy with a very high intellect, a very high ability. In a way, I think that surprised some people.

[00:27:52] WC: Right. Not just the president, but also Hillary Clinton. And they were all and are continuing to be very impressed with their super intellect and abilities.

KK: Yeah, I've—you know, and I'm not trying to get you to say one way or the other, but I'm just making a comment—but I've heard a lot of people say that Hillary was even more bright, if that's possible, than Bill Clinton, and that together they were just really almost an unstoppable force. It's just—it's really amazing to have those two people, you know—although Hillary's not originally from Arkansas, but I think of them both as Arkansas people.

[00:28:34] WC: I think she considers herself very much an Arkansan and—or that she has been an Arkansan and is proud of our state. And I believe that both of them would say that they benefitted from being here and learning about people and what people need.

[00:29:00] KK: Yeah, that—because that's real [*WC laughs*—it's real different from being in London or Washington, DC, or Chicago than it is being in Arkansas.

WC: Yes.

KK: So what I'm hearing you kind of say is that it made them more well

rounded. It gave them exposure to a more broad scope of what the country is like.

WC: Surely.

[00:29:16] KK: And I—you know, I would agree that it would have to be important because, you know, you need to know your constituents in order to be a good public servant.

WC: Yeah.

KK: So a poor state like Arkansas is probably a good training ground, I would think.

WC: He's doin' all the talking. [*Laughter*]

KK: Well, I'm—I keep thinkin' [*laughter*] you might follow up. [*Laughter*]

BP: He's puffin'.

WC: Yeah. [*Laughter*]

[00:29:42] KK: But I just—I'm often—I think it is remarkable that those two people as Arkansans have achieved and continue to achieve what they're achieving. And do you ever get a chance to still talk with the Clintons? I know they're very busy, but do you get a chance to speak with them every once in a while?

WC: Yeah. Yes, I visit with 'em fairly often, and I am . . .

[00:30:07] KK: Are you still an unofficial advisor of some—of any kind?

WC: No.

KK: Or do you just . . .

WC: No.

KK: . . . have a . . .

WC: No.

KK: . . . more of a . . .

WC: No.

KK: Just a personal relationship with them.

[00:30:17] WC: Yes. Let me say this: I really think that a former president has certain opportunities, but Bill Clinton has made the most of those and, I think, will go down in history as one of our greatest presidents because of not only what he did when he was in office but what he's done since and what he is continuing to do.

[00:30:46] KK: And being a younger retired president, a younger former president, maybe that also gives him a bigger opportunity than maybe former presidents, but you know, when you think of ?his? global initiatives and what a huge reach he has and his ability worldwide to raise money, that is an opportunity.

WC: Yes. [*Laughter*]

KK: Yes, it is. [*Laughter*]

WC: Yes, it is.

KK: "Yes, I would agree with you." [*BP laughs*]

WC: Yes, he asks real good questions to [*KK laughs*] say "Yes" or "No," doesn't he?

BP: Yes, yes, yes.

KK: I'm not doin' it right, then. [*WC laughs*] I'm not doin' it right if I'm makin' you say "Yes" and "No." There is a comment in here—you know, it—we've talked a lot about how important good education is.

But also the arts—you have quite a bit of involvement in the arts and that—you know, sometimes the arts get shuttled off to the side when there are economic problems or other issues like testing scores and—why is art and culture so important to you?

[00:31:44] WC: Because the arts are important to everybody. And in business and in higher education and all forms of life, the arts are just very important.

KK: You want to try that one again? You kind of stumbled there. So why is support of the arts important?

WC: [Pause] It's important that we support the arts because they are so important to people in the lives that we all lead. They're important to business. They're important to higher education, of course, and many areas.

KK: And . . .

WC: That better?

KK: Yes. And why is the arts important like reading and writing and arithmetic. Why is the arts—how does the arts fit into that, or why is that an important part? What do the arts give us that these other skills don't give us?

WC: Main thing, I think, is it helps to be a more well-rounded person.

[00:33:13] KK: So you think the humanities is an important part of our overall education?

WC: Yes. Arts and humanities are extremely important in today's world.

KK: Hmm. Perfect. Do you have any comments about—it says something

here about the future of business in Arkansas. I mean, that's a pretty broad question. Do you have any—you're pretty tapped into—and have been over the years—to the business leadership of Arkansas. So do you have any feeling about the potential of the progress of business in Arkansas?

[00:33:48] WC: I think—and the best is yet to come in Arkansas. We have come a long way in so many areas, and with the leadership that we have had and that we have now, the best is yet to come.

KK: Well, that's very encouraging in a down economic time. But do you feel like Arkansas . . .

WC: But you know, we've . . .

KK: . . . will climb out of this?

WC: We've survived the economy much better than most states.

KK: So in some sense, Arkansas is poised to maybe do better than some other states in the near future, one would hope.

WC: Yes. [*Laughter*]

KK: This is pretty funny. Okay, we've got enough good statements. Is there anything that I've left out about—that would make a good sound bite about, you know . . .

WC: I mean . . .

KK: . . . CJRW or, you know . . .

[00:34:40] WC: I—you know, one thing I was cognizant of was the script for the video.

KK: Oh. Oh, okay.

WC: And I—you know, I knew some of the things that were being said.

KK: You didn't want to repeat that verbatim, right?

WC: Right.

KK: Yeah.

BP: Is there something I can ask here?

WC: Yeah.

KK: Yeah, sure.

[00:35:03] BP: I'm just gonna go off in a whole nother direction here.

WC: Good.

BP: Your agency [*WC laughs*] has turned into probably the predominant or the biggest agency Arkansas has ever seen and currently continues to be the predominant . . .

WC: Yeah.

BP: . . . advertising agency.

WC: Yes, but I can't say that.

BP: I know that. No, and I'm sayin' that. But we all know that, and part of the reason you're being inducted into the Hall of Fame is because what you've contributed through your business to this state. And as you know, these folks want to sit down with you in Little Rock and say thank you for the contribution you have made personally as well as what the agency has made to this state. Now, there's a couple of questions I want to ask you.

WC: Okay.

[00:35:46] BP: The first one is, is there anything, and this may be a little

tough, anything over the however many decades you . . .

WC: Five.

BP: Five decades. What—is there anything that stands out in your mind as far as memory goes? I mean, what has made this endeavor, this journey, satisfying to you personally through this agency and the work you've done. Is there anything you can think of that's—that really is good example of why I got into this business.

KK: That's a great question. You'll have to direct the answer to me.

[00:36:20] WC: Yeah. Two things come to mind. One is helping Arkansas, and I think in many ways that we have made contributions to various companies and to the state itself to help the economy of Arkansas. And then the second thing would be the people. We have given many, many people a chance to begin a career and continue a career in some cases.

KK: Mh-hmm. Yeah.

BP: Good.

[00:37:03] KK: Good. Now, what are—I mean, they're thanking you, but what are you thankful about? I mean, what makes you say, "Wow, I'm really glad, you know, that I had this opportunity."

WC: Well, I remember many people who have helped so much along the way. The—Marcus George at the *Arkansas Democrat*; Judge Pat Mehaffy; Judge William Smith; Finley Vincent; Bill Bowen. There are so many people that I owe so much to. That's why I'm grateful.

KK: Awesome.

WC: That okay?

BP: No, one more question.

WC: Okay.

BP: That was a good answer. [*WC laughs*] As you—as this agency got bigger and bigger and more successful over time, most businesses that enjoy the success that your agency enjoyed—and you—fortunately or unfortunately, depending on who you're talking to, pack up and leave. They head for New York, or they head for Chicago, or they head for the West Coast. And it's almost like, how odd that you all didn't do that, that you stayed here in Arkansas. Is there—can you tell me why you didn't pack up and go to the big city with the agency? You knew you were on the right track. You knew the agency was gonna do well. It just seems like—from the outside lookin' in, it might seem like, "Well, why didn't they go somewhere else?" Why did you stay in Arkansas?

[00:38:42] WC: We never thought about leaving Arkansas. We, at various times, have had branch offices in Memphis, New Orleans, Dallas, Shreveport—course, Northwest Arkansas we have an office right now. But we have been able to do our work in—while we live in Little Rock, which is a wonderful place to live. Not very good.

KK: Yeah. [*Unclear words*]

[00:39:16] BP: So a lot of it is just you like—you intentionally wanted to stay in Arkansas . . .

WC: Yeah.

BP: . . . because you liked the place. I mean, there's no secret formula here or anything like that. You just—you liked it, and so you decided you're gonna stay rather than move to New York, for example.

WC: Yeah.

BP: Yeah.

[00:39:39] WC: The desire to live in Arkansas is one thing and is important, but another—let me start over.

KK: Sure.

[00:40:04] WC: The desire to live in Arkansas because it's a great place to live is important. But another thing that comes to mind is that we like to feel that we have helped Arkansas to grow and become a better place.

KK: Yeah.

BP: Kay.

WC: That good?

BP: That's good. [*WC laughs*]

KK: Yeah.

BP: That's good, I think.

KK: Yeah, those last two or three were really helpful for your edit, right?

BP: Yeah, that's what I'm thinkin' here. Yeah.

[00:40:38] KK: Okay. Yeah. Bruce is actually gonna be the one that's gonna cut together the little finished piece for the . . .

WC: Oh . . .

KK: So he's . . .

WC: . . . my sympathies. [*Laughter*]

KK: So he . . .

BP: No, no.

KK: So he's thinking about, you know, like a wrap—the wrap-up phrase and things like that, so some of those answers I think will work very well for that.

WC: Good.

[00:40:59] KK: Is there anything else that you would like to say about your wonderful agency and the life that you've been able to leave—lead?

WC: Well, it ain't over yet.

KK: Well [*WC laughs*], no, it's not, thank God.

WC: Oh, let's see—like what?

KK: Well, I mean, I do think it's interesting to follow up on what Bruce said. You know, you started creating this really successful agency, and you guys, you know, did some branch offices, but you decided not to go, "Okay, we're just gonna, you know, Jim and I or the four of us or whatever, we're just gonna—we're gonna go, but we're gonna move to Dallas, and we're gonna get a lot bigger." And the same thing happened to your sons. They went off to other cities and did big, important, nice things.

WC: Right.

[00:41:43] KK: But they ended up comin' back here. That's kind of a neat repetition, I think. Is there a way you might be able to

incorporate that idea into one sentence? You know, not only did you want to stay here, but they ended up comin' back, too. I mean . . .

WC: A man that I've always greatly admired used to say, "Who will build Arkansas if her own people do not?" And that concept has been important in my career.

KK: Absolutely. Good one. I remember that. That's a great one.

BP: Good. You're good.

KK: Bruce, we got all the thing we need, you think?

BP: I'm thinkin' we're . . .

KK: More than enough for that.

BP: . . . pretty close. Yeah, yeah.

KK: Okay. Well, why don't we . . .

BP: We got some good bites.

KK: Yeah, why don't we be done with the Business Hall of Fame part, eat some lunch, and then the next part will be a lot easier, I think, 'cause you can just wander around all you want.

WC: Gotta tell you all my projection about the Clintons. I think Hillary is going to run as vice president.

KK: Really?

BP: Really?

KK: There've been a few rumors that she might.

BP: Joe Biden will become secretary of state or perhaps an ambassador to Great Britain or somethin' like that.

KK: Wow.

BP: And Hillary will—I think that's the only way Obama can win.

[00:43:09] KK: Well, it's interesting because she's already publicly announced two or three times that she was not gonna be secretary of state for a second term.

WC: And she's also said she's tired and wants to not do anything. Or—except write a book and do that. But being vice president is a lot more easy than being [*laughs*] secretary of state.

BP: Yeah.

[00:43:32] KK: No kidding. And when you look what she's had to deal with, it's got to been one of the most difficult and busy, challenging times for a secretary of state of all time.

WC: Yeah.

KK: I mean, I—I'm blown away by how she's doin' . . .

WC: But I really think—they were here, you know, just a month ago for the—well, it was in October—for the dedication of the bridge. And Chelsea and Hillary came with him, and we went to a party over at Kaki Hockersmith's, and I walked in, and all of the kingmakers from both coasts were there, and I thought, "Why are all these people"—I mean, the twentieth anniversary of his announcing that he was gonna run for president—that's not all that sexy. I mean, why would they all come to Little Rock this weekend? And the more I thought about it—that's what was goin' on.

BP: Some negotiations were happening.

KK: Well . . .

WC: Yeah, they'll have to . . .

KK: . . . decision probably had been made by then.

WC: They'll have to twist her arm . . .

KK: Yeah.

WC: . . . and appeal to all of her special interests that she has. And now that her mother has . . .

KK: Yeah.

WC: . . . passed away and she doesn't have to worry about that, I really think that's what's gonna happen.

[00:45:00] KK: Well, interesting.

WC: And another reason I'm so proud of 'em, you know.

KK: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, what other couple has been able to achieve what they've achieved politically. I mean, that's just phenomenal.

WC: Yeah.

KK: It really is.

[00:45:16] WC: Worldwide. I mean, all the research shows that he's one of the most popular people in the world.

KK: And the respect for her, worldwide, has gotta be . . .

WC: Yeah.

KK: . . . incredibly high.

WC: Yeah. [*Electronic music*]

KK: So . . .

WC: He's more likeable, but [*laughter*—I—although I like Hillary a lot.

[00:45:38] KK: I think if you knew her personally and were sitting with

her in a room as a friend, it would probably be really different than . . .

WC: Yeah.

KK: . . . having her on camera talking about an issue.

WC: Oh yeah.

KK: I mean, I just—you know, some people have a different persona when they're in their political mode than when they're in their . . .

WC: Yeah.

KK: . . . personal mode.

WC: Yeah.

[00:45:52] KK: But there's no doubt her ability is extremely high. And you think—look at the complicated stuff she's been dealin' with lately—the fine lines she's had to take on all these issues in the Middle East . . .

WC: Oh, I know.

KK: . . . and North Korea and Pakistan.

WC: The touchy Middle East situation and . . .

KK: Yeah. You know, the . . .

WC: . . . handlin' Israel and—ooh!

KK: The surprising shift of the Arab Spring. So many incredible issues going on there. I admire—I envy that you have a occasional seat at the table just to kinda hang out with somebody who's working at that level. Must be incredible.

WC: It's an advantage, you know [*laughs*], to have known somebody that long.

KK: Well, we'll ask more about your . . .

[00:46:43] WC: There was one question there that . . .

KK: Oh, sure.

WC: . . . might—I would like to say a little bit more about the small-town thing.

KK: You want to take a look at that and—or I can just ask you a question about the importance of comin' from a small town, if that will get you started.

WC: [Pause] Can't think, though, what . . .

