

**Oral History Interview of
Alan Henry**

**Interviewed by: Daniel Sanchez
September 1, 2015
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:
*Lubbock History Interviews***

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The Lubbock History Series interviews document general life histories and other topical stories that chronicle the history of Lubbock.

Transcript Overview:

This interview features former Lubbock mayor Alan Henry, who discusses his upbringing, education, early career, and his experiences in municipal politics

Length of Interview: 02:22:51

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Daniel Sanchez (DS):

My name is Daniel Sanchez. Today's date is September 1, 2015. I'm in the office of Alan Henry. Alan, thank you so much for sitting down with us.

Alan Henry (AH):

I'm glad to have you here, thank you, Daniel.

DS:

And could you please start off by stating your complete legal name?

AH:

My complete name is Alan Ray Henry.

DS:

And when were you born?

AH:

December 4, 1941, three days before Pearl Harbor.

DS:

Wow. And where?

AH:

In Lubbock, Texas.

DS:

In Lubbock, Texas. Now let's have a little bit of information on your parents. Start off with your mother and then your father.

AH:

My mother, her family was from Tennessee. They were from a small town in central Tennessee, migrated out here in the thirties, and they were eight in the family and eventually five of them ended up in west Texas. She was a housewife while I was at home. Before I came along she worked in an office in several different places.

DS:

What was her paternal name?

AH:

Her maiden name was Mary Catherine Ray.

DS:

Okay, that's where you get your Ray.

AH:

That's where my middle name came from.

DS:

Okay, and how about your father?

AH:

My father, his actual name was Clifton Ford Henry, he went by Pat Henry. He was born in the small town of Whitewright, East Texas, near bottom, but his family moved to West Texas in 1916. My dad would have been, I guess, eight years old at that time. They settled on a small farm just outside of Slaton, Texas, but he and his two brothers grew up on that farm. He worked for the Higginbotham Bartlett Lumber Company. He was also the office manager for the Claims Co-op Oil Bill during World War II. He and my mother met in Ralls, Texas, she was working there at the time. My dad did have a college education, the only one in the family, either side of the family that did have a college education. He went to McMurry College in Abilene.

DS:

And what was his degree in?

AH:

Business, I think. I'm not really sure.

DS:

Did he talk any about the Depression years?

AH:

Yes, to a certain extent, you know, but they had gone through the Depression, but they were towards the end of it. So it was their older brothers and sisters that really had more—or more involved with the Depression. On both sides, there was no wealth whatsoever, and it was just hard work. No, they never did really dwell on the past. When I was growing up was during World War II, and that was what was on everybody's mind was the war, and what was going on. When the war was over, then there was so much opportunity. That's when my dad started his insurance agency, in 1945, and that was the time that everybody was looking for something different to do than they had been doing during the war.

DS:

Did you ever ask your dad why he chose insurance?

AH:

Well yes, I think it was one of those—I don't think it was something he just sat down and thought, "This is what I would like to do." I think it worked out well for him because he had some contacts with people in the insurance business. He had gotten to know several of the insurance company representatives when he was working at the oil mill. And then he had a really good friend whose name was Fred Campbell, who was one of the leading insurance agents in Lubbock who mentored him and got him started there. But he started the agency from scratch which is just unheard of today to have enough customers or develop enough customers fast enough to make a living.

DS:

And how many were in the family?

AH:

I had one brother, he was four years younger than I and he passed away, oh, twenty years ago.

DS:

So what was it like growing up in Lubbock?

AH:

Well, you know, I guess it's like most other places. All you know is your neighborhood and we were in a fairly—it was a new neighborhood back then, but our house was built in 1939 and I was born in 1941 so I was in a brand new house. It was a blue collar, middle-class neighborhood. We were on 28th Street, 1916 28th Street. And now I always think it was interesting the way people envision their lives how they would like to be. Our street was separated: O'Neil Terrace to the south. That is what was at that time, and still is, has some beautiful homes on hundred foot lots. And we were on a little fifty foot lot and my parents would look across the street and that was sort of the promise land. That someday we would have enough money to move into O'Neil Terrace. It took until I was in college and my dad finally—he didn't want a loan, but he had enough money saved up that he moved into O'Neil Terrace. He moved from 1916 28th to 1910 29th. That was all it took to be in O'Neil Terrace.

DS:

Yeah, because one ends and the other begins right there.

AH:

Exactly, exactly. And growing up, I kind of had an interesting childhood because there were a number of children in our area, but most of them were at least five to ten years older than I. You know, it helped me an awful lot because I grew up and dealing with and thinking like somebody older than my contemporary age. Sometimes it was good, sometimes it was bad, but we did the

same thing everybody else did back then. Have pickup baseball games and football, that sort of thing. Not anything really unusual, but just I'm sure the same types of activities that any neighborhood in the country would have at that time.

DS:

And were there any structured athletics as far as like, you know, we had Little League and all that. Was any of that going on at that time?

AH:

At that time when I was in junior high, Little League was just getting started. Once again, during the war, you know, that just didn't happen, so Little League was just getting started. There were no football leagues, no soccer leagues and so by the time I was a teenager we were kind of passed that stage. I was active in Boy Scouts. I was a Cub Scout and went through the boy scouts and attained my eagle which I was very proud of and so most of my outdoor activities, organized activities were through the scouting.

DS:

And where would they take y'all?

AH:

We would go down to Camp Post. We would go to one called Haynes, Camp Haynes, which is up near Floydada. A lot of times we would just have campouts in somebody's backyard. Back then you didn't think anything about digging a hole in the backyard and building a fire and getting a merit badge. I don't see many people doing that at this day in time, but of course, back then that was before there was any irrigation of yards. Nobody knew what turf was. Whatever grass was there, was there, but landscaping as we know it today really hadn't come into its own, at least in our neighborhood.

DS:

Okay, I never thought of that. So where did you go to school?

AH:

I went to Dupree Elementary, 22nd and Avenue S. It's two blocks south of Lubbock High. And actually, it is, I believe, the longest continuously occupied school in town now. It was built in the twenties, I believe. I went to Dupree for six years, interesting story there. At that time, the mascot of Dupree was the dogie which, I assume you know is an orphaned calf. And so we were the Dupree Dogies. So when I went back to Dupree a few years ago, we were invited as alumni and I found they had changed it to the Dupree Dolphins. And so I said, "Why did you do that?" and they said, "Because nobody knew what a Dogie was anymore." And then I went to junior high school in O.L. Slaton, which once again at that time, it was O.L. Slaton Redskins. A few

years ago I noticed it's no longer that, it's now the O.L. Slaton Knights. But then when I went to Lubbock High it was the Westerners and as we always said, "Once a Westerner always a Westerner." And then I went to Texas Tech, also.

DS:

You went to Tech? And so at the time were we the Matadors or the Red Raiders?

AH:

Uh, the Red Raiders were coming in about that time. That was in the fifties. I entered Tech in 1960. So it had been a few years there.