[00:47:15] KK: The original question was really about—the answer was kinda about, "Well, you kinda want to prove yourself when you're comin' from a smaller town and you come to the big city." But you may have had a second thought about it.

WC: Well, I can't think now what it was.

KK: Okay.

WC: So maybe I've said enough about that.

KK: Maybe. But I—we have found that—I would say ninety-five out of a hundred people we interview came from a small town in Arkansas, no matter how big their success was. [00:47:45] A number of people that have come from Camden, Nashville, kinda that south-central, southeast, southwest small town—Fordyce—I'm just astounded how many people have come from those towns.

WC: Now, Bald Knob is northeast.

KK: No, I know [*WC laughs*], but it seems like a lot of those smaller

towns—not real close to a big town—that a number of people have come from those areas . . .

WC: Yeah.

KK: . . . and have been very successful.

[00:48:11] WC: And that—see, that script mentions Bald Knob, so I guess it's okay.

KK: Yeah. I mean, was goin' to Searcy a big deal from Bald Knob or was goin' to . . .

WC: Oh yeah. Yeah.

KK: Yeah, we'll talk more about that in your bigger history.

WC: And you know, it just takes less than ten minutes now to get from Searcy to Bald Knob. But then, when I was growin' up, it was big—a big deal—took a lot of time to get there, and course, the trains were running. We were—we used to hop on the train and come to Little Rock for the day, and that was a big deal.

KK: Yeah, no doubt. But there were a lot of trains running, too, so it was easier in that sense for the train.

WC: Yeah.

[00:48:52] KK: But you didn't—I mean, you weren't gonna get and—try to drive to Little Rock very often. That just wasn't—you know, I guess when you were really young, maybe—did you guys always have a car?

WC: Yeah.

KK: Yeah. Well . . .

WC: My dad was a carpenter. And we certainly didn't have a lot of money,

but we always had a car and indoor bathrooms. [*Laughter*]

KK: Yeah.

WC: That sort of thing.

[00:49:23] KK: You know, 'cause, you know, Governor Beebe didn't start out with indoor plumbing. I mean, there were a lot of people . . .

WC: I know. Yeah.

KK: . . . who didn't start with indoor plumbing.

WC: Yeah.

KK: So I guess you were a little bit more fortunate. Well, you're not quite—maybe not quite the same, you know, type of family, but . . .

WC: I knew Governor Beebe's first wife. I was a reporter at the *Democrat* and doing a *Sunday Magazine* photojournalism story on a Boy Scout in Pangburn, Arkansas, who had won the highest honor in Boy Scouts. He'd saved another scout's life in a boating accident. And the scout had a younger sister named Dawn, and we've—the photographer and I spent several days in Pangburn with this family. And Dawn turned out to be the wife of Mike Beebe. And the governor is still close to her father, who was kind of a, you know—well, he was helpful to him. Kind of a substitute father, really . . .

KK: Yeah.

WC: . . . during a period.

[00:50:54] KK: Yeah, that's interesting. So, it seems like the more interviews we do, the more we see how small Arkansas is in terms of . . .

WC: Oh, gosh.

KK: . . . who knows who.

WC: Gosh, yeah.

KK: Everybody knows somebody else that's—you know, has done some different things and important things. And someone in your position who was in advertising from the [19]60s, you've met probably most of or many of the people who make things happen in this state, whether it's politically or from a business standpoint and advertising and other issues.

[00:51:28] WC: Yeah, I was—I knew Sam Walton real well. And—but I was thinking the other day—I've—I have known every governor, I mean, you know, really well since Sid McMath.

KK: Neat. Well, you ready for some lunch?

WC: Well, yeah. We've—you were asking about candidates that we had handled. We even did a campaign for Orval Faibus one time. I never have talked about it.

KK: Well, we'll talk about it a little bit more when we get into your real interview 'cause that's really interesting.

[00:52:05] WC: And the reason we—the main reason we decided to not ever do any candidate representation again was Tommy Robinson.

KK: I remember that campaign. I worked on that campaign a little bit on the TV side.

WC: For which candidate?

KK: For Robinson.

WC: Really?

KK: Mh-hmm. [*Ringtone*] ?Jim? Dempsey . . .

WC: Well, he was—I mean, I could work with him. I mean . . .

KK: Yeah.

WC: . . . he was, you know, full of wisecracks and called me a limousine liberal and [*laughter*] all that, but he ended up owin' us a lot of money.

KK: No. Yeah, that's too bad.

[00:52:47] WC: Lot of money. And Jerry Jones . . .

KK: Okay, she cut. We're off camera, so you can say whatever you want to say.

WC: Would y'all like to use the table up there?

KK: Well, whatever ends up being convenient.

WC: Yeah.

KK: Okay. All right. Well, watch your head when you stand up. Don't hit the microphone.

WC: Okay.

[Tape stopped]

[00:53:09] BP: Speed.

KK: Okay. This is an interview recorded by the David and Barbara Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History. The interviewer is Kris Katrosh. The interviewee is Wayne Cranford. And the recording is taking place at Wayne Cranford's home in Little Rock, Arkansas, on the fifth day of January, 2012. Okay. Mr. Cranford, you will receive a

copy of all materials, including a full transcript, to review. Once approved, the interview will be made publicly accessible at the Pryor Center on our website and archived with other publicly available sources. If you agree with this statement, please say so now, and we'll proceed with the interview.

WC: I agree.

[00:53:49] KK: Thank you. All right. The first thing we always want to do is get your full name and get you to spell it. Now, I know that seems kind of elementary, but that way future generations will know that we got it right. So, if you'll state your full name and spell it for us.

WC: Well, my full name is J. Wayne Cranford.

KK: Mm-kay.

WC: C—well, *W-A-Y-N-E C-R-A-N-F-O-R-D*.

KK: Okay. And is that the way you like to see your name listed, like if it's on a screen—is J. Wayne Cranford . . .

WC: No, I think . . .

KK: . . . or you prefer . . .

WC: I think without the J.

[00:54:24] KK: Okay. Do you want to talk about what the J stands for or . . .

WC: No.

KK: [*Laughs*] Okay, well, there you go. Where were you born, and when were you born?

WC: I was born in Bald Knob, Arkansas, on January 1, 1933.

KK: So you just had a birthday.

WC: Yes.

[00:54:45] KK: Great. And can you tell us your parents' names?

WC: Yes. My father was Benjamin Franklin Cranford, and my mother was Rachel Jacobs Cranford.

KK: And so her first name—her maiden name was Jacobs or w . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: Okay.

WC: Yeah, she was Rachel Howell Jacobs.

KK: Kay. Squeaky chair here. I need to be still. And where did your parents come from?

WC: They were—their families had been in White County, Arkansas, for many generations. My mother's father was a German immigrant—came to America when he was eighteen. I never did know him. I knew her—my mother's mother, but I never knew my grandfather. And they came from Tennessee, I understand.

[00:55:56] KK: So they—on your mother's side, they came from Germany to Tennessee and then to Arkansas?

WC: Right. And also my father's family, too, from t—not Germany, but Tennessee.

KK: And—but you're—you understand that your father's side were in White County for a few generations before you.

WC: Yes.

[00:56:17] KK: Do you know anything about what they—were they always farmers, or did they pioneer—did they—do you know anything about that history?

WC: Not much. My father was a carpenter, and I am almost sure that at least one of my grandfathers was. I really don't know too much about—when I was born, my—both sets of grandparents were quite old. Because my mother was the youngest in a big family. My father was the youngest [*laughs*] in his family—big family.

[00:57:01] KK: And big families were really common in those days. You know, not all children survived, and it seemed like people had big families.

WC: Yes.

KK: Well, do you have any particular fond or fun memories about your parents as a young child?

WC: I'm—I remember they were very good parents, very loving, and supportive, and all those good things.

[00:57:34] KK: What's your earliest memory?

WC: I think my most vivid early memory was when I started to school. I was only five, and I didn't like it. I didn't want to go to school.
[*Laughs*] And it took about five days before they could get me to stay.
[*Laughter*]

[00:58:05] KK: Did you physically leave the school and go home?

WC: Yeah. My—our home was only a couple of blocks from the school.

KK: And at five years old, were you going to first grade?

WC: Yes.

KK: It's interesting because I was just hearing recently from some other interviewees—some transcripts I was reading of other interviewees—that in those times there wasn't such a strict rule about what age you were to start school or people didn't seem to enforce it as much.

WC: Right. And course, there was no kindergarten in our town, anyway, or any kind of preschool at all.

[00:58:50] KK: So starting at five, did that mean that you were ahead compared to what it would be to now? I mean, did you graduate early from high school and all that?

WC: Yes, and I also skipped the last half of the fourth grade and the first half of the fifth grade. So I was always the youngest in my class. In fact, I was—when I became a senior in high school, I was fifteen, and when I became a senior in college, I was eighteen.

[00:59:23] KK: Wow! That's so incredibly young. You had such a—an early start. You may not have liked going when you were five years old, but there were some advantages in the long run, it seems like—being—getting out of college so young.

WC: Yes, I guess so. I got an early start.

[00:59:43] KK: So what was it like growing up in Bald Knob, Arkansas?

WC: Oh, it was great. I wouldn't take anything for the small-town childhood experience. We did all the—you know, the usual things, playing out in the yard at night without air-conditioning and no television, of course. Went to the movies a lot, but overall, a very—

good memories of my childhood.

[01:00:21] KK: And since you were only two blocks from the school—you know, a lot of small towns everything was kind of walk around.

WC: Yes.

KK: Was that true for you?

WC: Yeah. Oh, yes, very much so. Yeah, people walked from our neighborhood to downtown almost always.

[01:00:43] KK: Was church within walking distance?

WC: Oh, yes.

KK: And was that regular thing for your family to go to church?

WC: It was. Yeah.

KK: Which church did you go to? Do you remember?

WC: Methodist church.

KK: Was there a pretty big congregation there?

WC: Well, pretty big for a town that small. When I was a child, the population of Bald Knob was about two thousand. It's about three thousand now, but it was about—around two thousand.

[01:01:15] KK: And so it wasn't uncommon to—after you were a little older, particularly—like, to walk to the grocery store or walk to the bank with your—with a parent or things of that nature?

WC: Not at all. It was—it would be most unusual not to.

KK: Right. So you didn't need to drive to go anywhere that was a normal place to be around in town.

WC: No.

KK: You just walked.

WC: No.

[01:01:36] KK: Did you—do you remember having a bicycle or . . .

WC: Oh yeah, and I did ride my bicycle downtown a lot and other places. I don't remember ever ridin' it to school because school was so close.

KK: Yeah, you would just walk. Now, did you go home for lunch from school, or did you eat at school?

WC: Sometimes. Not all the time. As I recall, the school didn't even have a cafeteria until maybe I was in junior high school. And people took their lunch in a little brown paper bag. But since we were so close, I did walk home sometimes.

[01:02:33] KK: I—we'd heard that from some other people, too, so that's why I asked. So, did you have any brothers and sisters?

WC: Yes, I had two brothers, one seven years older and one seven years younger.

KK: Kay, but no sisters, then?

WC: No sisters.

[01:02:55] KK: Well, what type of house did you have growing up?

WC: Well, it was not a very large house. It was on the corner of a—one of the main streets in town. As I said, close to school. Certainly not fancy at—but nice enough. I mean, we thought it was fine. And that's about all I can say about it.

[01:03:38] KK: Did you share a bedroom with your brothers? Did you have your own room or . . .

WC: See, my older brother was away at school and then in the army—
World War II. By the time—I guess I pretty much had my own room
most of the time.

KK: Yeah, 'cause it was such a spread of years between your brothers and
yourself.

WC: Yes.

[01:04:07] KK: Yeah. Now, I think you told me before we got into the
interview that you did already have running, you know, water and
indoor plumbing and electricity and . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . you know, so . . .

WC: Yeah.

KK: . . . it wasn't as primitive as some of our interviewees grew up, I
suppose.

WC: Right. No, we did have running water and one bathroom [*laughs*] and
electricity.

[01:04:36] KK: Well, tell me a little bit about your parents' jobs. What
did your—you said your father was a carpenter. Did he just . . .

WC: He was a carpenter . . .

KK: Did he travel or . . .

WC: . . . and a builder, and he could build anything. I remember he built a
flying jenny in the backyard for us to play on at one point. And he
built a tree house, and he later built many of the homes in Bald Knob.
And—but as I said, he could build anything.

[01:05:13] KK: Now, describe for people who don't know what a flying jenny is.

WC: Flying jenny is a—it's a long, thick board mounted on a post with a— goes around and round and round. [*Laughs*] Very dangerous if it hit somebody.

KK: Yeah. And did your mother ever work, or was she a housewife?

WC: No, she never did work. She was a stay-at-home mom.

KK: Hmm. Pretty common in those days.

WC: Yes.

[01:05:55] KK: So your father—it sounds like he worked fairly steadily, that he did all right.

WC: Yes. He did some work out of town. I remember during the war he was involved in the building of the Rohwer center for displaced Japanese.

KK: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm. Yeah, that was a—that was kind of an unusual thing. Did you ever go and see that camp?

WC: No. No. But he was—he's—most of his jobs were in Bald Knob.

[01:06:35] KK: And your older brother was in the service in World War II. What branch was he in, and what did he do?

WC: He was in the army in the K-9 Corps.

KK: Really? And . . .

WC: Yeah, in the Pacific.

KK: What did the K-9 Corps focus on?

WC: I'm not sure. I know they were an important part of the war effort

and—but I don't know how close they were to the, you know, battle line and all that.

[01:07:15] KK: Just kind of waiting for this plane to go over. Do you happen to know what islands he fought on or anything like that?

WC: I remember—I was—you know, I was pretty young. I was a pretty young kid, but I remember one island—one of the first ones where we knew where he was Mortai—*M-O-R-T-A-I*—and I believe he was on Iwo Jima. And usually you found out only after they had already left.

[01:07:57] KK: Right. They were tryin' to keep the troop movements . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . quiet, of course.

WC: Yeah.

KK: So there was censorship of letters.

WC: Right.

[01:08:07] KK: So do you remember anything about what your chores were as a child—as a young child? Did you have chores you had to do?

WC: Sure. I remember bringing in wood for the woodstove for heat in the winter. And of course, I mowed the lawn with a manual lawn mower [*laughs*] and things like that. Go to the store for my mother. Those are some of the chores.

[01:08:43] KK: Do you remember if the grocery store was a thing where you went in and picked up what you wanted and it was a credit thing that you paid a bill on, or did you take cash?

WC: It was a charge account, yeah.

KK: I remember that being very common.

WC: Very common.

KK: And—so those are the kind of things that make sense for a boy to be doing, right? You run the errands, you get the wood, you—now, did you have, like, a potbelly stove for heat, or was it more like a wood-burning stove near a wall?