DS:

And so you went to Lubbock High. What was Lubbock High like when you went there?

AH:

Well, it was, of course, very crowded. This was just about three years after Monterey was opened. It had done a very good time athletically for Lubbock High because, of course, they had been state champions in the fifties, I believe two times in a row. Literally there was only one high school. Of course, when Monterey opened up, a lot of the better athletes went to Monterey because, of course, in the south part of town which was the direction the town was migrating. Our football team didn't do very well. I think maybe we won two out of the season one year. We enjoyed it very much. I was in the band, I liked that a lot. Have a lot of good memories. In fact, just two months ago had our fifty-fifth reunion here in Lubbock and had a great crowd. I think we had like eighty people that showed up fifty-five years later. It was a large class; I believe we had over four hundred in the class, maybe four hundred-fifty, something like that in our graduating class.

DS:

Wow, yeah, I went to Lubbock High years later, when our class was smaller than that because it was so many high schools at that time.

AH:

Of course, at the time we had Dunbar, and Estacado came later, I think.

DS:

Sixty-seven, sixty-eight, something like that?

AH:

Okay, I was thinking it was not in existence at that time. Very interesting, I remember we had one Hispanic young man in our class Manuel Ronje. Everybody just loved him, but it shows how

much the demographics of the school have changed now and the demographics of the community.

DS:

So what year was that?

AH:

Well, I graduated in '60 so this would have been say from '57 on. I don't mean that there were not any other Hispanics in the school, I just remember—

DS:

He was somebody you knew.

AH:

As somebody that I knew in the class and there were very, very few. I've thought about that from time to time because there had to be more Hispanic families than were represented. I don't know, I'm sure that would be a very interesting thing to work on, to discover if at that time there were actually a lot of folks that dropped out of school and didn't go through their senior year. And I think probably there may have been, I don't know.

DS:

Yeah, I think what it is—there's a timeline that we developed. I've talked to somebody in '33; he was in the first group of kids that went beyond the sixth grade. So, you know, that kind of gives you a timeline until '33 and before, they went passed the sixth grade so then a few more years to get passed junior high and then high school became the priority.

AH:

That would be what I think might have happened more than anything else because there had to have been a larger population than that. I don't recall, as far as African-American population, the same thing. Of course, at that point the African-American community was pretty well confined to east of Avenue A, so it was more geographically identifiable and probably the Hispanic population was the same way as far as not being dispersed throughout the community. At any rate, high school was great.

DS:

What did y'all do for entertainment in high school?

AH:

Oh, those were back in the Buddy Holly days and we'd go to Coronation Drive-In for malts or whatever. We'd drive around the Village Mill, which was I guess was one of the first drive-ins in

Lubbock. Church activities, there were a lot of church activities. Movies, no television, we got along perfectly well. I can't remember when television—it must have been mid-fifties, I guess, something like that.

DS:

Something like that, that's when KDUB showed up here.

AH:

I'll never forget when we got our first TV there was nothing on except reruns of films of musical numbers; they called it the music box. They'd run the same ones over and over and over. One guy that sang a song called, "One Meatball", which was certainly not one that made the hit parade forever. And sometimes you'd just watch the test pattern and say, "Wow, this is really neat."

DS:

Yeah, because people don't realize it on this 24-hour day when it used to be stations would sign off.

AH:

That's right, they would sign off. There was one station and I remember going to the inauguration of that station downtown at that Lubbock National Bank building. There was a big crowd in the streets, it was an evening and of course, Dub Rogers, that was KDUB, and that's when TV came to Lubbock. You were mentioning Dirk West and some of the local folks. Everything was basically local at that time. Hardly any, I don't even recall network that much when it first started. I'm not an expert on it, but I remember we had like Bell Dairy, we had a kids program. One of them—in fact, it's pretty interesting, I had a call from a guy here last week who's much older than I am, but he had a TV show, he was "Captain Foghorn." Of course, you had Dirk West and his drawings. It was really a great time as far as local talent was concerned. I was in the same class with Ralna English, who went onto success. In fact, the nearest I ever came to real success in music was in sixth grade orchestra. Ralna had moved here from Spur, and she was just great at any music. Anyway, she played violin, and she and I played a duet for like thirty seconds. Anyway, the subgroups like the orchestra, the band, the athletics, that's what everybody did and still does, kind of running your circles.

DS:

And you were talking earlier about you'd watch some of the braceros while they were here, the seasonal workers when they'd come here. What was that experience like?

AH:

Well, of course—and this is during the war, it would have been in the mid-forties, I would guess. I was very young. I would have been six years old or something like that. We always looked forward to, what I termed “the bracero season,” in the fall. There were activities downtown, as I recall more in the courthouse area, maybe a little south of that, I’m not sure exactly. They would set up tents or makeshift booths and actually, some of the Lubbock citizens went into “business.” They would make bread or they would take—I know my aunt, she was part of a booth and they would bake cookies or something like that and sell them. The braceros, it’d be just like an open air market. That’s one of the things I remember. It was just a lot of fun.

DS:

Yeah, because we’ve got those photos, I know you’ve seen them; you lived through it when Lubbock was just teeming with activity downtown on the weekends.

AH:

Absolutely, absolutely.

DS:

So you’ve got all this behind you. When did you decide you were going to college?

AH:

Well, I sort of fell into college. As I mentioned before, our family just didn’t have a long history of college. My dad had gone to college and my mother had not, none of her family had, none of his family had. So it was not as though we had a rich history and discussing where you wanted to go to school, it was just understood that you’d go to Texas Tech. I did not live in a dorm, I lived at home, so to me it was almost just moving from twelfth grade to freshman as far as it was not a get-up-and-move-type-thing, you drive to your classes at Tech instead of Lubbock High. And there were a lot of us that way back then that it just never came up, “Would you like to do something else?” It wasn’t that I was prohibited from it, it’s just it just never was an issue.

DS:

And Lubbock High just being within a mile of the way you were going before.

AH:

Right, right, in a 1956 Chevrolet. That was my first car. It was a used car. Turned out, I didn’t know it, but it was a Hertz rental car so it was cheap. Back then, things that you would never do like work on your own car and change your own oil, it actually had a small V6 motor that you could figure out what to do with and so, you know, those kinds of skills, we didn’t think of them as skills, you needed to know how to change your tire. You needed to know how to change your oil and you needed to know how to work a grease gun because they had those grease spickets all

over the car and underneath, and you better keep it greased. You learned the responsibility and how to do some things just because it was necessary and because you didn't feel like you were being put upon or forced to do it in the first place. It was not that easy to find people to work on cars. Once again, just right after the war, which this is when it was—people who had been working in garages were trying to do other things. So it was not that they were just lined up, because people did so many of these things themselves. I remember my folks, up until [the] mid-forties, they had a Chevrolet coupe, they call it a coupe now, but it was a two-door, and it was a two door and just two seats. The driver and the package and behind it was a rather large package tray. Well, my brother and I, that's where we stayed because there was no such thing as a back seat and no such thing as a car seat; so you'd just get up behind the front seat and drive. You'd be arrested for that nowadays.

DS:

I think so, yeah. They might arrest the parents, too, for endangerment.

AH:

That's exactly right. We never thought anything about it. I remember it was funny talking about the cars like that. Apparently after the war, one of the things people started doing was expanding with the road system that they would go greater distances than they had before. People started going, I guess to Colorado or New Mexico and deer hunting. I can remember numerous times that a car would come through Lubbock and they would have a deer draped on that hood and used it, tied it on, and I guess they were taking it home. Then they were complaining about the venison tasting gamey after it rode on a fender of a car for four or five hundred miles.

DS:

Well, we'd also been talking about you went to Texas Tech. What was it like when you first got there?

AH:

Well, it was of course smaller, obviously, but once again, you didn't feel that—you still had the same situation that you had in high school and junior high and, that is, you had your circle of friends that you were with. I've always felt like we've talked about living at home. I've always felt like I missed a lot by not living in a dorm because there's so many friendships and so many experiences. Some good, some bad with leaving home and actually living in a dorm with other people. By the fact that I lived at home, I was not as active on the campus as I would have been if I had been living there. I did not pledge a fraternity when I was a freshman; I did when I was a sophomore. I pledged Phi Kappa Psi and that was a fraternity that I enjoyed being a part of. We were members of the Baptist church. They called it the Baptist Student Union back then. I'm not sure what they call it now, but those were pretty important gathering places for people. Of

course, Student Union, which was the SUB and then it was the Student Center and then it was something else and I think now it's back to Student Union.

DS:

It is, yeah it's just like the *Toreador*, went to *University Daily* and now it's the *Toreador* again.

AH:

That's right, exactly, *University Daily* back to the *Toreador*. Just hang around long enough, what goes around, comes around.

DS:

It might be the Matadors again.

AH:

It might be the Matadors again, you're right.

DS:

So you know, speaking of Matadors and Red Raiders, that's the athletic side—athletics were pretty strong in the years you were there, weren't they?

AH:

Oh yes, they were, very definitely. Of course that was the time that we were moving from the Border Conference, I believe it was, to the Southwest Conference. I well-remember that when we were invited to—well, actually, the two conferences—but beforehand, I'm not that up on exactly what happened when, but I guess [the] Border Conference first, you would probably remember. And then when we got into the Southwest Conference, of course, that was a huge deal. That raised our profile an awful lot. My wife and I talk about the difference in the ball games. Back then, a football game was an occasion, especially homecoming. You had to have a date; you had to buy a mum for your date. Actually, we dressed—we called it "Sunday school." We'd wear a sport coat, the girl would wear a dress and it was a special dress up occasion. That is all kind of gone by the way, sad too. That may be okay, that's alright, but it was quite a dress up occasion back then.

DS:

You mentioned your wife; did you meet her in college?

AH:

I did, I met Sandy—actually I was in graduate school or I just got out of graduate school. She was three years behind me so she would have been, I guess a junior. Sandy, she was in a military family, her dad was air force. Her dad was in World War II and Korea and was supposed to be

called up for Vietnam, but by that time they had gone from piston-driven planes to jets and that just wasn't going to work. She actually moved to Lubbock her senior year at Monterey from the Island of Guam. Her dad had been stationed on Guam. So we met shortly after that. I'm not sure, I think maybe she pledged Kappa Alpha Theta and maybe we went to one of her presentations or something along that line, but I was just finishing up my graduate studies. I had an interesting experience, this was in the school of business which was—at that time we called it “the classroom and office building.” I think then they called it the flat iron building and then they tore it down. It was that ugly. My major was management with a minor in industrial management, like in personnel and industrial. When I graduated, my advisor asked if I'd like to go into a masters program. Well, it turned out, there was no masters program for management. They were about, I think, twelve of us that were the inaugural program. There had never been a masters program, but we had a great advisor named Dr. Vince Luchsinger. He kind of led us through, we let each other through and so we were the very first masters program for the college of business back then.

DS:

Have they recognized y'all for that?

AH:

No, I'm not sure they're proud of it.

DS:

The graduate program at the business school is one of the more popular degrees out there.

AH:

This would have been in 1964; I guess it was something like that.

DS:

Forty-one years later it's one of the top guns. In fact, they just had a brand new building.

AH:

Yeah absolutely, we're really, really proud of it. Of course, Jerry Rawls came along and endowed it and it's just done great. It really has helped my degree considerably.

DS:

And what were you thinking about doing once you got out with your masters in business?

AH:

Well, you know, that's an interesting question. I had sort of a circuitous route to where I ended up. I really enjoyed industrial management and I really enjoyed the personnel side of it. And so

that's what my major was, was primarily in personnel management. I finished my masters in the spring of—that would have been '66, I guess it had been the spring of '66. I was finishing up and I interviewed Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company. They came to Kappa and we interviewed companies like we still do, I guess. I went to Corpus Christi and was offered a job down there in their company. That was where I intended to go, but in the meantime then, fight intervened. I had been real active in various organizations at Tech and had developed some friendships around and got a call from Gene Jenkins, who at that time, was the director of personnel. A lot of people will remember Gene Jenkins. I'd say personnel—the term is placement—she was director of the placement service. She said, "Allen, I know you've been interested in political activities and things along that line. I've had a call from Congressman George Mahon and he's asked me to look for somebody that I think could do him a good job to work up there." I said, "Well, that sounds interesting." Mr. and Mrs. Mahon at that time, when we were interviewing the congress at that time, rather than it does now, just go constantly, they would adjourn about August. And Mr. Mahon and Mrs. Mahon would move down to Lubbock for those until it started the end of January. So I interviewed in their apartment. It was the Cant Apartments over on Avenue Q. The apartments are still there, I think they call them something else. This would have been in probably December. I didn't think any more about it. I would check in from time to time and so one morning about eight o'clock, after I pretty much agreed to go to Pittsburgh Plate Glass, I get a call from Mr. Mahon and he said, "Would you like to come up here and work in our office?" And so I thought about it and I said, "Yeah, yes sir I would love to do that." So I did and never regretted it. It was one of the most fabulous interesting times that I could have ever enjoyed. I get back and tie Sandy into this. So I was working in Washington. We met and we had to then correspond long distance while I was in Washington and she was here in school. And so we married in 1966 and she moved to Washington and she worked for a time in Mr. Mahon's office. The first part of our marriage we were living in Washington and really enjoyed every minute. It was a fabulous time to be a Texan. This was before the Vietnam crisis and all the bad things that happened there. It was right after Lyndon Johnson was elected president in a landslide over Goldwater. So he was still in his honeymoon and he was very, very strong. George Mahon was chairman of the appropriations committee, the most powerful committee there. Now, there were probably six other Texas congressman who were chairs of other standing committees. So it was a great time to be a Texan and especially work for George Mahon because he was—I think without question, admired by republicans and democrats and political affiliation was important, but George Mahon always said, "I'm working for the people first." Working with a party, but he got so much done because people on both sides of the isle respected him. It might be nice if we still had some of that.