WC: Well, it was a—I guess you would call it a potbelly stove. It was out from the wall five or six feet, I guess.

[01:09:29] KK: And was one of your jobs sometimes to make the fire in the morning?

WC: Yes.

KK: And was the cooking stove also wood fired?

WC: No, I don't believe so. I think it was always a gas stove.

KK: Okay. Did you guys have your own garden? I know victory gardens were a big deal in World War II. Did you have a garden in your house [music plays]—at your house?

WC: [Laughs] At some time we had a very small one.

KK: We'll wait till that's . . .

WC: Thought I had it turned off.

KK: That's okay.

BP: Oh. Over the headphones it sounded like the entire room. [KK laughs]

WC: Hello? Okay. It's completely off now.

KK: Okay.

WC: Sorry.

[01:10:25] KK: No, that's fine. What I was asking about was a garden. I know a lot of families had victory gardens, and some people who lived maybe not quite right in town had bigger gardens. So, did you have a garden?

WC: As I said, I think at one time we had a very small garden at our house. My grandmother had a large garden, and I had an aunt in town who had a large garden. And primarily, she kept us in all kinds of fresh vegetables.

[01:10:57] KK: I'll bet that was nice. Well, do you remember—do you—were you ever tasked with helping take care of any of those gardens you—weed the garden, waterin' things, or was it more just . . .

WC: No.

KK: . . . kind of play around?

WC: No, I don't think I would've been very helpful.

KK: [*Laughs*] Why do you say that?

WC: Well, I just didn't know how to, and I guess, really, they didn't need my help, either. [*Laughter*]

[01:11:25] KK: I understand. So did—was—you said that your family went to church and—very common—and you went to the Methodist Church. Was there usually a prayer before your meal at home every night, or was that a common occurrence?

WC: Most of the time, yes.

KK: And who usually said grace?

WC: Yes.

KK: Who usually did that in the family?

WC: Oh, my dad.

KK: Were you ever asked to do it? Did you ever . . .

WC: Sometimes. Yeah, but not very much.

[01:11:54] KK: Okay. So, the community was about two thousand people. You went to a church. It was—for the town's size, it was, you know, well attended, and I'm sure the other churches were well attended, too. What kind of things happened in a community, like, for play—like with you and other kids? Did you know a lot of neighborhood kids? Did you guys play together?

WC: Oh, yes, yes. Yeah, all—I mean, all the kids in the neighborhood—and seems like in those days almost every house had a family with children. Yeah. And there were a lot of kids to play with.

[01:12:46] KK: Do you remember what kind of games you played, specifically?

WC: Oh you know, red rover, come over and—what is it—take a baby step or, of course, hide and seek, treasure hunts—all kinds of games like that.

[01:13:14] KK: And were there—did you play baseball—more organized stuff? Did you play baseball in the summers, and did you have sports like that that you kind of played—not official, but just in the neighborhood?

WC: Not really. That was all—what there was was in the school. It was

organized sports in school.

[01:13:35] KK: Okay. And what about hunting? Did you go hunting?

WC: No.

KK: You guys didn't hunt. Okay. How about discipline? Who was the disciplinarian of the family? Was it your father or your mother?

WC: My father.

KK: You say that definitively.

WC: Oh, yes, yes.

[01:13:57] KK: [*Laughs*] And then how were you—I mean, did you ever get—were you a kind of kid that got in trouble a lot or just . . .

WC: No, not a lot. I do remember some—quote—"whippings"—unquote [*laughs*—I got for little things. I remember one time popping a friend's suspender straps, so it hurt his back and made him cry. And I got a bad spanking for that.

KK: Weren't supposed to mistreat other people, huh?

WC: No.

[01:14:31] KK: And you know, it seems like a lot of the stories that we hear are around how not just your parents but other kids' parents and other adults—that they all had a hand in making sure that kids behaved. Did you find that the town was kind of coordinated in that way that it was a given that any adult could discipline you or tell you what to do or tell your parents about problems?

WC: Yes, quite a bit, I guess. But mostly other family members, you know, like aunts and uncles and grandparents. But some of what you say.

[01:15:11] KK: Okay. And when did you first kind of get a sense of the value of a dollar? Was it—growing up when you did, I mean, things were scarce. For a number of years there, you had depression—Great Depression and, course, that—the lingering effects of the Great Depression went on for quite a while. And then you had World War II, where there was a lot of sacrifice.

WC: Yes.

[01:15:30] KK: So do you feel like in your early childhood that it was really clear what the value of a dollar was and . . .

WC: Oh, yes, I think so. I had an allowance of probably twenty-five cents a week. I remember one time a man my father was working for gave me a dollar to do my Christmas shopping. And I did all my Christmas shopping for one dollar. I was probably about seven.

[01:16:06] KK: And what kind of stores were there to shop at?

WC: Well, we had a—downtown we had a Townsend variety store. Very similar, I guess, to a Ben Franklin or that sort of store. And then we had several—one was a mercantile company—clothing and, really, all sorts of things. That's not too much.

KK: But a kid with a quarter could go to the variety store, and there'd be a lot of things for, like, a penny or a nickel, right?

WC: Yeah. Yes.

[01:16:46] KK: What kind of things could you get for a penny or a nickel?

WC: Well, you get candy. Popcorn was only I think about five cents a bag at the movie. Really, probably there weren't too many things you

could get for a penny, but you watched your pennies. You made sure you got the right number of pennies back when you bought somethin'.

KK: Yeah. Every penny counted.

WC: Yes.

[01:17:19] KK: What about race relations? Were there any African Americans in Bald Knob?

WC: Yes, there were, and they were very well treated and very—they were segregated, but the ra—the two races got along very well together.

[01:17:42] KK: And so there was a black side of town, you might say?

WC: Yes.

KK: And they had their own . . .

WC: Much . . .

KK: . . . churches and . . .

WC: Much smaller. It was very much of a minority.

KK: Yeah.

WC: The schoolchildren were bused to Searcy, which was about twelve miles away. And they had their own churches. When they went to the movie, they had to go upstairs to the balcony. They had—at the depot, the railroad [*laughs*] station, they had separate water fountains, separate restrooms.

KK: Yeah. And those were the times.

WC: Yes.

[01:18:27] KK: So pretty much your whole childhood that was the case, then.

WC: Right. But the relationships between the races was very—I mean, they were respectful of each other.

KK: So what year, then, did you—let's see, you went to grade school. What was—do you remember the name of your grade school?

WC: Oh, it was Bald Knob Public Schools.

KK: Right, so there was probably only one grade school that . . .

WC: Yes, only one. Yes.

[01:19:00] KK: And do you remember a particular teacher or class that kind of stood out for you?

WC: I do. I happen to remember the names of every teacher in high s—in grade school, junior high, and high school that I ever had. But I do remember especially two English teachers, one in junior high and one in senior high, who were especially effective. And one of them was there only because her husband was in the navy—World War II—and he was a professor at what's now the University of Central Arkansas. But she was at—in Bald Knob because her husband was away in the war, and she was a very, very good teacher.

[01:19:59] KK: And what was her . . .

WC: But all of my teachers were good, really.

KK: Hmm. And what was your teacher's name, the one that had the navy husband?

WC: That one was Mrs. Ted Worley.

KK: And then you mentioned there was a—was that the junior high or the high school teacher?

WC: That was junior high.

KK: And . . .

WC: My high school English teacher was Mrs. C.C. Hunnicut. Her husband was the superintendent of schools.

KK: Oh, that name sounds familiar. Yeah.

WC: Hunnicut.

[01:20:29] KK: And what did they do that was so special, in your mind, as far as being English teachers. Why do you think . . .

WC: Well, they made you learn to diagram sentences, and I think that was very wise, which I understand they don't do now. But I think that was the main thing. But they were just good teachers not only in grammar but literature and writing and just overall good teachers.

[01:21:06] KK: And do you think that the skills that you learned as a young student were important for you throughout your life?

WC: Oh, definitely.

KK: How did their teaching affect your life and career, you think?

WC: Well, I think that I learned at a very early age that I could write and enjoyed writing. And so when I went to college, I majored in journalism, and my first job was at a newspaper. In fact, I worked for the local weekly newspaper when I was as young as ten or eleven years old.

KK: Really?

WC: Yes.

[01:21:50] KK: And did you write stories?

WC: Right. Wrote stories and even set the type on the Linotype machine.
And the headlines were set with—hand set. Single letter at a time.

KK: Wow! So, that was a—it's just so interesting because, in a way,
you've always been involved with words . . .

WC: Right. I guess so.

KK: . . . since that early time. I mean, use of words and language have
been very, very important to your career.

WC: Yes.

[01:22:21] KK: That's so interesting to me. All right. So, then after
grade school you went to junior high. Was there just one Bald Knob
Junior High?

WC: Yes.

KK: Okay. And as you get into junior high, you know, the courses get a
little harder. There's a little bit more expectation. Did you have any
particular memory of junior high, other than your English teacher, that
stands out to you?

[01:22:48] WC: I remember I was president of my class every year
except one when they—by the time they start doing that, I guess, in
about the ninth grade. And I was president of my ninth, tenth, and
twelfth grade classes. I was valedictorian. I don't remember too
much other than that.

KK: Were you . . .

WC: There were a lot—you know, school plays that were of interest, and
the town was so small that at that time we didn't have a band. That's

about all I remember.

[01:23:44] KK: What about sports? Were you ever involved in any kind of sporting . . .

WC: No, none—no organized sports.

KK: Okay. And did you start dating in high school? Do you remember your first date?

WC: I was pretty young, you know, through high school. I think pr—I mean, we had—I guess my—really, my first real date was in college.

[01:24:21] KK: But you had—there were some things like organized dances and things like that.

WC: Oh yeah, yeah, and parties and opportunities to be with boys and girls, but then, you know . . .

KK: Yeah. And tell me again, what was—what—how old were you when you graduated from high school?

WC: Well, I became a senior when I was fifteen, and I guess I was sixteen when I graduated.

KK: Yeah, that's really young. A year or two ahead of most people.

WC: Yeah.

[01:24:53] KK: Yeah, and did you take that summer off and then immediately go to college?

WC: Yes.

KK: And where did you go to school?

WC: I went to Harding University my first year and then transferred to Arkansas State Teachers College, now University of Central Arkansas.

[01:25:15] KK: Were you thinking at that time you were gonna become a teacher or did—were you always in journalism and English?

WC: I knew that I wanted to major in journalism, and I thought that—I thought at the time that I might teach for a while but not forever. And so I did get a Bachelor of Science in Education degree, and actually, I did my practice teaching the summer after I had already taught one year.

[01:25:54] KK: I see. Gotcha. And was there—so you said you probably had your first date in college. Do you remember that experience? I mean, you were pretty young, and I know those first dates are kind of awkward or can be. Do you remember getting into the dating life at all?

WC: No, not really. Nobody had a c—not very many people had cars, so there was—had a lot of walking and sharing rides and riding from the campus downtown in a city bus and that sort of thing.

[01:26:34] KK: So there wasn't really as much of an opportunity to have a—what you would call a car date.

WC: No. No.

KK: Nor maybe would it have been as easy to have one from a parental standpoint. You know, parents probably weren't super eager to have their teenage girls go out on car dates with teenage boys.

WC: Right.

KK: Yeah. Fairly conservative at Harding, was it not? And also at—was it as conservative at State Teachers College as it was at Harding?

WC: Oh, no, no.

KK: It was pretty different.

WC: Yeah.

[01:27:03] KK: What prompted you to switch from Harding to State Teachers College?

WC: Well, one, I had a scholarship. [*Laughs*] And another, I had been—I was offered a job in the school publicity department where I did work throughout the time I was in college.

KK: So it came with a scholarship and a part-time job opportunity.

WC: Mh-hmm.

KK: That's pretty significant. You know, college is difficult to pay for.

WC: Yeah.

[01:27:38] KK: So did you pretty much pay your own way by that—by those means?

WC: I had a little help.

KK: Your parents helped out?

WC: Yes.

KK: Okay.

WC: But of course, tuition costs in those days were nothing like they are now.

[01:27:55] KK: Do you remember how much it cost to go for a semester in those days?

WC: I don't. My impression is that it was only about four or five hundred dollars a semester.

KK: Yeah, that's incredible by today's standards.

WC: Yes.

[01:28:13] KK: All right, so you were in college. You had a part-time job. You had a scholarship. Were there any teachers or other influences in college that kind of stand out to you? Either friends that you had that became lifelong friends or, you know, or a teacher that was important to you?

WC: Actually, about all of them were. My journalism teacher was Miss Roberta Clay, and I remember her well. But all of my teachers were good. And one of my best friends in college was Will Counts, who became a very, very well-known photographer in the 1957 Central High crisis and published several books of photography and became a Ph.D. in photojournalism and taught at the University of Indiana. Died of cancer fairly young.

[01:29:30] KK: And he was a good friend of yours at State Teachers College?

WC: Yes.

KK: Was he also in journalism with you?

WC: Yes, he was. And then I have a lot of friends still that were in school when I was and were fraternity brothers. They live here in Little Rock now. And then several who were a little bit younger, but we became acquainted about that time.

[01:30:06] KK: And what fraternity was that that you belonged to?

WC: At that time it was Phi Sigma Epsilon. I think it's now Sigma Epsilon—

Sigma Phi Epsilon, I believe.

[01:30:20] KK: Kay. Yeah. So, when you were growing up in high school and in college, was politics a big—was it an interest to you? Did you—was there a lot of conversation about politics around the dinner table and things of that nature?

WC: Yes, quite a bit. I remember big news was when Sid McMath was elected governor, and there were, you know, some scandals and some—prior to his election. And then several years later, race relations got to be a big thing. There were segregationists and integrationists and liberal—social liberals and social conservatives, and yes, it was talked about at the dinner table and at school.

[01:31:32] KK: So, what year did you enter college?

WC: Nineteen forty-nine.

KK: So, the race-relation issues were really starting to heat up in the [19]50s. You were already out of college by then.

WC: Right.

KK: So, you and your friends and colleagues and acquaintances and family—the race-relations issues in the late [19]50s, early [19]60s were a pretty big topic, I would think.

WC: Oh yes. Yes. By the time the 1957 crisis occurred, I was already in Little Rock and had just left the *Arkansas Democrat*, and some of my friends there were very much involved in the—covering the activities at Central High. And I was already at the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce.

[01:32:37] KK: And were you doing public relations type of work with the Chamber of Commerce?

WC: Yes, I was their director of public relations.

KK: So the crisis, the Central High crisis, and race-relations issues were a huge deal in your department because to try to attract business—to try to improve business atmosphere was very tough in those times.

WC: Right.

KK: I would assume the corporations were very shy about establishing a headquarters in Little Rock or opening a . . .

WC: Right.

KK: . . . big plant with . . .

WC: Right.

KK: . . . race-relation problems.

WC: Our industrial-development efforts just came to a standstill for several years. And I remember the first one that we were successful with was Jacuzzi Brothers, and so that was a big deal.

[01:33:34] KK: Very important for the city.

WC: Yes.

KK: I remember seein' their place in southwest Little Rock. Were they always based in southwest Little Rock? Do you remember?

WC: Yes, they were out on the old Hot Springs highway. I guess it's still Asher Avenue. No, no—well, University Avenue.

KK: Right. Right.

WC: Highway to Hot Springs.

[01:34:02] KK: Right. And I mean, that was a very prominent company for decades.

WC: Yes.

KK: Guess . . .

WC: Yes, they'd been in San Francisco and moved here and were in operations until they were sold to a bigger company.

[01:34:21] KK: Were you involved directly in trying to lure them to the state with your activities?

WC: Yes.

KK: Well . . .

WC: In fact, when—while I was at the Chamber of Commerce, I really had an opportunity to meet all of the business leaders in Little Rock like Bill Bowen and Billy Rector and people who were the real movers and shakers. And I, you know, became—they were Mr. Bowen and so forth to me, but I was—I mean, they called me by my first name, and I knew them, so by the time I got into advertising, I had that advantage of knowing all these business leaders.

[01:35:13] KK: Well, that had to be of a huge impact on your career.

WC: I ge—I think it was.

KK: Because it's personal, isn't it? I mean, these kinds of business transactions, these kind of business relationships are part built upon personal relationships.

WC: Oh yeah. Well, of course.

KK: 'Cause there has to be trust.

WC: Yes.

[01:35:29] KK: Well, that's really interesting. Well, before we get too far into your career, I just want to cover that segment of postcollege when you went back to Bald Knob and kind of catch back up to the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce time to fill that little gap in. So, what did you do immediately after college?

WC: Immediately after college. I—my dad died when I was a sophomore in college. And I felt like I really needed to go ahead and get out as soon as possible, and so I did finish in three years. And—but I was still pretty young [*laughs*] and actually too young to get a lot of jobs. And I did have an opportunity to teach journalism and English at Bald Knob High School, which I did for three years and enjoyed it very much. But finally decided that I couldn't afford it [*laughter*] and moved to Little Rock to seek my fortune and . . .

[01:36:48] KK: So how old were you when you graduated from college?

WC: Well, I finished college after three years, except for my practice teaching. So I taught school one year before I did my practice teaching and at that point got my degree. And I guess by that time I was almost twenty.

[01:37:23] KK: So you actually taught for a full year before you actually did your official practice teaching . . .

WC: Right.

KK: . . . for your degree.

WC: I was ni—I started teaching when I was nineteen.

KK: Well, it's kind of funny because you'd been teaching for a year and then you did your—quote/unquote—"practice teaching" . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . for college, so you had some experience under your belt. Was that helpful for your practice-teaching time?

WC: Oh yeah, it was a breeze. [*Laughter*]

KK: I would think so, having already been a real teacher.

WC: Yes.

KK: But there's a mentorship portion of that, right, where you practice teach under a more experienced teacher . . .

WC: Right.

KK: . . . and . . .

WC: And it was helpful. Yes.

[01:37:56] KK: But having already done some teaching, it probably was even more helpful. You got more out of that mentor, probably . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . 'cause you had some background, I would think.

WC: Yes.

KK: Yeah. All right, so then you go back, and you teach a couple more years in Bald Knob. You decide that you want to, like all people, you want to advance. You want to make a bigger salary. You want to do something different. What did you do next?

WC: I moved to Little Rock and almost immediately got a job at the *Arkansas Democrat*, an evening daily newspaper. And at first I was a

police reporter and later assistant state editor and then later a writer in the *Sunday Magazine*.

[01:38:45] KK: But you'd had quite a bit of paid journalistic work prior to that *Democrat* job. You said that you'd actually written some copy as early as ten or eleven years old for a paper.

WC: Right. I—yeah . . .

KK: Did you also participate in, like, school papers and college paper and . . .

WC: Oh, well, yes, in the college paper. I was editor of the college newspaper. And as I said earlier, I had worked on the weekly newspaper in Bald Knob for several years while I was very young. Learned a lot there.

[01:39:18] KK: And do you think that that experience made it a lot easier to get that job at the *Democrat*? I would think so.

WC: Yes, but I think they really needed somebody and thought I had the qualifications [*laughs*] to fill the job that was open at the time.

KK: Did you feel like that your age, your young age when you joined the *Democrat*, that that was a—that that made it harder to for you to get that job?

WC: Little bit.

[01:39:52] KK: Did you feel like that they thought they might be takin' a risk on a youngster?

WC: Yes, some.

KK: So you had to prove yourself.

WC: Yes.

KK: And is the police beat job one of those jobs that's a kind of a beginner job at a newspaper, often?

WC: Yes. Yes. It was—actually, it was a—the police beat was my first job, and then I was promoted to the city hall beat, which was very similar. And then to the state desk.

KK: Well, what does that mean—the state desk? What does that involve?

WC: Well, there is a copy desk in the middle of a big newsroom, and the city editor and the state editor and the wire editor all sit around it with a—or at that time they did—and gathered the news.

[01:40:42] KK: And so what was your direct responsibility then? You did the state part—the state editor part?

WC: Yes. Assistant state editor. I took calls from correspondents all over the state. Wrote a lot of obituaries. [*Laughs*] And—but any kind of news that the—and they had—we had a paid correspondent in just about every little town in Arkansas who would call in with the news.

KK: That's amazing. That's a lot of people, and that's a lot of stories. And was part of your job whittling down what needed to go in the paper the next day or whittling down . . .

WC: Yes. Yes.

KK: . . . because sounds like you might've gotten more stories than you could use on a lot of days.

WC: Oh yeah.

[01:41:37] KK: Did you develop some good friendships with some of

those reporters? Just . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . even though you rarely saw them personally?

WC: Yes, very much. They're still good friends.

KK: That's interesting 'cause it was really a telephone relationship.

WC: Well, yes, I didn't develop many real friendships with those people on the telephone. I thought you meant the people in the newsroom. Will Counts being one of them, my college friend.

[01:42:04] KK: Yeah. Yep. And was he doing primarily photography for the newspaper at that time?

WC: Oh, yes.

KK: He didn't write stories?

WC: No.

KK: Kay.

[01:42:13] WC: He almost won the Pulitzer during 1957.

KK: In part for that picture, the famous picture of Elizabeth Eckford.

WC: Yes.

[01:42:27] KK: One of the most famous pictures of race relations in the country, ever, probably.

WC: Right. The advisory committee selected him and that picture as the winner of the Pulitzer Prize, but the board vetoed it because they had already awarded or decided to award the Pulitzer to the *Arkansas Gazette* for its overall coverage, and they didn't think there should be—and also Harry Ashmore for editorials and they didn't think that

there should be that many Pulitzer Prizes in one city.

[01:43:07] KK: So, essentially, he earned it and got voted for it, but it got vetoed . . .

WC: Right.

KK: . . . almost by chance. I mean, it wasn't really a . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: It wasn't because he didn't earn it.

WC: Right. Just bad luck.

KK: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Interesting, interesting time. I mean, what a great time to be a journalist. A great time. I shouldn't say a great time because it was a very difficult time.

WC: Lot of change.

[01:43:31] KK: But so much happened from the mid-[19]50s to the mid-[19]60s. Were you—and how long were you at the *Democrat*?

WC: Not long. About a year.

KK: Just about a year. And that was in [19]57, [19]58—in that—right in there or was it a little . . .

WC: No, it's a little before that.

KK: Okay. Yeah.

WC: [Nineteen] fifty-five and [19]56.

[01:43:55] KK: And while you were at the paper, were things starting to come to a head in that area?

WC: Oh, yes, all over the South.

KK: Lot of change. You could—I've had it described to me—in fact, by

David Pryor—in an interview he said, "Not everyone talked about it, but you could feel it everywhere."

WC: Yeah.

KK: It was like it was in the air. Was that a—is that an accurate description of how it felt?

WC: Yes, exactly. It was kind of a rumbling—and, too, there were things going on in other states that made it very surprising when the Central High School crisis became the big news. It was most unexpected that that happened in Little Rock.

[01:44:44] KK: That's interesting, because I've certainly heard the perspective that the focus on that incident was maybe not totally deserved, or maybe it wasn't just necessarily the most radical thing going on in the South at the time.

WC: Oh, exactly. There were a lot of worse places regarding the fight by segregationists than what happened in Little Rock.

[01:45:21] KK: What do you think made it such a national spotlight?

WC: Combination of circumstances. Fa—Governor Faubus was furthering his political ambitions. The president at that time was not totally on top of things. There were just a number of coincidences and circumstances that worked out that way.

KK: Do you think it was possible that, under different circumstances, that it wouldn't have gotten out of control like it did? Do you think it could have . . .

WC: Well, probably, but there were avid segregationists who came into

Little Rock from other cities and other—and not all in Arkansas—other states—and caused the so-called riots. They weren't really riots, but they were just demonstrations.

[01:46:33] KK: And things like the governor blockin' the door and disagreeing with the president—those things certainly brought it . . .

WC: Yes. Yes.

KK: You were—do you remember when Faubus was being interviewed on national television about the issues?

WC: Oh, yes.

KK: I mean, that was a pretty famous thing, too.

WC: Right.

KK: And this is early television.

WC: Yes. Yeah, there were only three networks and three, you know, local stations to cover everything.

[01:47:07] KK: Yeah. Yeah. And newspapers were a huge part of the communication chain at that time before television became more . . .

WC: Oh, yes.

KK: I mean, every little town revolved around the newspaper, seems like.

WC: Yeah.

KK: Yeah.

WC: And just about everybody you knew read the newspaper.

KK: Right. Every day.

WC: Yes.

[01:47:31] KK: All adults.

WC: Yes, without fail. And a lot of young adults—older children. I know I remember I started readin' the newspaper every day when I was probably eight.

KK: Well, that's interesting 'cause I know I didn't.

WC: You didn't? [*Laughs*]

KK: Not at eight years old.

WC: Yeah.

KK: But then again, you were writin' copy by the time you were eleven, so you got into it early.

WC: Yeah.

KK: Yeah. Interesting. It seems like those people that start really young like that do have a bit of an advantage when they become adults in the marketplace. Do you think that's true?

WC: I—yeah, probably so.

[01:48:19] KK: Yeah. All right. So you finish college. You do a year of teaching. You do your practice teaching. You get your degree. You do some more teaching. You get a good—move to Little Rock to forward your career. You join the *Democrat* for a year. Then what happened? Why only a year?

WC: Because I was offered the very prestigious job of director of public relations for the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce.

[01:48:45] KK: Now, how does a young kid who's only had one year in the workforce in Little Rock get a job offer like that?

WC: I never knew. It was just a very lucky experience.

KK: Would you not guess that there was a possibility that someone in the chamber had a conversation with someone at the newspaper ahead of that or asked around?

WC: Oh yeah, probably. Yes.

KK: But you never heard that backstory.

WC: No. I didn't know who it was.

KK: So you don't even know who to thank for maybe helping.

WC: No.

[01:49:15] KK: Interesting. Interesting. All right, so you get invited into this really pretty amazing job at a young age. How old were you when you joined the chamber?

WC: Twenty-three.

KK: A lot of kids are still in college—twenty-three. Or maybe just getting into a master's program or maybe just starting their first job.

WC: Yeah.

[01:49:41] KK: All right. So what was that like workin' for the chamber?

WC: Oh, it's great. Great fun. I got to start a publication for them—edit it. And I worked with the other departments, like industrial development and membership and all the activities we had. Among other things, the chamber started a—its own bowl—football bowl game called the Aluminum Bowl. And we just did all kinds of interesting things.

[01:50:22] KK: Now, this publication that you made, was it a newsletter? Who all got the newsletter? How was it . . .

WC: Well, all the members of the Chamber of Commerce and, you know, all

the media and other chambers of commerce throughout the country and that sort of thing.

[01:50:42] KK: And when you say you put it together, clearly you were the person in charge and probably did a lot of the writing and, certainly, the editing.

WC: Right. And taking the photographs.

KK: And was that something new for you to take the photographs, or had you been doing that on and off?

WC: No, I'd been doing that while I was at the *Democrat*. And—well, after I left the *Democrat*, I'd been with the *Sunday Magazine*. The editor, Bob McCord, allowed me to freelance a lot of photojournalism stories for his *Sunday Magazine*. And I worked with Will Counts on some of them. I worked with a photographer named Rodney Worthington on some. And we did quite a few freelance jobs like that.

[01:51:38] KK: And were you guys using, like, the two-and-a-quarter speed, graphics-type cameras in those days?

WC: Yes.

KK: Does that sound familiar? Is that right?

WC: Yes. The old-fashioned . . .

KK: It's got a little bellows on it and it . . .

WC: Right. And they let me . . .

KK: Kind of heavy.

WC: They let me take the pictures, but then turned 'em in to the photography department for developing and printing.

[01:52:01] KK: Right, right. Gotcha. And did you look at negatives and pick pictures for them to print and . . .

WC: Oh yes—contact sheets.

KK: Sure. Okay. Interesting. Wow. I wonder where all those photos are today. There's probably some incredible stuff that is in that archive.

WC: Yeah, I think in the archives they—they're still there.

KK: That is so cool. That's neat to know that, isn't it?

WC: Yeah.

[01:52:23] KK: I mean, that's a permanent archive that people are gonna—and I know they're starting to scan a lot of that stuff now, so . . .

WC: Yeah.

KK: . . . it's gonna live on, I think.

WC: Right. Yeah.

KK: That's really somethin'. So while you're at the chamber, what—was there a particular thing that was the most exciting thing that you did? I mean, I think building this publication was probably huge and probably a good reason to hire you. But were there other things that you did that really stand out to you as interesting or important or pivotal?

[01:52:59] WC: Well, the football game [*laughs*] that we started was exciting. And then having become acquainted with these chamber leaders—for example, one of our—one of the men I met was William Shepherd with Arkansas Power and Light Company, now Entergy. And

he—as—and when he was the Chamber president, I had already left and was—in fact, I'd even started my own advertising agency, and he started the International Congress on Air Technology, which we handled publicity and all for it, planning special events and all and—oh, and then we also—one of the first things we did was the national—Ten Outstanding Young Men congress for the national Jaycees. They'd—they used to do that every year and . . .

[01:54:10] KK: That was the chamber or the—when you . . .

WC: The . . .

KK: . . . started your agency?

WC: When I—that was—it was after I'd started my agency.

KK: Uh-huh. Okay.

BP: Let's change tape.