DS:

Now since you really didn't know him before you started to work for him, what was it like to get to know him and his wife?

AH:

It was just fabulous. Most people, I think this day in time, when they go up, especially situations like I had, would do it based on their parent's knowledge or political appointment or something like that. I had none of that and never been active in any politics other than just on a very low level at Texas Tech, but not ever as far as party politics. I just never had. I think that kind of shows the way he thought. He just never considered, he never asked me. You know, "Are you registered this way or that way?" Obviously he was loyal, he was a very loyal guy, but that was not the number one thing that, you know, that drove his decisions.

DS:

What were some of the first lessons you learned when you went to D.C.?

AH:

I think probably persistence. I remember one of the first times I was in Mr. Mahon's office he had given me an assignment to call somebody. You have to remember, he was chairman of the appropriations committee which is, many people say, the third most powerful man in Washington at that time behind the president. Probably ahead of the vice president, maybe right up there with the speaker of the house because they all knew and loved him. Actually, he was chairman of the appropriations committee and the military subcommittee, which is unheard of for somebody to be involved in a chair in two committees. He was one of the handfuls of people who knew all about the Manhattan Project and the atomic bomb. So that was getting to what we learned, I just got to give you a bit of background. He said, "Would you call Senator so and so?" I said, "Okay." So I get the phone and I call and get to the secretary and I said, "Is Senator—" I can't remember which one it was, Laird, I think. Not Laird, but one of the senators. "Is he there? Mr. Mahon would like to speak to him." And Mr. Mahon, you know, he had his conversation and he said, "Now let me tell you how to do this the next time." He said, "Congressman Mahon is calling. They'll find him." I said, "Oh, okay." George Mahon was one of those folksy people who kept in touch with those constituents better than anyone in the world, but he also, you know, he knew how to get things done. There's another occasion that we were talking and he said, "Well, have you talked to so and so at the Agriculture Department." I said, "I called and I wasn't able to get through there." He said, "Let me tell you something, first thing you try to do is you get in the front door. If you can't get in the front door, you go to the side door, if you can't get in the side door, you get in the back door, but you don't just stop at the front door." You know, you learn as you go and of course the truth is, if I had done what he was suggesting, calling and saying, "Congressman Mahon is calling." And I worked for another congressman, it wouldn't have worked. You know, the Mahon name, it was magic. In fact, I thought was an interesting story, I was just a staffer. You know, I wasn't anything out of the ordinary, but I worked for George Mahon. At the Goldwater debacle, I think everybody agrees that wasn't the greatest deal, but when Johnson got in, he swept in with him a lot of people and a lot of them shouldn't have ever been swept in. They were just not quite up to the task, but you know, that's the way those

elections happen. In most cases, some would have stayed, but others maybe two years later, four years later maybe four years later would have defeated any kind and worked its way off, but there was a congressman, brand new. Actually, went up about the same time I did, but he was just lost. So one day he called and he said, "Alan would you come down and sit down?" This is a member of congress. He says, "You work for Mr. Mahon and he's the most powerful congressman up here. I need you to give me some pointers." And obviously, a twenty-three-year-old kid, I wasn't much on pointers, but I think it indicated to me the esteem that people held George Mahon in. We would go out, Sandy and I and the other folks on the staff, we would go to their house. They would invite us house from time to time and one of our favorite activities was sing-a-longs and he would lead a song and we'd all follow. He had a great voice. He had an apartment called the Prospect House, which is still there. He had just moved in. He had been on, I believe, Wisconsin Avenue for years and years and years. He never did own a house except his house in Colorado City where they moved from when he was first elected forty years before. Other than that he rented. He'd rent here and rent there. One of our favorite activities, that was before the jet planes and the Washington National Airport. It was the tri-tail plane, they called in Connie. It was the Constellation. You could hear them coming forever, they were noisy. That was before noise it made, too, but at night you'd sit out there and you could see these landing lights for miles and miles and miles in the distance and then they'd all come in and you'd see them land with the backdrop of the capitol and the Washington Monument. It was really neat. And then when it was time for us to go he would say, "Well, well, well, it's been fun." Or something like that. But it was always, "Well, well, well." And that meant he was getting up and going to bed. That was our signal that it was time to leave. Anyway, I could go on and on and on about George Mahon's stories, but I'd say that it was certainly a highlight of my life and Sandy's life and continued to be after we came here. The last thing he asked me to do, I'll never forget, the women in communications were initiating the George Mahon Award. Have you been to the communications luncheon?

DS:

No.

AH:

That's a Texas Tech organization. Well, I'm sorry it may not be, it may be community wide, but anyway, they gave a beautiful award and the first one went to George Mahon. And he said, "I just can't get down there, would you go accept it for me?" So I did and that was one of the last times—in fact, he had already retired, I think. We stayed in touch along with a lot of these other former staffers. We had quite a bond there, people who were former Mahon folks.

DS:

Yeah, when in fact you were on our building with David Langston a couple weeks ago and one thing that struck me was how well you knew everybody else that was up there as far as the

different leaders of all the subcommittees. Can you talk about some of those people you met and how they impressed you?

AH:

Sure, once again you've got to keep in mind the timeframe. This is just after Johnson was elected. Herbert Humphrey was the vice president. McNamara was the Secretary of Defense. So, you know, those are some of the main ones. It's funny, the first time I met Secretary McNamara was in George Mahon's lobby. He just had a seat until Mr. Mahon was ready. You know, then came in to see the chairman. I want to make it clear that these were not bosom buddies of mine. I was just a little staffer, but I think this story, I think will tell you more about the security and the way things have changed than anything else. One of my roommates at that time was a policeman down at the capitol. At that time, that was sort of a patronage job also. My other roommate Tom Burdem worked on—they called him a door keeper, door man. Anyway, allowing and recognizing the congressman when they went onto the floor coming in. He was not a security guy, if anything bad had happened, of course, he would have to call the police. So John and I, he was off duty as I'm recalling. The State of the Union, President Johnson was there delivering the State of the Union Address. Well, nobody had tickets, we certainly didn't have tickets. I said, "Well, it would be neat to see if we could get over there, you know, and see the president." This is impossible for you to believe today, but we just walked through the tunnel from the Rayburn building to the capitol. Just walked through, no security, no nothing. So we went up the stairs and ended up in the reception room with the president. So there was a receding line. There was Darrell Royal, the coach from UT, there was—oh, there were a couple of well-known authors, I forget who all were there, but you know, well above our paygrade. We were just staffers. So we went through and met them all and they didn't know any different. After it was over we just went back through our little tunnel and went back to our little apartment.

DS:

You were talking earlier also, and it struck me that you mentioned that he was able to meet the public and do his work. That's what you were talking about the other day also about how groups would come in because that was part of the position.

AH:

Yeah, you showed me, I think, y'all had a picture of Mr. Mahon and who was it? With the house appropriations committee? I'll think of it in a second. We knew the two of them and the other three; it was obvious where it was just a couple in their daughter that were probably from Slaton or somewhere. Anytime there was someone from the district, they took presence and signed in at both David Langston and all the other folks. Once again, it wasn't just us, it just happened to be our time. We would take people on tours. Now you have to go pay and have a tour. Well we took them on tours of the capitol. If so and so was there, they'd call over from the office and say, "Alan is coming over with Mr. and Mrs. Jones from Lamesa." He said, "Okay." So he'd be on

the house floor and he said, "Just let me know when they're there." So he would come out, it didn't matter what was happening, you know, he'd come out and one of the things that I did a lot, a whole lot, was take pictures. He had a Nikon camera that several of the staff would take, whoever was doing the guiding and then you'd take a picture of them. I have on my wall, a photograph of Mr. Mahon. He would have been about sixty-four at that time. He served until he was seventy-eight. He told me, I well remember, he said, "I'm going to serve until I'm eighty, but I'm not going to serve any longer because that's too long." It turned out that was wrong. There were house photographers, professional photographers that you could get. He didn't want to spend the money and he needed a new photograph for a brochure or something like that to send out to people. He sent me out, he said, "You stand here and I'll stand here and you take the picture." And so after I left and came back to Lubbock I called his office and I said, "I need one of those pictures and I'd like for him to inscribe it to the photographer, Alan Henry." And he did, I've had it all these years and really treasured it. That is kind of a hometown guy he was, you know, he could have had anything in the world, he could have called anyone to do—I guess Getty would have gone up there and done it free, but he'd rather just get a staffer to take one and go with it.

DS:

That kind of speaks, he didn't think too much of himself.

AH:

He knew he was grounded. From some of his other stories he knew where he was in the circle of things, but he didn't flaunt it. Just walking down the hall with him and having the Speaker of the House come by say[ing] "Mr. Chairman, how are you Mr. Chairman?" That was a very, very special time, we were just lucky. As I've always said, you've got luck and skill. We were just lucky, those of us who had the opportunity to work during that time.

DS:

And you mentioned a typical Mr. and Mrs. Jones going to visit Washington. Where would you take them?

AH:

We would take them different places. We would usually go to the capitol first. Sometimes we had to stop off at the Library of Congress. Are you familiar, I don't know whether you're familiar?

DS:

I've never been to D.C.

AH:

You kind of need to go.

DS:

I agree. Maybe Janet can pay for it.

AH:

Exactly, there are a lot of people that need interviewing up there. At any rate, the Library of Congress is just beautiful interior with the painted columns and that sort of thing. We'd take them there; we'd take them to the Supreme Court building. Usually you wouldn't go into the Supreme Court building and then the capitol. A lot of times we'd just go straight to the capitol because if Mr. Mahon was there, he'd want to meet them. And then we'd go through the rotunda that was what we knew about that from the history. We had exposure to enough history that we were able to give a decent tour. We'd go to statuary hall and where John Adams; desk was. Those sorts of things, we would do that, but a lot of times we would end up in the house dining room and Mr. Mahon would have lunch with these folks. Just completely off the cuff, "Come have lunch." You always had to have bean soup, the house bean soup. They had a menu there and they'd have a menu for each day and he would autograph those menus and hand them out. We've still got, I think, some of those. It was enough for somebody to absorb and get in and out. Back then, once again, you didn't have the security thing to worry about. Nowadays, it would take half a day to do what I just told you about because you've got to go through the metal screener, exactly this path, exactly that path.

DS:

Yeah, and you've probably got to screen your background also nowadays.

AH:

Not necessarily for that as far as just the general public. I assume you would if you were going to be in the presence of the president or anything like that. Of course, I'm sure that's exactly right, but we would find our shortcuts. One of my shortcuts, I would go down underneath the dome and go through the various levels of the base land and the level I remember well. I didn't even think about it at the time, but this was only three years after the Kennedy assassination. There was a hall that went off from this central area and with an iron gate in front of it and right behind it was the hearse that Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy were on, their bodies were on and pulled by a horse. You've seen these pictures many, many times. That's just where they started. Its things like that that you just never thought about the building and what was where. Once again, fifty years later I'm sure it's not that way. One of the things Mr. Mahon would do, he had a keen eye for souvenirs and cheap souvenirs. The first day that I was working for him, he said let's go walk around on the capitol grounds. And on the capitol grounds are the buckeye trees. I'm sure you've heard the stories about Mr. Mahon giving buckeyes, the buckeye seed which is

very—it looks like it's polished. Have you seen a buckeye seed? It's about an inch in diameter and it's a very shiny, polished look and they just fall. So most people would just kick them aside, but George Mahon would pick them up. You know, he would have them and when a special guest came, he'd give them a buckeye seed from the capitol grounds. Another thing that he did, and I think we've probably sent some of these to the Southwest Collection, one time, of course, there have been many times they have remodeled the capitol. They'd have to put a drainage pipe in or have to do something and knock bricks out. Well, everybody else would just go buy them and Mr. Mahon understood that these were bricks from the original capitol building in the 1700s. He said, "If you're not going to use those, I'd like to have them." They gave them to him and he got somebody to slice them about an inch thick, each brick, and then he would tie onto it a—they used to call it a fracking permit; I guess they still do it. What it is, is it's a white paper tag, a cardboard tag, but with a white string. He had typed on there in his office, actual brick from the capitol building and then the date and he'd give those as souvenirs. Isn't that neat?

DS:

Like you said, no cost, too.

AH:

No cost, absolutely. The price is right.

DS:

So eventually your time in D.C ended and you came back down to Lubbock? What was that transition like for you?

AH:

Well, it wasn't that bad. You'd think it would be terrible, but it really wasn't. I came back under kind of unusual circumstances. You would have asked some about what I plan to do. So what I planned to do and what I ended up doing weren't the same thing, but that happens, I guess, to most people. My dad, as I had mentioned had started his little insurance agency back in the forties and it was a one man shop and he had one secretary and that was it. While I was in Washington he developed cancer. And this would have been in 1964 I guess it was. It was very fast moving. Sandy and I were married in June of '66 and my dad passed away two weeks later. So we had this insurance agency with once secretary and she was wonderful, she knew all the customers. So my mother had been licensed because she was a family member. So basically she and the secretary held the thing together until I could get back. Let's see, this was in June so congress would have been—I came down, worked for Mr. Mahon until January of '67. And so then I stayed here and did full time. Up until that time I was doing part time with the agency and part time with them him and he was just wonderful about it. When my dad got cancer and was M.D Anderson, he said, "You go down, take what you need to do, don't worry about it." Family was absolutely the number one as far as Mr. Mahon was concerned. I've often told people I got

into the insurance business trying to figure out what to do with an agency. Are we going to sell it? What are we going to do? And here, fifty years later I was still trying to figure it out.

DS:

Where was the original location at?