[Tape stopped]

[01:54:20] WC: While I was still at the—workin' at the Chamber of Commerce, I would go to work at the *Gazette* at six p.m. and work on the copy desk writing headlines and checkin' copy and all that for two weeks. I had negotiated with him—I had already planned a trip to New York for, you know, just a vacation. And I had negotiated with him that if I came over there, I would come start, but after two weeks I was going [*laughs*] to New York, and then I'd be back in about a week, I think, you know.

KK: Yeah.

[01:55:03] WC: And so I did that. While I was in New York, Marcus

George, who was the city editor of the *Arkansas Democrat*, had recommended me to his good friend Tom Hockersmith, who needed a writer, and he called—Marcus called me in New York and introduced me over the phone to Tom Hockersmith. And Tom offered me the job—fantastic salary [*laughter*] increase, and you know, I took it.

KK: And that was to go to the Chamber.

WC: No, to the . . .

KK: No, this is before then.

WC: To go to—to go into advertising.

KK: Oh, right.

[01:55:48] WC: And I had to come back from New York and go face Mr. A. R. Nelson, the managing editor of the *Arkansas Gazette*, and you know, tell him that I was going with an advertising agency [*laughs*] and leaving the hallowed field of journalism and especially the *Arkansas Gazette*. And as I said, that's kind of complicated.

[01:56:18] KK: How did . . .

WC: That was in . . .

KK: How did Mr. Nelson react?

WC: Oh, he was—he couldn't believe it, you know.

KK: I guess he thought you were throwing away the opportunity of a lifetime by not staying . . .

WC: Yeah.

KK: . . . with the *Gazette*, right?

WC: Yeah. And also . . .

[01:56:35] KK: I mean, the *Gazette* was just this . . .

WC: And also furious.

KK: Yeah. [*WC laughs*] That he had invested in hiring you and then you . . .

WC: Yeah.

KK: . . . were gonna be gone right away.

WC: But I couldn't turn down the money. And I've never regretted it.

[01:56:53] KK: So, what were you invited to do in advertising in—at the advertising firm? And what firm was it?

WC: The—it was Thomas C. Hockersmith and Associates.

KK: And that was in Little Rock?

WC: Yeah. He was the father of Kaki Hockersmith, and he had been the agency for Faubus. And he had the Parks and Tourism, AIDC, Oaklawn, City of Hot Springs, all those accounts we have now.

[*Laughter*] And was really the up-and-coming kingpin of advertising in the state. And he—I had a golden opportunity workin' for him because he was—he had a gambling addiction, a drinking problem, a womanizer, and loved to not work. And he just kind of turned it over to me, and I had to learn real quick how to do all of the—you know, financial and management and everything. So . . .

KK: So you . . .

WC: . . . by the time it was—by the time it was time for me to start my own agency, I knew because of him and his . . .

KK: Absence.

WC: . . . absence. And so, several years after that, he was lost at sea. He had bought a boat and moved to the Bahamas and one day didn't come back. And they never did find his body. Declared him dead after seven years, I think.

[01:59:08] KK: Wow, what an interesting trip. So you had—really had to jump in with both feet when you moved over there.

WC: Oh, yeah.

KK: 'Cause you had to take on a lot of the responsibility or it wasn't gonna get done.

WC: Yeah, right. Now, that wasn't right at first. I mean, he gave me time to get established, and I was the only copywriter, the only account executive, besides himself. He had a good bookkeeper and a good art director, and I talked him into hiring Jim Johnson as another art director. And that was still the only staff. And my wife was a college consultant for this ladies' dress shop in Pine Bluff one summer when I was workin' there. And the ladies' dress shop owner, who had introduced me to Frances by—at one point, hired her to model for these photographs we were doin' for her fall campaign. And she came into our office, and she thought I was Mr. Hockersmith, and that's before we really knew each other. But yeah, I had to do everything.

[02:00:50] KK: And it sounds like as you went along, you had to do more and more—had more and more responsibility.

WC: Right, but it was great experience. That was about [19]58, [19]59, [19]60.

KK: Right.

WC: And we started in [19]61.

[02:01:12] KK: So you said you had talked your boss into bringing in Jim Johnson as a copywriter.

WC: Right.

KK: So you knew Jim Johnson before even he worked with you at that agency.

WC: No.

KK: Oh, you didn't?

WC: No.

KK: Had you heard about him?

WC: Yes.

KK: So by reputation—you were looking for more copywriting help. And by reputation, you chose . . .

WC: No, art director.

KK: Art director. Okay, you were looking for art-direction help and by Mr. Johnson's reputation . . .

WC: I did all the copy myself and all the account-executive work. But I did need another art director, and he was working for Hallmark. I thought I'd already told you this.

KK: You did.

[02:01:54] WC: He was a—when he got out of college, he was so good that he went to Kansas City, and Mr. Hall interviewed him personally and hired him just like that. And then while—even—while—after we'd

started our agency, he did card—freelance cards for a couple of different companies—the artwork for 'em.

[02:02:21] KK: So he was quite a talented artist as well as art director, I take it. I mean, he wasn't just . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . an art director. He was really . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . good at art.

WC: Yeah. Well, in fact, now that he's retired, he does fine art and just turns it out [*laughs*] like a factory.

KK: So he's always been pretty prolific.

WC: Yes, very. Quick. Fast.

KK: Comes in handy at an ad agency.

WC: Does.

[02:02:47] KK: [*Laughs*] Okay, so you decide it's time to move out and have your own agency.

WC: Right.

KK: And this is—and so—and you decided . . .

WC: It's about the summer . . .

KK: . . . in 1961.

WC: . . . early fall of [19]61.

[02:03:01] KK: And who all is in this company at the very beginning?

WC: The new company?

KK: Mh-hmm.

WC: Well, I remember walkin' into Jim's off—or he'd popped his head in my office and said, "Let's go to lunch." And I said, "Well, good. I've got somethin' I want to talk to you about." So we went to lunch at the Coachman's Inn. Remember where that was? And I told him that it was time that we left Hockersmith and started our own agency. And he gulped and said, "Well, if you say so." [*Laughter*] And he had a wife and a baby and another one on the way. That's how much faith he had to have. And—what was your question?

[02:04:00] KK: Oh, I was asking, you know, who all was involved in the beginning of the . . .

WC: Okay. Who was involved? Okay. So we had—one of our clients was this Southern Equitable Life Insurance Company at the corner of 3rd and Center. They just tore the building down this year. And the executive vice president of that company was a very good friend, and we'd been doin' their work at Hockersmith. And they practically let us use the space for peanuts. And we had this little office, and we hired a receptionist, who was also supposed to be the secretary, and she didn't last but about—maybe a month. And then we hired her replacement, who turned out to be an alcoholic. She would go to the ladies' room and come back smelling heavily of Listerine, and so we had to let her go. [02:05:26] But in the meantime we'd moved across the hall to a slightly larger office, and a young man named Johnny Burnett, who later became the CEO of Rector Means & Roland real estate, had worked with me at Hockersmith, and he wanted to

work for us free, for nothin', and did for several months. Finally, we put him on the payroll. And we had—oh, and there was a young man who had worked for the life insurance company who ran our printing operation. That part of the deal was that, you know, we could have their account if we'd do—manage this printing company they had for all of their forms and everything, so we did that. [02:06:21] And he was just transferred to our payroll. And just—we kind of just started growin', you know, adding another person, and one of the next people we hired was this—right out of college—Dick Langford, who had studied advertising under Harry Ainsworth at Fayetteville. And we hired him as a copywriter and later made him creative director. And that's—I mean, we just kept addin'. [*Laughs*]

[02:07:04] KK: Yeah. And so when did you move out of that space into another space? Or did you stay there . . .

WC: In . . .

KK: . . . a number of years?

WC: . . . [19]64 we moved to the Pyramid Life Building at 2nd and Center.

KK: Now, what was the name of your advertising agency when you first started?

WC: Cranford Johnson, Inc.

KK: Okay. Makes sense.

WC: And then when we were in Pyramid building—[19]64—we changed it to Cranford/Johnson and Associates, Inc. By that time we did have a few [*laughter*] associates. And that's how—I mean, we just kept growin'.

KK: So . . .

WC: Now we have over a hundred. [*Laughs*]

[02:07:49] KK: Wow! So when you took over the printing operation for—
or the—at least paying the person to do the printing operation for the
insurance company—was the printing area something you had a lot of
experience in?

WC: No! [*Laughs*]

KK: So wasn't that kind of scary?

WC: Yeah! [*Laughter*] But it was just—it was, you know, offset printing.
It was—by that time it was still kind of new but it—you know, you
didn't have to have the type and all that. You just took a picture of it
and, you know . . .

[02:08:19] KK: So that was the immediate successor . . .

WC: Lithograph. Off . . .

KK: . . . to the Linotype, right?

WC: Yeah.

KK: Yeah, okay.

WC: Yeah, offset printing. And it was just a little bitty print shop about half
as big as this room in the back of the building we were in. And it was
no big deal. We . . .

[02:08:39] KK: But was that not also a—in a way, it was a way to learn
about printing side of . . .

WC: Oh yeah.

KK: . . . the business . . .

WC: Oh, sure.

KK: . . . too, right?

WC: Sure.

[02:08:48] KK: So you had some ambitious things that you did for your career, and you also sound like you had some luck in timing.

WC: Yes.

KK: Would you agree with that?

WC: I agree. Yeah, I agree. Yeah, we had lots of luck, you know.

[02:09:07] KK: What was the business climate like when you started? Because this is right on the heels of Central High. Businesses were probably suffering somewhat from the backlash. The central Arkansas area and the . . .

WC: It had slid.

KK: . . . Arkansas was probably hurting a little bit.

WC: It had . . .

KK: Was it hard to get clients at that time?

WC: Yeah, it—after the integration crisis, it just stopped. I mean, there was no growth, no new companies comin' in, no new projects started by existing companies. It was pretty bad. But we worked real hard and were fortunate to keep getting' more and more good clients. And we haven't been hurt by the rese—the current recession. Just . . .

KK: That's remarkable.

[02:10:10] WC: Yeah. I mean, the agencies all over the country have gone out of business and had to, you know, fire hundreds of people at

a time. And we've not lost—we've not had to fire anybody.

KK: Wow.

WC: And when we had this merger in 1990, we'd heard horror stories about what happens then, and you have to—you know, the people lose their jobs and all. And we brought all of their people over, and I think at the time they had maybe twenty-five or thirty. And we didn't lose one person.

[02:10:50] KK: And who was that merger with? Who did you acquire?

WC: The Woods Brothers.

KK: Gotcha. Yeah.

WC: He had started—Shelby Woods had started his company in [19]67 and was doing nothing but publications for the tourism industry, you know. Boat docks and things like that, and gradually grew to be a, you know, pretty respectable little agency specializing in travel—tourism. And so we merged in 1990, and we've never had a cross word.

[02:11:40] KK: [*Laughs*] That's awesome.

WC: And Shelby and I both now are chairmen emeritus, and his brother is the CEO.

KK: Well, you had a fairly smooth run of it.

WC: Yeah, I really have.

KK: Not that I'm sure there weren't some challenges. Now, when you started out, what kind of hours were you workin'? I mean, you weren't just workin' eight to five, right?

[02:12:07] WC: No. [*KK laughs*] No. Well, Frances and I were married.

We started our company in October of [19]61 and almost that—maybe that same month, I got engaged, and we got married in September of [19]62. And then we didn't have any children for about five years, so—and she worked with me. You know, I'd go back down to the office at night, and she'd go with me. And we'd, you know, do some things and—this is funny. I didn't know—I thought I knew everything I needed to know about the billing operation and the—you know, how you get the money. And I did. But I—what I didn't know was how you get it out. And so Peerless Engravers would send an invoice with every work they did. You know, we had to make cuts. You don't remember cuts, do you? Well, they were techni—we called 'em cuts. They were technically called engravings—metal plates that had the photograph, you know, to print with. [02:13:32] And so each job that came in would have an invoice. Well, I would go down to the office—back to the office at night to write a check for each invoice. [Laughs] And finally [laughs] they told me—they called and said, "Wayne, you don't really have to pay all of these. I mean, we'll send you a bill at the first of the month for all of these [laughter] invoices. And you can pay us then." [Laughs] That was . . .

KK: So you were doin' it the hardest way possible.

WC: Yeah, 'cause I didn't want to be late payin' a bill.

KK: Yeah. Well, I'm sure they appreciated that part.

WC: Well, they kind of laughed. I mean, it was a joke. [Laughter] But . . .

[02:14:20] KK: And you credit Frances with that or with helpin' you with

that or . . .

WC: I credit her with almost everything—encouraging me to start the company, helping attract business. I mean, after all, she was the current Miss Arkansas and first runner-up to Miss America, and these people knew her, knew of her, and it opened some doors.

[02:14:50] KK: Well, that's pretty neat to have that in a . . .

WC: It opened . . .

KK: . . . spouse.

WC: . . . some doors. That may have caused Mr. Darby and some of those people to know who we were when they were looking for an agency for Senator Fulbright. Same thing with First National Bank, which was one of our big, first acquisitions. And she was just a—she's been very helpful, all fifty years. [*Laughs*]

[02:15:29] KK: How did you guys first meet?

WC: This client in Pine Bluff, the lady that had the ladies' dress shop in Pine Bluff, named Garnette Mullis. We had done her work at Hockersmith, Jim and I, and had a lot of his cartoons. And they were classy, but you know, kind of light. And I would go to Pine Bluff to call on her at least once a week. And one day she and I were havin' lunch at Pine Bluff Country Club and passed by a table where Frances was with a date. So they were home for Christmas or somethin'. And so Garnette introduced me to her. And sometime after that, we—the three of us were together, and she introduced me to her again.

[02:16:29] And so then [*laughter*] she—that—she was a sophomore

at Randolph-Macon Woman's College, and the Pine Bluff Jaycees called and talked her into bein' in the Miss Pine Bluff Pageant. And by that time I had started doin' the publicity for the Miss Arkansas Pageant and happened to be one of the judges for the Miss Pine Bluff Pageant in the Saenger Theatre. And she—I mean, she won Miss Pine Bluff. Not—I mean, I didn't do anything wrong, you know. [KK laughs] Or even give her any special consideration, really. [02:17:24] But then she—and I was dating a girl from England and helpin' her with gettin' ready for the Miss Arkansas Pageant. And then I started [laughs] dating Miss Hot Springs [laughs] real hot and heavy, and so the pageant started. It was at Oaklawn then, outside. And Frances had never performed anywhere, you know, singin' or anything, and she needed all the help she could get. And it—the way it worked out, Garnette, who was her chaperone from Pine Bluff, the ladies' shop lady, persuaded me [laughs] as her—you know, I worked for her—to see to it that Frances had the right accompaniment and practice time and all that, which was crucial, and I did because of Garnette, not this little young girl from [laughs] Pine Bluff. [02:18:52] And so then I was also covering the Miss America Pageant for the *Democrat* for two years. The year before and then this year, when Frances was Miss Arkansas. So we went to Atlantic City and then to New York for a week afterwards, and that's where we really got together. And then came home, and I started the [laughs] agency that—like that next month and then in a month or two we were engaged.