AH:

The original location was on Texas Avenue across from what's now the George Mahon Federal Building. He was at a very small office there. I've mentioned his mentor, Mr. Campbell. He was in the front of the office, as I recall with his secretary, and my dad was in the back of the office at his desk. At first he didn't need to have a secretary, he'd just do it all himself, but that was where he was. And then over the years I believe his next move was out on 15th Street just next to Avenue Q which is now what is the parking lot of the prosperity bank on 15th Street. And then by the time I came in, he had moved down to what's now the Page Building where the big radio antenna is that was up in the cloud, they own that building. But this office was about the size of this room with two of us. Over the years then, we've been very fortunate and being able to attract customers and we've bought several agencies and kind of, you know, been very lucky and Lubbock's been very good to us. What I hoped to be a very successful business here now.

DS:

Were these properties historical that you owned here?

AH:

Well, all three of them are historical; I only have one of them designated. Getting into the buildings themselves is a whole different animal. If you want to do that, we can do that.

DS:

Oh yeah, well we'll get to that because we're going to talk about the city stuff also.

AH:

Okay, let's talk about the city stuff.

DS:

So when did you start doing the city and the politic stuff?

AH:

You know, I guess I kind of just kind of being around politics, a lot of people would call it pentomic fever. Somebody that just gets bit by the bug. Well, I never did. I guess I was inoculated against pentomic fever. I guess my very first thought about running for office was I was appointed to the planning and zoning commission of Lubbock, and that was in the early

seventies, right around '70. I enjoyed that an awful lot. I felt like if I was going to be involved in elective office I'd like for it to be local because I needed to earn a living. I was brand new and in business and certainly wasn't in a financial position to spend a lot of time out of time. In '74, one of the fellows of the council, a fellow named Jack Baker who had been on the council several years and decided he wanted to run for mayor. And so that opened up his slot. So I just announced and we had several opponents, but I was able to come in pretty good shape that way. I'll tell you more about that in just a minute.

DS:

Talking about how—

AH:

The politics.

DS:

How you got on the city council.

AH:

Well, yeah, so I was elected in 1974 and this was—at that time we had a five-member council. A mayor and five council members all elected at-large. So I was placed four, which really didn't mean anything because it was not geographical. We were all elected in the same place. I mean, from all over town. So I served four years there, and then, at the end of four years, I announced for reelection as mayor pro tem. At that time, mayor pro tem was elected by the people and it was place one. So I apt on that and had a pretty good medal there with a very good opponent. It worked out fine as far as the election was concerned. So I was elected for the second four year term. In that four year term—let's see, that would have been '74 into '78 and then in '82, things started getting kind of interesting. I went ahead in '82 and was reelected in good shape for another four years. I had been in office only about six months when the major, Bill McAlister suddenly passed away.

DS:

That's right.

AH:

And he was only forty-three, I was forty-two. We were probably about the same age. So, I thought, well, I'd really like to take a crack. The way the charter was at that time, and it may still be, the mayor pro tem did not automatically become mayor. So I had to actually resign from the council and run for mayor. So at one time, we actually had a three member city council for a little while I was off. So I was elected mayor in '82. So I only served less than a year on that third term. So I was elected in '74, '78, '82 twice, I guess, that would be four. And then what

happened was there was the single member district lawsuit that was brought and decided by Judge Woodward. I'm sure you've got a lot of history on the single member district. It was decided by the judge that the next election would be under single-member district. So I was very, very fortunate. I served as mayor under the last at-large system with four council members. Then I was elected as the first member of the single member district council. And it was fascinating because I got to see firsthand the difference between an at-large and a single-member district. We had some great people that I got to work with, but I always liked to give special credit to Maggie Trejo and TJ Patterson. They were our first minority members. They did a wonderful job. The reason they were able to work so well into the system that had been at-large because both of them were well known throughout the community. TJ had worked out at Texas Tech and had his newspaper. Maggie had been very active in community affairs and was a realtor. They made, in my opinion, really, really good single-member district members because they understood the single member district and were trusted. But they also understood the city as a whole. So, I served that one term there at-large and one term single member district. In '86, that's when my term came out. I actually announced to run for reelection, didn't have an opponent. I don't think I had any trouble with it, but I just got talking to some of my friends and folks that I really trust and they said, "Look, you've been elected this many times, you've been on the committee." My son Ryan went on was two and by this time, he was fourteen. Our twin daughters were born during my first term and we said, "Well, how much is enough?" A really, really good friend of mine said, "Yes, you can get reelected, but you need to know—it's important to know when and how to leave office as it is to get into office." So I announced that I was not going to run. In '86 I retired and we had several—never had an unsuccessful election and I think, you know, I left with a fairly decent record. People never ran me out of town or anything and I have always thought that was the best advice I had ever got because if you get into elective office or anything, no matter what you're doing, that's the height of your life, you won't do anything any better and the world can't get along without you. You're cutting yourself short. So I have had more fun, I would not take for anything that I did in the city. It doesn't mean I did it right, but I enjoyed it a very great deal. I enjoyed the people that I worked with. We would disagree, but we were never disagreeable. I just give them all the credit in the world. Then after that, I devote more time to my banking, to my agency, to my wife that started the Science Spectrum during that year in '86. I've been working on that. I've been on the Texas Tech foundation board which I'm still on. There have just been a lot of neat opportunities since then.

DS:

Well let's get into that in a little bit, but I kind of want to back up to when you were on the council. What were some of the important issues during those first couple of years that you were on there?

AH:

Well, it was a great time to be there because keep in mind the tornado happened in '70. So in '70 then, and I would say probably ten years after that, there was more harmony in the community. It doesn't mean everybody agreed with everybody, but there was more general interest in being progressive and moving forward and that sort of thing than any time before since because that was such a traumatic time. Also of course, a lot of budding was coming in from federal relief activities so some of the things that we were able to do, which some of them started before us, some of them not, but for example the civic center was opened in '76 during my first term in the council. The Canyon Lakes Project, which if you've seen pictures of the way the canyon used to look, it's just an auto dumping ground, it was horrible. To build the series of lake through the community, which was very forward thinking.

DS:

There was a lot of backlash, wasn't there?

AH:

There was, but you know, not enough that it stopped it. Sure, anytime you do anything like this you're going to have people that are against it and that doesn't mean they're wrong, it's just that nobody's going to get in line and say, "Let's all do something."

DS:

I think a lot of us liked it though; we liked the idea of what y'all's vision was there.

AH:

The interesting thing about this, this is the way I recall, it was the year before the tornado, '69, we had actually had a bond election. It was to build the civic center and to do the Canyon Lakes Project. Now, the other major event that happened at exactly the same time was the new air terminal, the new airport. So that was a major deal. And so that bond election was turned down. Just one year later after the tornado they virtually the same, they tweaked it a little bit, but virtually the same question before the voters and it passed overwhelmingly. The only thing I could say is, it was the same project and it was just a different mindset that people were under at that time. So, the point is as far as the types of things we were able to do we were really in an expansion mode; fire stations, just parks, quality of life situations and issues. We still have those, but we were able to get those passed and it's really a neat thing to be able to open the canyon lakes. I remember we had a canoe race of the members of the city council. I don't know how this all got started, but all of us had a canoe and we had a member of the canoe club. We'd be in front and then your back guy would be the experienced one. We all raced in that and I won. I was pretty pleased with myself because as a scout and a few years before that I had taken a canoe trip up through the wilderness area of Canada so I actually knew how to do it. We did that and when

we opened the Burgess Rushing Tennis Center we played tennis and I got a trophy for that. These were neat things that happened.

DS:

That would have been the time that they were having that tennis tournament that would bring in stars from across the country?

AH:

Yeah, that's true, that's true, it is. John McEnroe was there when I was there. The stupidest I've ever felt in my life was they [said], "Well, here's Major Henry with a"—we did this indoors; I mean, they were down at the old First Federal Savings in Lubbock, just as an executive thing. Of course, he hit that thing and it went right behind me. I couldn't even see it much less try to lay a racket on it, those kinds of things. There were some really serious issues and I think at that time, certainly the single member district was one. That's when we had the—the Brown Berets were very active. You know, we had marches. And one of the things I've always felt really proud about was that I think I was the first—I know I was the first mayor that spoke Spanish. Back up to 1962, the chamber of commerce used to send what they called a "community ambassador" to a different country each year as a good will ambassador and I was selected to go to Argentina. So I spent a summer there and had to speak Spanish because they spoke no English. Of course, my Spanish was horrible and that was fifty years ago. But, I was able to put together enough Spanish and did a decent enough job that I was able to give some speeches; Cinco de Mayo, Deice Seis de Septiembre. You know, we did some things like that. You know, not for any reason except just to show courtesy. I knew enough Spanish; I was fluent enough to show off. We enjoyed as a family, that would be our son, Ryan, and our twin daughters Lauren and Sandy, we really enjoyed going around the community. We'd go to East Lubbock and work with the Catholic Sisters over there. We'd go to the African-American section and go with the—of course, at that time the pastors were the folks who made decisions or made recommendations. We did those kinds of things which I think gave our kids an education that we never had before. To be honest with you, this is one of the disadvantages I see to single member districts. The advantages worked out perfectly, but if you have that same situation and you're representing any district and you're responsible for that district, there's really not that much incentive to know what's going on all over town. At any rate, that's just a little editorial comment. TJ and Maggie and Joan Baker, I give Joan a lot of credit. She had been one of the members of the At-Large council. So had, let's see, Bud Atterton had been a member of the At-Large Council and so had Jack Brown, E. Jack Brown. So you had the two different sides there. You had those who were elected at-large, were used to at-large, and weren't sure how single member district worked. And then you had two members who had never been on the council and were elected as single member district. So all of them, the chemistry among those was really, really interesting to watch.

DS:

Let me ask you, since like you said, you were the last mayor for at-large and the first mayor for single member, what did you see as your role going into that first session?

AH:

My role had to be, "Let's figure this thing out together." We'd been given a challenge, let's make it work. One of my good friends at the time was the mayor of Fort Worth who had gone into single member districts a few years earlier. He told about all the horror stories about how, you know, obviously it worked, but all of the dissension and that kind of thing. I saw my only role, primarily, was as maybe an arbiter, as somebody to work with and encourage the freedom of thought and expression, but in a way that people respected each other's view. I honestly think, from what I have understood, we were just lucky we had really good people. If I was able to capitalize on it, that still makes it better. I think there were many, many cities that went through the change into single; I think we had as smooth a change as any city ever has. To me, that's one of the things I guess I'll always be grateful for, not having to be in that place in that time and the people on that council there. If they had gone into it with an attitude either side, say, "I'm not going to do it."

DS:

If we had the politics like today where one side says, "I'm going to shut you down." It just doesn't work.

AH:

Yeah, it's a different animal, it really is. You know, I think that—well, just like procedures, again, before where you only had four people and the mayor. Obviously, the smaller committee you have, the easier it is to understand, but when you go to seven, you have to respect. The other thing is, you no longer elected—the people no longer elected the mayor pro tem. That was under the new charter. The mayor pro tem is selected by the council. So my first mayor pro tem, I believe, was George Carpenter. Yeah, George Carpenter was. Let's see, TJ later became mayor pro tem, Maggie became mayor pro tem. We passed it around, but I think that worked. Now, TJ and Maggie as minority representatives, they had pressures back at home. Obviously there were obviously people that fought to get single member districts and they wanted to move fast and they weren't really in a mood to, "Let's all sing Kumbaya." Maggie and TJ I think did as good a job of navigating those waters as any two people could have. They understood the need to move as fast as possible towards a single member district situation, but they also understood that they had to have help in doing it, they couldn't do it by themselves. So, I think it worked out pretty well.

DS:

You know, something that I'm picking up, because I've had the fortune of serving on plenty of boards commissions through the city also, and you mentioned you had to start off planning the zoning. So did you change the way those were structured also afterwards, as far as how the voting went in?

AH:

You know, it wasn't while I was there. I mean, I think obviously there had been changes, but keep in mind I was only there the first two years. I really couldn't speak to exactly how that works now, but I've always felt like the planning and zoning commission is one of the most important anywhere. And the zoning board of adjustment, but you were on planning commission?

DS:

I was on a zoning board of adjustment.

AH:

You were on a ZBA.

DS:

Yeah.

AH:

Well see that's very, very important because that's one that the decisions that the ZBA banks don't even go the council. If those are challenge, they had to go to a court so it's pretty important.

DS:

Yeah, I was fortunate to be on there with both Maggie and Gene.

AH:

Oh, were you really? Yeah. That's great.

DS:

This is about you, not me. So, let's see.

AH:

No, I'm [inaudible] [01:31:14]

DS:

What I wanted to ask you about before that, before the single member district change and all that, you had to run for the office after McAlister's death. That was also a very important time in the city of Lubbock because the mayor dies unexpectedly one morning.

AH:

That's the first time that's ever happened.

DS:

How did you as a council move forward that day?