[02:19:37] KK: Wow, that's a . . .

WC: So that's that story. [*Laughs*]

KK: Well, and if you think about it, it—kind of like your career—it went pretty fast, too, really.

WC: Yeah, yeah.

KK: Maybe not getting married right away, but I mean you're—you know, you met her. You didn't know her for a whole real long time before you started kind of getting together, and then you . . .

WC: Right.

KK: . . . started dating, and then you opened your agency. And then you get engaged. So things were still moving . . .

WC: Yeah.

KK: . . . pretty quickly.

WC: And you think about it, and you just don't realize how fast things can go like that. So that's—where were we? [*Laughs*]

[02:20:08] KK: That's where we were, really. I just wanted to backtrack onto her stuff, and you were talkin' about how your company then began to grow. I mean, you changed your name to Cranford/Johnson and Associates because you were growing. And you wanted, I guess, to be—you wanted that recognized in your company name that you were growing and . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . that you had other . . .

WC: Right.

KK: . . . talented people.

[02:20:29] WC: Right. Yeah. And we ran an ad with our whole staff,
which was by that time probably about ten.

KK: And you were in the Tower Building, correct?

WC: No, the pyr—First Pyramid . . .

KK: The Pyramid Building. Yeah, First Pyramid Building.

WC: Mh-hmm.

[02:20:44] KK: And you began to get more accounts. What—did you end
up inheriting all of the Hockersmith accounts over time?

WC: All the good ones. [*Laughter*] I . . .

KK: And when I say inherited, isn't . . .

WC: I was in a position to know which ones were worth—and I didn't really
go after 'em. I really had loyalty to Tom, and I knew his problems
and, you know, what was . . .

KK: Yeah.

WC: . . . happening. But I mean, we had no choice. I mean, we had to
leave . . .

KK: Yeah.

WC: . . . and work for ourselves 'cause we were workin' really, really, really
hard for a salary, and you know, we had to leave.

KK: Yeah.

WC: But then after we left, it was—well, to answer your question, most
the—most of 'em came to us.

KK: You left and the clients decided they wanted to go with you is the way

I'm hearing you say it.

WC: Most of 'em.

KK: A lot of 'em. Yeah. And that was a . . .

WC: And . . .

KK: . . . huge start for your company, was it not? I mean, that was a huge and very important thing for your company that you got some of these clients pretty young in your career.

WC: Yes, but prior to any of them comin', he remained an agency for several years and brought in another partner and, you know, that sort of thing. [02:22:19] But we—in the meantime we'd gotten the Fulbright account . . .

KK: Yeah.

WC: . . . First National Bank account, and then these started comin' in. And then we got the Arkansas Power and Light Company account, which had been handled by an agency called S. M. Brooks Agency for about fifty years.

KK: Was that the forerunner of the Brooks-Pollard agency?

WC: No, it's to . . .

KK: Different. Okay.

WC: You know, our friend at Fayetteville—oh—Dillard—Tom Dillard wrote a column about all this last Sunday. Did you happen to see that?

KK: I didn't see that one. I love . . .

WC: Well, last . . .

KK: . . . his column.

WC: . . . Sunday's editorial section has this column by Tom Dillard, and he made a couple of errors in it, including the Brooks-Pollard thing. Brooks-Pollard had absolutely nothing to do with S. M. Brooks. It wasn't the same Brooks. And so—but S. M. Brooks had acquired the very important in the state Arkansas Power and Light Company account.

KK: I'll bet.

[02:23:34] WC: And actually, we got the Middle South Utilities account first, and then after we'd had it about six months, we got the Arkansas Power and Light Company. And then later we got the Louisiana Power and Light Company account. Opened an office in New Orleans. But all of that was kind of goin' on at the same time.

[02:24:00] KK: Now, I have to ask you—was—when you got the AP&L account, was that before or after—let's see—what is it—Jerry Maulden was involved with AP&L.

WC: With—oh, long before.

KK: I thought so. Yeah.

WC: Yeah, long before. The president at the time was Reeves Ritchie. And he was our very good friend. And Mr. Bill Shepherd was the vice president in charge of all of their public relations, and we actually got—he's the one who got us the Middle South Utilities account, which did national advertising. And when Mr. Ritchie retired, Mr. Shepherd had already retired, and so Mr. Ritchie went out and found this man named Arch Pettit and put him in as CEO. We worked closely with

him, and I was assigned at one time the—I had to tell him that he had to use deodorant [*KK laughs*] or else.

[02:25:27] KK: That's uncomfortable. [*Laughter*]

WC: That was one of my little duties.

KK: Whew!

WC: And so then we worked with him several years, and then he proved not to be—I mean, he was—in addition to body hygiene, he made other mistakes and was not effective in runnin' a business. So they had made the decision to fire him. And so the president of Middle South, the holding company, called me to come to New Orleans, and I took Ron Robinson with me. And Jerry Maulden, at that time, was an assistant to the president of Middle South Utilities—not even an officer. And we had known Jerry before because he'd been kind of a—an executive assistant to Mr. Ritchie here in Little Rock and—but anyway, we went to New Orleans that day, and they told us that our assignment was to tell Mr. Pettit that he was no [*laughs*] longer needed [*laughter*] and that Jerry Maulden would be coming to Little Rock to take over. So that's how . . .

[02:26:55] KK: Now, why were you guys assigned to do that? That doesn't seem quite like your duty as a advertising firm.

WC: It was just part of—I mean, they didn't know any other way. There wasn't anybody else to do it, and that's—and we did. We had to come back and tell him, and we had, in the meantime, worked out a plan, you know, for all of the announcements that had to be made and the

meetings scheduled . . .

KK: Yeah.

WC: . . . and all that. And of course, Jerry was in on it.

KK: Yeah.

WC: And then we worked very closely with Jerry for several years.

[02:27:37] KK: Interesting. Interesting. Well, now that you say that, I sort of see why you were so involved in it because—I'm not sure why you had to make the announcement to him, but I do see why they wanted to preplan how they were gonna roll out the . . .

WC: Yeah.

KK: . . . you know, their own PR about the changeover.

WC: Yeah, yeah.

KK: Critical . . .

WC: Yeah.

KK: . . . I would think, for them.

WC: Yeah, it—I mean, it was necessary for us to know about what was gonna happen before he did, see?

KK: Yeah.

[02:28:04] WC: So I guess it just evolved that—I mean, there wasn't anybody else gonna be in Little Rock . . .

KK: Yeah.

WC: . . . to tell him. [*Laughs*]

KK: Still, I think they kind of gave you a task they didn't want to do. I mean, it seems to me, but that's just my . . .

WC: Yeah, they could've . . .

KK: . . . take on it.

WC: They could've jumped on a plane . . .

KK: Yeah, they didn't really . . .

WC: . . . and come up here and . . .

KK: . . . want to tell him, probably, either. [02:28:30] You mentioned Ron Robinson. Now, how did you first meet Ron Robinson?

WC: Well, the insurance company that was one of our first clients—and we were in their building when we first started. Ron's father worked for them, that company. And Ron was in college and was kind of interested in, you know, PR. And so he visited us in the office every time he came home to see his mother and dad. And we let him be an intern one summer. And then he went—that was about 1970, I guess. And he then went to the army and came back and decided that it—what he—his—he wanted to be in public relations, and he wanted to work for us. So he came, and we hired him, and that was about [19]72, I guess. And . . .

[02:29:53] KK: What did he do for the company at first?

WC: Public relations.

KK: Okay. Right from the beginning.

WC: Yeah, yeah. He likes to say that he started our public relations [laughs] department. And it must've been 1970, but since 1961 we had been doin' public [laughs] relations, you know. I had done a lot of it. A young man named Bill Stover had done a lot of it. A young man

named Sam Smith had done some. And—but Ron did develop a department, a formalized department, for public relations. We started charging efficiently for it, you know.

[02:30:40] KK: I see what you mean. You made it a real stand-alone or . . .

WC: Yeah.

KK: . . . separate asset that you could bill for and . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . department that could be run.

WC: Yes.

[Tape stopped]

[02:30:53] KK: You said it was about five years before you started having children. Do you . . .

WC: Well, we got married in [19]62, and Jay was born in [19]66.

KK: And where were living at that time? Where were you living when you . . .

WC: Here.

KK: In this house?

WC: [*Laughs*] Yeah, yeah. We got married in the fall of [19]62 and lived at Plaza Towers, which was the only apartment building in Little Rock at that time, and lived there one year and then moved to another apartment complex called—well, it's in Hillcrest behind the Baptist Church, Pulaski Heights Baptist Church. You know that area?

KK: Yes.

[02:31:50] WC: What was that? Anyway, there's some buildings up on the hill close to where Lisenne Rockefeller lives now.

KK: Yeah.

WC: I've forgotten the name of 'em, though. So we lived there one year, and then after one year we bought this house, and that was [19]64. And then Jay was born the next year. Yeah, we've lived here forty-eight years.

[02:32:21] KK: I can't imagine how much this property might have appreciated [*laughs*] in that time. And you don't have to say, but I mean, it's just kind of interesting because, you know, it's changed a lot around here over the years.

WC: Yeah.

KK: It was always a nice neighborhood, but . . .

[02:32:36] WC: Yeah, and we've put a lot—you know, we've added a lot of space to it.

KK: Sure. Yeah.

WC: Latest one was that porch that she's always wanted.

[02:32:44] KK: Hmm. It's nice. Beautiful day like today, especially. Okay, so I didn't hear anything about military service in there, so you didn't . . .

WC: No, I . . .

KK: You were never in the military.

WC: . . . had a—see, my mother and younger brother were dependents.

That was during the Korean War. And I had that classification of 4-A, I

believe it was. Somethin' like that.

KK: Instead of 1-A, which was almost an automatic.

WC: Yeah.

[02:33:22] KK: Yeah. Right. I understand.

WC: Yeah. And I, you know, I was literally supporting them. That's why I had to hurry through college.

KK: Yeah, right. Your father passed away. They didn't have a means of support without his work, right?

WC: No.

KK: So . . .

WC: Just her Social Security.

[02:33:41] KK: So when you were teaching in Bald Knob at a young age, were you supporting them at that point on that tiny salary?

WC: Mh-hmm.

KK: Which I'm assuming was a tiny salary.

WC: Oh yeah.

KK: Well, no wonder you wanted to make more . . .

WC: It was only nine months a year, for one thing.

KK: Yeah.

WC: And I've forgotten what it was, but it was, like, three or four hundred dollars a month. Somethin' like that. And so that—while I was teaching, the first summer I—okay, first summer I got a job in Newport as editor of the *Newport Daily Independent*. That was some more good experience. And so I worked there all summer and then

went back to teaching. And then the next summer, I leased from a good friend an ice cream parlor and ran that. Lost money. And then I guess the third year I—after the third year I came right on to Little Rock immediately.

[02:35:00] KK: Well, no wonder you took various jobs with higher pay when you could. You had a lot of responsibility.

WC: Yeah.

KK: Now, are your brothers still alive—either of your brothers?

WC: No, my older brother died a couple years ago, and he was a banker at Rector. And my younger brother lives here now and is retired. He was a chemist in Mississippi and then moved to Jackson, Tennessee, and taught physics and chemistry and calculus and all that for a long time, most of his career. And he retired from Tennessee education system and moved here and taught at St. Mary's for several years and then retired from that. [02:36:09] And he—after we moved to Little Rock—I came to Little Rock first and left them at Bald Knob. And then after about one year—maybe not quite a year—I moved them here and lived—I lived with them until I moved out when we got married.

KK: Makes sense.

WC: But he, in the meantime, had enrolled at UALR, pretty much put himself through college, and worked at all kinds of little jobs. And then I just kind of helped my mother for—until she died.

[02:36:56] KK: And what year did she pass away?

WC: [Nineteen] seventy-eight.

KK: Well, it must've been really tough losing your dad at such a young age. That's hard, and it put a lot of pressure on you, too. So . . .

WC: But you know what? It gave me a lot of incentive to work harder and be more serious about what I was doin'.

[02:37:24] KK: Do you think you got certain things from your father and certain things from your mother in terms of who you are?

WC: Yes. Yeah.

KK: What part of you, you think, came from your dad's side, your dad's influence?

WC: The philosophy of anything that's worth doing is worth doing right.

KK: And part of that's maybe the craftsmanship of his carpentry?

WC: Uh-huh. And my boys kid me about that all the time, you know. I pounded it into them. And when I do somethin' sloppily, they'll say, "Now, Dad, anything worth doin' is doin' right." [*Laughter*] But I think that was the main thing I got from him. And from my mom I got, you know, love of beauty and that kind of stuff.

[02:38:25] KK: You think some of your passion for art and culture might have come from your mom's influence?

WC: Mh-hmm.

KK: It just kind of sounded like that's what you were hinting at there.
I . . .

WC: Yeah.

KK: Okay. Well, we're probably only gonna do one more of these tapes.
I'm not sure where we are on this one, but . . .

[Tape stopped]

[02:38:42] KK: The things we still are gonna want to touch on will add—
will be a little bit more about Cranford Johnson itself, what it evolved
into, and how that . . .

WC: Okay.

KK: . . . you know, and how that fit into the whole business community . . .

WC: Oh yeah.

KK: . . . of Arkansas 'cause it's a big piece . . .

WC: Yeah, I'm real—of course, I'm real proud of that, you know.

KK: Well, sure, sure.

WC: To have over a hundred employees and bill \$85 million a year is
somethin' that I just dreamed of. [*Laughs*]

[02:39:07] KK: I mean, that's incredible. That's an incredible growth
from where you were. I mean, what do you think you were billing
your first few years, when you—just you and Jim Johnson were
hammerin' away at it.

WC: Probably couple of hundred thousand.

KK: Which was probably quite a bit of money . . .

WC: Yeah.

KK: . . . at that time. I mean, it sounds like . . .

WC: I mean, yeah.

KK: . . . quite a bit of money.

[02:39:27] WC: Yeah. I member if there was an account come along that
billed as much as \$100,000, you were just big time.

KK: Somethin' to be very excited about.

[02:39:39] WC: Mh-hmm. And I remember one time—we'd been in business maybe three years, and Jim was a little hesitant to do somethin' that I had started, like goin' after an account or somethin'. And he said, "Oh, we can't do that." And I said, "Jim, if Ford Motor Company came in or GMC came in here and offered us their account, we could do it." I really felt strongly that we could, you know. You'd have to hire some people and . . .

[02:40:23] KK: [*Laughter*] Yeah. Well, that's a—you need that when you're starting out. You need that drive and confidence, I think, to—and you had the ability to take some risk . . .

WC: Yeah.

KK: . . . when you're that young, I think . . .

WC: Yeah, yeah.

KK: . . . because you can make some mistakes, and you have . . .

WC: Oh, yes.

KK: . . . time to recover.

[02:40:39] WC: Yes. And we were both so young that—although he did have [*laughs*] his wife and two children, and then they got a divorce. And we went through—that was another challenge I had when she left him, and he really, really took it hard.

KK: Yeah.

WC: But then married a wonderful gal, and we've all been best friends ever since.

[02:41:15] KK: I could see how that could be a pretty big event for a two-person or not much bigger company.

WC: Yeah.

[02:41:24] KK: Okay, so you bill a couple hundred thousand dollars a year. Then you move on . . .

WC: I'm just guessin', you know.

KK: You get bigger. Yeah.

WC: It couldn't have been much more, though.

KK: Right. Yeah. Right.

WC: Course, at that time, money was not what it's worth today.

[02:41:42] KK: Yeah. [*WC laughs*] Oh, obviously. But at some point you must've taken some leaps. Some things happened. Key things must have happened that gave you a chance to kind of move up to different levels. Yeah, you had Cranford/Johnson and Associates. You had ten people, but it grew quite a bit from there over time. What do you think—were there some other key turning points in your mind?

[02:42:05] WC: Yeah. Well, just as—at the time—course, Fulbright was a big step.

KK: Yeah.

WC: And then First National Bank was the next one. And then I guess the next one would've been Arkansas Power and Light Company and Middle South kind of at the same time. And then another one that I haven't mentioned yet is the Riceland Foods. We had that opportunity and made a lot of money off of Riceland rice and Chef-way shortening

and salad oil.

[02:42:39] KK: All that was under the Riceland umbrella?

WC: Uh-huh.

KK: I see. And Riceland was a national company, right?

WC: Yeah, one big . . .

KK: Just based in Arkansas.

WC: Yeah, one big account. Yeah, we did national advertising—and then, you know, television. We have seen it grow from nothing. I mean, we've used it from its very beginning. [*Laughs*] And I remember we did the first color, local spot in Arkansas with some color slides [*laughs*] and—oh, and for Middle South we placed the first national television buy. We sponsored the Sugar Bowl parade one year. That was . . .

KK: You mean the first national buy by an Arkansas advertising firm?

WC: Yeah, by an Arkansas advertising agent. And that was exciting and a big step.

[02:43:50] KK: Was that a big learning curve going to a national buy like that?

WC: No, 'cause it was [*laughter*] just a one-time . . .

KK: Yeah.

WC: . . . show, you know, after the Sugar Bowl or before the Sugar Bowl, so it was fairly simple, you know. [*Laughs*] One contract and—okay, what am I forgettin'?

[02:44:20] KK: Well, at the beginning of television advertising, when you

first started your agency, was there any television advertising at that point? And if so, what was it?

WC: I don't remember any. It probably was limited to local products. Goin' to the studio, do—see, we didn't even have videotape. And as I told one of you earlier, I don't think film was involved, locally, because people would just go to the studio and do a live commercial. And I guess our first entry into it, really, was First National Bank. And—yeah.

[02:45:32] KK: Do you remember anything about that commercial, that first commercial for First National Bank?

WC: No, that color one was not the first one, so I don't remember the first . . .

KK: Okay. Just thought I would ask.

WC: Course, we did a lot of outdoor, and we won some national awards for our very bold and different outdoor posters.

KK: Like billboards?

WC: Yeah.

KK: What was bold and different about 'em?

WC: They were much better than anything we have now. I mean, outdoor advertising used to be, compared to today, classy. And—for example, we had one of Jim's drawings of Scrooge, and it said, "Save like the Dickens at First National Bank." That was one big award winner. And that's what I mean. Won the national OBIE Award. We went to New York to—for the awards ceremony and . . .

[02:46:51] KK: So that ability to be clever or innovative—creative put you on the national map, in a way, if you won a national award. Or did you—would you—you were certainly recognized nationally.

WC: Yeah, yeah. To a degree, yeah. And then we won a lot of national ADDYs, which were mostly print ads.

[02:47:19] KK: And did that help your business, do you think, winning those awards?

WC: Yeah, I think so. Yeah.

KK: And was it nice to be recognized from your peers?

WC: Oh, yeah. Yeah, we won—I mean, for years and years and years, we won more than anybody. And then Stone Ward started comin' forward. And by the way, my son Jay was, at one time, creative director [*laughs*] at Stone Ward. And several years ago we were both, our company and Stone Ward, were spendin' about \$30,000 each entry fees and then wh—and then if somethin' wins on a local basis, you have to enter it in the district, and you have another entry fee. And if it wins there, you have another entry fee to enter it in national. So we were each spending \$30-, 40-, 50,000 a year on the ADDYs. And we got together and decided to stop it. Jay talked to our executive [*laughs*] committee this year into—we're startin' again on a more controlled number of entries.

[02:48:47] KK: Not just entering everything, in other words.

WC: Right.

KK: Yeah.

WC: Yeah.

KK: Not to win a hundred awards.

WC: Right.

[02:48:55] KK: Gotcha. Interesting. Well, what was that like havin' your son in competition with your . . .

WC: It wasn't bad. A lot of, you know, a lot of people—I was not as active on a day-to-day or week-to-week basis as I am now. We had to fire our CEO and five other—four other people at the same time about eighteen months ago.

KK: Oh, really?

WC: Yeah.

KK: Wow.

[02:49:29] WC: And at that point I had always been on the executive committee, but I had to start goin' to the meeting every time and doin' some other things that I hadn't been doin'. And so prior to that is when Jay was at Stone Ward. And when he first came back to Little Rock from California, he and Craig Douglass started their own agency. And it was not a success. Cost him a lot, and so when he was offered the job as creative director by Millie Ward, I was ecstatic. [*Laughter*] So as I said, it wasn't bad . . .

KK: Yeah.

WC: . . . the way it worked out.

BP: We need to change the tape.

KK: Okay, that's a good stoppin' point.

[Tape stopped]

[02:50:29] KK: One place we left off was talking about television advertising. One of the things we touched upon was television advertising. When it first started, it was just live commercials. What did it evolve to over the . . .

WC: Well, videotape came along, and that changed things a lot because we could, well, tape one and put it on the shelf, and then the station would run it at the proper time, we hoped. [*Laughter*]

[02:51:08] KK: So that brought up the whole idea of traffic, of broadcast traffic or, you know, media scheduling . . .

WC: Yes. Yeah.

KK: . . . which hadn't existed really . . .

WC: Yeah.

KK: . . . so much . . .

WC: Right.

KK: . . . before.

WC: Yeah. Made it more complicated.

[02:51:22] KK: But it was also an avenue for advertising marketing firm . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . to help manage that for a fee. So . . .

WC: Yes. And of course, as you know, you get better quality with film, and we eventually then shot commercials in film, transferrin' it then to videotape, as I understand it. [*Laughs*]

[02:51:49] KK: Yes. No, that's correct.

WC: Is that right?

KK: Exactly. That's correct.

WC: And for a long time after we started having—being fortunate enough to have clients who could afford television advertising, we would have to go to Dallas to produce a really professional television spot. There was no one in town to do that except possibly the station itself, and so we were forced to do that.

KK: Yeah.

WC: Dallas or St. Louis or Chicago.

[02:52:50] KK: Right, right. But eventually there were production capabilities even in Little Rock.

WC: Oh, yes, yes. Very good ones.

KK: So that—in some cases, that probably helped because you wouldn't always have, let's say, the budget range to go to Dallas for a client.

WC: Right.

[02:53:12] KK: So you had live television spots, then you had videotape, then you shot in film and transferred to videotape 'cause it looked better. You began trafficking and controlling, helping schedule how things run on television. You mentioned something interesting to me on the break about having the opportunity to be in groups or on committees or within associations and traveling and meeting with other agency folk. And . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: Remind me of your trip to Dallas where you learned about a whole new department you didn't really know you needed.

[02:53:47] WC: Yes, I remember one meeting of one of the advertising groups was meeting in Dallas, and one of the Texas agencies in one of the bigger cities mentioned a media department. And I thought to myself, "What is a media department? What do you think they do?"
[*Laughter*] And pretty soon I had to learn how to set up a media department.

[02:54:15] KK: And what had—for those who don't know, what does a media department do? How did—what—why was that new to you?

WC: Well, I guess it was new because we—I mean, that's so long ago, you know.

KK: Yeah.

WC: It's hard to remember, but . . .

KK: Sure.

WC: . . . the strategy, you know, is so much—so important and so much more than just the placement, you know, buying time. And I guess that's why—or when I saw the light [*laughter*] about that.

[02:55:06] KK: And up to . . .

WC: But . . .

KK: . . . that point, I would guess that you were just wearing that hat, too, and not really realizing that it . . .

WC: Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

KK: . . . maybe deserved a separate department.

WC: Right. Yeah, many, many times I would be the copywriter, the creative director, the account executive, the media dire—buyer, and just about everything else—the billing person. *[Laughs]* But I do think I had an opportunity in the early days with the Southwestern Advertising Agency Association, which I was elected to the board, and then I moved up to secretary, treasurer, vice president, and then president. And then, also, the Southwest Council of the American Association of Advertising Agencies. Same way I was elected to the board and then up to chairman.

[02:56:13] KK: Why are those experiences so valuable?

WC: Well, you learn a lot from listening to people in other, larger agencies and those in larger cities. And Texas, you know, has big cities and big—some big agencies and it was very helpful. We were the first agency to be elected to membership in 4A's. That's the American Association of Advertising Agencies. And we were the first to become a member of a national network of agencies. The first one we were in was the National Advertising Agency Network or NAAN, and then we formed the National Public Relations Network. And today the agency belongs to a network called MAGNET.

[02:57:24] KK: And when you say first, you're referring always to first in Arkansas to do that, right?

WC: Oh, yes, I'm sorry.

KK: No, that's fine. I just wanted to make sure that's in the record. So the public relations network—would that have been something that—

was Ron Robinson involved in that because—was he in your public relations area at that time?

[02:57:45] WC: Yes, he ran our public relations department at that time. And Brenda Scisson was very active in that, too. We have alumni all over town [*laughter*] in other fields now.

KK: Sure. Yeah, yeah. And there are a lot of good friends in that group still, I would think.

WC: Oh yeah, yeah.

KK: People that you worked with for a long time that you were . . .

WC: Right.

[02:58:18] KK: So even though they may not always stay with your agency forever, I'm sure there's some pride in seeing them grow and move on to other . . .

WC: Sure.

KK: . . . good jobs.

WC: Well, Brenda Scisson is the good example. She's the executive director of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute Foundation now.

[02:58:41] KK: Yeah, I've heard her name associated with your firm so many times that I know there was a very high regard for her work and her. So your company was growing in the [19]80s. And then in 1990 you merged or acquired or folded into your company the Woods Agency.

WC: Yes, it was a merger.

KK: And that's a pretty big . . .

WC: Not an acquisition, a merger.

KK: Okay.

WC: Full merger and it was a very—it was a textbook case of how to do it, I guess, and it was very successful—has been all the time since. We— not one person lost his or her job, and it was beneficial to both agencies and beneficial to all the clients.

[02:59:37] KK: Hmm. Terrific. Terrific. So at that point you're Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods. That's in 1990. So the next ten years or so, what—were there other turning points or big events that forwarded the corporation, or was it more of a gradual growth?

WC: I'd say more of a gradual growth.

[03:00:08] KK: Was there a—and at what point did you stop being involved so much in the everyday operation of the corporation?

WC: In 1993. I retired on my birthday, January 1, 1993. And one of the reasons was that Bill Clinton had just appointed me chairman of the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts, which required quite a bit of time. And it gave me a lot of opportunities to meet some new people, do some great things.

[03:00:47] KK: So how old were you on that date? You turned . . .

WC: Sixty.

KK: Turned sixty. Okay. So when you turned sixty is when you retired.

WC: Yes.

KK: And then you began to work on—in this—on this national board for—

appointed by or invited or appointed by President Bill Clinton.

WC: Yeah, for about ten years. I am still on the executive committee of the agency and on the board of directors and still somewhat active.

[03:01:18] KK: Well, tell me a little bit more about what's involved with that agency because it's just—I would—when I first read about this, I was kind of floored by it because it just seems like one of the most rewarding types of service you could do in terms of what you get back out of it.

WC: Which board—the . . .

KK: The board that President Clinton . . .

WC: Oh, the . . .

KK: . . . appointed you to.

[03:01:40] WC: Yeah. The President's Advisory Committee on the Arts. Yes, works closely with the Kennedy Center, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and it's not just a fund-raising organization. It includes a wonderful program of providing education for—education in the arts for school students all over the country. And—for example, we brought the children's theater of the Kennedy Center here to Little Rock for several performances.

[03:02:25] KK: Hmm. Neat. So you had some opportunities to do things for Arkansas out of that service as well, or at least encourage.

WC: Oh, yes.

KK: It's nice. That's . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . very nice. And I assume you get to meet some really wonderful people.

WC: Oh yes, especially during the Kennedy Center honors each year.

[03:02:45] KK: You have a favorite person that you've met?

WC: Person?

KK: I know it's tough to narrow it down.

WC: Well you know, it was—most of 'em were great people, but some of 'em were disappointments, so I won't mention them. [*KK laughs*] But some of the better ones were Gregory Peck, Jack Lemmon, Robert Redford—trying to think of a woman. [*Laughter*]

KK: I understand. [*Laughs*]

WC: Give me another question.

KK: Yeah, I will. [*WC laughs*] We can come back to that. And were you surprised when you were asked to do that?

WC: Yes. Pleasantly surprised.

[03:03:37] KK: So there must . . .

WC: Yeah, I got a call from the White House, and they said, "President Clinton would like for you to serve on the committee." And I said, "Well, okay." [*Laughter*] And the next day I got a call from the same office at the White House saying, "President Clinton wants to know if you would consider being chair of this committee." And I said, "Well, let me think about that." [*Laughter*] And I called back and said, "Yeah, I'll take it."

[03:04:10] KK: It is kind of hard to turn it down, isn't it—a call from the

president's office. And so do you think that Bill Clinton or his staff at the White House had done some research and realized that you had an interest in the arts and culture?

WC: Probably. Yes.

KK: You must've had some track record for them to—of service in that area for them to want to have you. Did you have previous experience supporting the arts or serving on boards in the arts?

WC: Well, I'd been on the board of the Arkansas Arts Center for two different—at two different times; once in the [19]60s and once in the [19]80s. And I'd been on the board of the Arkansas Repertory Theater and the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra and several others. And one board that I really gained a lot of satisfaction out of was the Arkansas Children's Hospital board. I served on that for, I believe, about twenty-three years.

[03:05:13] KK: Hmm. And why was that so rewarding?

WC: Oh, have you ever just walked through the lobby of that place and seen children coming in who needed help and then seen other children coming out who were well? And it's very satisfying.

KK: It's an amazing place. It really is.

WC: They say a miracle happens every five minutes.

KK: I believe it. I believe it. A wonderful place. Hard not to get emotionally attached to . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . the Children's Hospital. So what kind of—when you say you

served on the board, what kind of things did the board do?

WC: We were involved in everything except medical [*laughs*]*—*actual medical procedures. Public relations, of course, community affairs, fund-raising, and just about everything. One of my main interests was gaining*—*was helping to gain national recognition for our Arkansas Children's Hospital.

[03:06:31] KK: Were you successful in that endeavor?

WC: Well, we have w*—*we worked on it for years and eventually hired Tom Bonner as the director of that. And he has done a wonderful job in that respect.

KK: Energetic man, isn't he?

WC: Yes.

KK: Good guy.

WC: And very effective.

KK: Yeah. I had a chance to work with him a few times. He was*—*I always thought he was excellent to work with. Right to the point, gets it done, very friendly.

WC: Mh-hmm.

[03:06:58] KK: Just the kind of person you'd want to have. You know, I've got a couple of things that we never quite said out loud this whole time, and one is I didn't get all your children's names, your three sons' names, mentioned. Do you want to list who your sons are*—*what order they came in?

WC: Sure. My oldest son is Jay Cranford, and he is currently the chief

creative officer at Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods. My middle son is Ross Cranford, and he is a vice president at the agency and director of tourism services. He—then—I mean, my third son, Chris, is creative director at Jones Productions, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the agency.

[03:07:55] KK: It must be really fun to see them succeed in that business in your—what—the company you founded.

WC: Yes. We have fun working together.

KK: That's awesome. That's—now, do any of your sons have children of their own? Do you have grandchildren?

WC: No.

[03:08:13] KK: No? Okay. And then I don't think I got both your brothers' names.

WC: Well, my older brother was named Bob—Robert Donald Cranford. He died a couple of years ago. And my younger brother is Bill—William Rogers Cranford.

KK: Okay, good. And the—one of the other things that we talked about at the break that I'd like to get on camera is in addition to serving on boards, regional boards and agencies and then national boards and agencies within advertising, marketing, and public relations, you—your company also, even though it's based here in Little Rock, Arkansas, has had a number of and continues to have a number of national accounts. And that started at a pretty early point in your career. Can you talk about the importance . . .

WC: And . . .

KK: . . . of and how that . . .

WC: And it's . . .

KK: . . . affected your . . .

[03:09:14] WC: It's not easy. [*Laughter*] We were very fortunate to be hired by Middle South Utilities, which was headquartered in New Orleans. It's now known as Entergy, Inc., and we did actual national advertising for them in the [19]60s. And that, incidentally, led to our becoming agency for Arkansas Power and Light Company later, year or two later, and then a little bit later than that, Louisiana Power and Light Company. But then a little bit later we—we've done national advertising for Riceland Foods, both for Riceland rice and Chef-Way shortening and salad oil. The—we were—we did some great work for Silver Dollar City for about eight years and did national advertising for them.

[03:10:24] KK: But you say it's hard—I mean, it was hard to get national accounts because you were an agency in Little Rock, Arkansas, and not one in Dallas or New York or LA?

WC: Yes, but that's not—I think that's not because we were in Little Rock, Arkansas, it's probably because we were not a large—at that time—enough agency. We have a goal now to reach \$100 million annual billing. And that, I think, will be a step up in ability to get certain national accounts. We do have other accounts in other states that we do regional advertising for and some that we do national advertising

for.

[03:11:20] KK: Do you want to mention any of the other companies that you do . . .

WC: Well, I was tryin' to think . . .

KK: . . . regional or national . . .

WC: I was tryin' to think of them. One is Kum & Go convenience stores. One is—well, I think it's interesting that we do the ad—national advertising for the Iowa Department of Economic Development.

[03:11:48] KK: That is curious. Is that, you think, because of your long history with doing state economic development in Arkansas advertising?

WC: Yes, partially, but also because of our association with Burson Marsteller, which is the largest public relations company in the world. And we're the only company with which they have an affiliation in the United States.

[03:12:16] KK: And where are they based?

WC: New York.

KK: But that—they're an international . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . firm?

WC: Yes.

KK: Okay. Well, that's quite an honor right there.

WC: I believe it's 213 countries where they have offices. And we have a working-together relationship where they use us for creative. They

don't do advertising, so they come to us for their creative work for many, many clients.

KK: Well, that's incredible—and also great for your team . . .

WC: Oh, yes.

KK: . . . to have that challenge and that exposure.

WC: Yes.

[03:13:00] KK: How many people work at CJRW now?

WC: A little over a hundred.

KK: Is that the most you've ever had in the company or is—has it been larger at any . . .

WC: No, it's—that's—it's largest we've ever had.

KK: And what's it like havin' a hundred on staff as opposed to when you had ten? I mean, it must be a really different environment and . . .

WC: Oh yeah, course it is. But one reason that the number we have now is not a great deal larger than the number we had, say, ten years ago is the efficiencies from computers. And I remember the first computer that we ever had. We had to do accounting with it, you know. And it was about as big as a small room. [*Laughs*] And that was before the days of personal computers, of course.

[03:14:05] KK: So you had a small mainframe system 'cause that's all there was.

WC: Yeah.

KK: And was—that's a huge decision getting into the computer side, and I'm sure one you didn't take lightly.

WC: And expensive. But necessary now.

KK: Oh yeah, absolutely. But . . .

WC: All of our art directors do their work on the computer, and course, all our writers do their [*laughs*] work on the computer.

[03:14:35] KK: So you had to make a decision at some point how deeply to get into computers each step of the way because, like you say, they were really quite expensive and really kind of quirky to work with—difficult to maintain . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . a system, especially early on. How did you make those decisions of, "Well, will this speed us up enough to make it worth it to invest in this?" Who—how did you figure out how to make those big steps?

WC: Well, we had—we set up task forces of account people and financial people and creative people, all working toge—media people, of course, working together to look into what was available and what other companies had experience with and together made that decision.

[03:15:28] KK: And then when Internet web browsing became so big, I'm assuming that, at some point, you built or added a web or interactive-design team to your department—to your agency. When did that happen about, or do you remember?

WC: I believe it was in the early [19]90s. And of course, it's grown like crazy—very big now. We have a—in fact, I guess all of our clients are interested in projects that involve that department.

KK: Social networking, for instance.

WC: Yes.

KK: Very, very big now.

WC: Yeah.

KK: A part of nearly, I guess, any campaign.

WC: Yeah. Website management, that sort of thing.

[03:16:23] KK: Is there anything else you want to talk about regarding your company that we haven't talked about?

WC: I can't . . .

KK: Am I leaving out some important area that I've just not—clearly, the people who have come [*unclear words*] the company and have become management. And some have moved on, and other managers have grown into it. There must've been a way that you felt like those people needed to be trained and brought up or—there's been such a—so many smooth transitions in that area.

WC: Yes. But we do—we've always believed in training programs, and we have a very active account-executive training program on a continuing basis. They have sessions at least monthly on a new area of the business.

[03:17:13] KK: And so that's been—do you think that that training has been an important part of the success of your management team?

WC: Oh, yes.

KK: So ongoing training is still important.

WC: Yes. And we also send people to seminars and workshops out of state.

KK: And, again, you learn from your peers from other places and . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . that interactivity is part of the benefit, I suppose, of that kind of activity. [03:17:42] Well, let's talk a little about—switching gears—have you had a chance to be involved in and do you want to share any comments about your philanthropic work? I assume that you've probably given and served in various capacities.

WC: We made a list the other day of all of the non-profit groups that we had worked with over the years. I've forgotten the number, but it was three pages single spaced of organizations. And we've always believed that that was a very important part of our—the role that we needed to play in the community.

KK: And you're speaking of the company.

WC: Yes.

KK: And then—and of course, I'm sure that's much appreciated, but on a personal level have there been—is there anything you would like to talk about from a philanthropy standpoint, or is that something that you prefer to keep private? You—do you have a specific special interest that you like to support?

WC: Yes, but I—I'd really kind of like to keep that [*laughs*] private.

KK: I totally understand. Okay, I—it is a sensitive question. I understand.

WC: Yeah.

[03:19:07] KK: But back to the philanthropy work that CJRW has done—sometimes it seems to me that agencies get a chance to do some of their very best creative work on a job like that where they're not

restricted by all the business elements that go into designing a campaign. Would you . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . agree that it can be a . . .

WC: Oh yeah.

KK: . . . good training ground for . . .

WC: And a non-profit will be more appreciative of the work that you do—the creative ideas that come to them. And it's a very fulfilling thing that creative—especially creative people like to do.

[03:19:57] KK: Well, what are we leaving out at this point? I know we've talked about a lot. Probably haven't covered everything. Am I leaving out anything that's important and big in your life that I have not touched upon? We really haven't talked that much about Frances. We did talk about how you met and, you know, some of your family life, but you only really barely touched upon . . .

WC: Well . . .

KK: . . . the importance of her partnership with you.

WC: Yeah, I just—I couldn't say enough about Frances because she's been such a valuable partner in everything that I've done for fifty years now. And she's so effective and capable and smart and smooth, and she just knows what to do and does it well.

[03:20:54] KK: Very nice. Nice thing. Okay. Bruce, was there anything that you would like to get that we haven't talked about that might be good for your . . .

BP: Well, let me . . .

KK: . . . business . . .

BP: . . . ask this. And this is a philosophical—kind of step back and . . .

WC: Kay.

BP: . . . review your life. I want—I j—I'm just wondering if over the fifty years in the advertising world—you kind of jumped. You were in a news—in the newspaper business. First off, let me ask this. You were in the newspaper business, and you switched over to advertising. That was traumatic for—at least for some people in your life. But what—how—lookin' back on that decision, was it a good one? I mean, obviously you stayed in advertising. Did you have something inside you that wanted to go into advertising? You said that the opportunity for more money was maybe the biggest thing. But . . .

[03:21:47] WC: Well, it—at the time it probably was, but it's very—the two are very similar.

BP: And look at Kris when you're . . .

WC: You know, if you're good in advertising, you gotta be a good writer, and you gotta appreciate words and the use of the words. And I think that—I don't miss journalism because I still use journalism every day.

KK: Yeah. Joy, anything you need?

JE: No, sir.

KK: Okay.

BP: All right.

KK: Let—if there's nothing else, I think we can just . . .

WC: Was that a stupid answer to your question? [*Laughs*]

BP: No, no. [*Laughter*] No, I'm just tryin' to get—some people fall into businesses just because of external opportunities. "Mom—Dad was in the business, so I'm in the business." I'm just wondering what motivated you to get—to stay in the advertising business. Was there s—did you grow up drawing pictures on the sidewalk? I mean, what attracted you or made you stay in the advertising business?

[03:23:03] WC: I remember in classes in both, like, high school and college doing takeoffs on advertising and what a—how much fun it was. Course, I didn't know what I was talkin' about, but [*KK laughs*]—so I think probably I have had that inner interest for all those years.

KK: Maybe even when you didn't know what it was.

WC: Right.

KK: Yeah.

WC: Right. Advertising appealed to me.

KK: And you also mentioned that you used to go to the movies a lot as a kid. There was a movie theater . . .

WC: Oh, yes. Yeah.

KK: So there's an entertainment aspect to all advertising, in my view. You're trying to get someone's attention, and you're also trying to engage them . . .

WC: Yes.

KK: . . . and entertain—movies do that, too.

WC: Right.

[03:23:59] KK: Do you think movies might've had some influence on your . . .

WC: I—yes, I believe so. Yeah. And growin' up in a small town, you know, movies are about one of the few things there is to do. [*Laughs*]

KK: A lot of people we've interviewed in your age group have said they used to go to the movies really a—you know, it was fairly inexpensive. In later years it was the air-conditioning—it was one of the only air-conditioned places in the summer.

WC: Yeah.

[03:24:25] KK: So it was really a—something they frequented.

WC: Yeah.

KK: Maybe they would go and sometimes stay for hours.

WC: Yeah. And I worked at a movie theater for quite a few years, starting when I was about nine or ten years old, sellin' popcorn and takin' tickets and that kind of thing.

KK: Yeah, interesting. Okay, good.

[03:24:56] BP: Was there ever a—is there any point during the entire time in advertising that sticks out in your mind that gives you—"That was a point in my life and my career that gave me a huge, deep satisfaction"—that you acquired an account or you met someone or just anything that sticks out in your mind.

KK: Yeah, kind of like what's the most rewarding thing that may have ever happened to you . . .

BP: Yeah.

KK: . . . in your career?

BP: Yeah.

[03:25:29] WC: Well, that's a big question to, you know, think back over fifty-plus years. But one recent example—and I'm not saying this is the most exciting, but it was a great satisfaction when we helped the Springdale Schools recently pass a millage election, which made possible some things they needed to do. It had been one of Don Tyson's last wishes that he wanted to have done. And we helped with that election campaign and won it. And that was very satisfying.

[03:26:20] KK: Was Tyson one of your accounts?

WC: Yes.

KK: Was it one of your accounts for a long time?

WC: Twenty-five years.

KK: Well, that's a huge national account [*WC laughs*] right there. We were talkin' about national accounts earlier—it's like, "Well, mention" . . .

WC: Well, they . . .

KK: . . . "a few national accounts."

WC: . . . have other agencies, though, too.

KK: Right. But that's a huge one, for sure. Twenty-five years. That's really somethin'. Half of your career. That's big. Great. Okay, is there anything else you would like to add?

WC: I don't believe so.

KK: Okay. Well, I'd like to thank you very much for spending all this time with us. I do have one more request, and that is each time we do one

of these interviews, we like to have people say to the camera their name, where they're from, and that they are an Arkansan. And we use those as a way to kind of promote the fact that these interviews are about Arkansans. So we want you to look right in the camera and just say your name, your town, and that you're an Arkansan.

[03:27:20] WC: I am Wayne Cranford, Little Rock, Arkansas. I am an Arkansan.

KK: Great. And if you could do one more where you say you're proud to be an Arkansan.

WC: I am Wayne Cranford, Little Rock, Arkansas, and I am proud to be an Arkansan.

KK: Thank you very much. All right. Thank you.

WC: M'kay. [*Laughs*]

KK: I appreciate you so much. Thanks for hangin' in there.

[End of interview 03:27:57]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]