AH:

You know, I was in Corpus Christi at a Texas Municipal League meeting when I got the call that he had passed away of a heart attack, I assume at night. So we got the first plane back and flying back, that was what I thought, "What do we do?" Because the press was there when I landed and I had to make a statement and did make a statement about the mayor and the confidence that I had that the council could continue to function and would. And so I did continue and I was presiding officer as the mayor pro tem. We actually had several weeks there, because we had to set up an election timetable. We'd made the decisions that needed to be made. Now, keep in mind also, that we are a council manager for the government. I mean, we had some major things to do, but we also had a good city staff in place. To be honest, most of the day-to-day didn't require the council. The thing that was required of us was to reinforce to the city manager and to the staff that we were behind them. So that's kind of the way it worked. It was a very emotional time, especially with folks on the council. We had all worked together. Bill and I had worked together. Let's see, I went on in '72 and he came on in '74; so this was nearly ten years that we'd been working together. So yeah, it was an emotional time. You know, when you're going through something like that, you don't really stop and say, "Let's plan." As it comes, you do what you can do, and do what seems right at the time and it did work out fine. Once again, I was the luckiest guy in the world because people were very understanding and very supportive of us. The council felt the same way. Probably the most difficult thing for me was moving from mayor pro tem chair to the mayor chair because, you know, here's a very popular mayor that's just passed away and just one of the guys and girls. And so when you have your peers that you've all been the same, and the next day I'm the mayor and they're still members of the council—that took some getting used to from them and me, too. I remember the first time when I was calling for a vote. Everybody does things differently so you've got to be careful. I was different than Bill and we just did things differently because we're two different people. You have to be careful about just such things as calling for a vote too quick or not getting enough time for discussion. You know, your timing, all these things when you're dealing with a group of people, you've got to all feel your way along. We never had any disagreements, but it was more of a perception thing than anything else. I've always thought, in a way, it's quite a bit different if you are elected

and you've never been on a council. Well, you've got a lot of catching up to do, a lot of disadvantages, and I think they far outweigh some of the other issues that you would have. If you had someone that has never been on the council and never has been a peer of everybody else, then you really don't come in as a peer, you come in as the mayor, which can be good and which could be bad because it can either go really well or really poorly. You've got to be conscious of the feelings of those members of the council because they're all elected and you've got to be very conscious. If they have a contribution and just because you've got "mayor" in front of your name doesn't mean you were smarter than the day before.

DS:

Were there any lessons you had learned as a twenty-something working for Mahon that you were able to use later when you were a politician yourself?

AH:

Yeah, I think just watching Mr. Mahon work with his committee chairman, listening to them, asking them questions, letting them ask questions. He was powerful enough that he could have just said, "That's the way it is, do it." There were times that he would need to take a leadership role like that and you had to always make decisions. I think it helped me an awful lot to see the need for consensus wherever possible even though it may not be required, once again, these are all intelligent people who had been elected by their constituencies and they deserve to be listened to and their ideas considered. We just kind of worked together like that.

DS:

And then, of course, after that, you transitioned into normal life. So what have you been doing for the last twenty-nine years?

AH:

I've been doing a lot of the same kinds of things I was doing before, except before I was doing—I was part of organizations because of the title. You know: "You are this because you are the mayor." Now, as I transitioned, I still did as many activities, but they were activities that I wanted to do. I was president of the Boy Scout Council. I went on the Symphony Board and was president of the Symphony Board. I hit up the United Way in Lubbock, the Goodwill Industries Board. Just, you know, a lot of the neighborhood center, I was president of the Guadalupe Neighborhood Center. I was president of the Guadalupe Neighborhood Center which was Guadalupe Parkway Center at the time of the tornado. That was really interesting because that was before I was on the council. You know, where you have a non-profit that's responsible for a geographic area of services and all of a sudden your area is gone. Did you grow up here?

DS:

We had moved back in time for the tornado, but I was too young to be able to answer questions. How did it impact the city as you or someone that was living in the city at the time and involved?

AH:

The tornado?

DS:

Yeah.

AH:

Well, it was the single most life changing event I guess we've ever had. There wasn't anybody that wasn't affected. In my case, once again, this was 1970. I had not been in business all that long so I spent a lot of my time just working with claims and helping our customers and that kind of thing. I remember the morning after the tornado I had a hotel, motel down on Avenue Q. It's still there, but it was brand new. At that time it was called the Astro Motel. It got hit really hard. So I went down and was standing out in the parking lot with the owner and it was just piles of brick. To see the different mindsets of people, because they were all more or less in shock. This lady came over to me and she said, "Are you an insurance man?" I said, "Yes, I insure the hotel." And she said, "What are you going to do about my car?" And I said, "What about your car?" and she said, "Well, it's under that pile of brick so it's your fault." And that's what she felt like. Well, the building fell over on her car so it's the owner's responsibility. Just different things go through people's mind, but a lot of it is not direct. In other words, it's not as though the town just came to a screeching stop, it really didn't. People went on with their business and they'd talk about the tornado and it'd be in the back of their mind. I would suggest it was sort of like, on a smaller—well, it wasn't smaller scale to us, but the day of 9/11 when that was going on, when those buildings were collapsing and you knew it was going on around you, not around you, but the people around you, you knew it. And in some cases you would stop and watch TV and in some cases you would have to take a phone call, but it was always in the back of your mind. That's the way you need to think about the tornado. It didn't stop everything in its tracks, but it was always in the back of your mind.

DS:

Right, and it just made you real busy, didn't it?

AH:

Right, absolutely.

DS:

So I guess that's one industry that really was impacted was the insurance companies.

AH:

Oh it was, it was. Of course, there were millions of dollars' worth of damage and the insurance companies sent in adjustors from all over the country, but you have to remember that the tornado didn't hit all of the city equally. It didn't hit most of the city. I mean, there was a lot of property damage and a lot of cars that were involved, but compared to the entire city, it was pretty localized.

DS:

It was. Well, we haven't talked about some of the things that have impacted our area. Now one of those being water. Now, let's talk about the importance of water and how it also came about that our lake is named after you.

AH:

Well let's talk about that then.

DS:

You know the story so you tell us.

AH:

Of course, the whole saga of the lake, of the reservoir has been a long one. At the time that I came on the council, there had already been some preliminary work done as far back as the sixties. When Lake Meredith came on, and on the lake even farther, up until Lake Meredith came on in the fifties, we just depended on mostly local water wells. They charged people, but our water supply, a great deal of it, was just wells throughout the city. Which of course we don't use at all, and then the Bailey County water well field came on and that was a major, major deal. So, what had happened was that from between the time that we were depending completely on water wells, from the time Lake Meredith came on, we got within—I've heard in as short as 45 days of running out of water, before Lake Meredith came on. Everybody that had any responsibility knew that we needed to plan ahead farther than that. And so in the late sixties, early seventies that we actually started looking for another surface water supply. The city has always been very wise and very fortunate that we've had sub-surface water wells and we had surface water to depend on. Obviously, the more you can depend on replenishable sources, like a lake, the better off you are because as that water goes down underneath in Ogallala, it doesn't come back, at least not in our lifetime. As early as the, as I say, around the seventies, we started looking at—there were all sorts of different ideas being floated. This is sort of interesting. At that time, there was actually a large movement or at least a vocal group of people who felt like we needed to import water from the Mississippi River. As a matter of fact, on the night of the tornado, I was coming home from a meeting of Water Incorporated. Water Incorporated was a non-for-profit organization that was incorporated with the sole purpose of exploring, bringing water, importing water; primarily from the Mississippi or from the northeast or whatever. As preposterous as that

sounds now, people really thought that was the way to go. At any rate, the CRMWA, Canadian River Municipal River Authority came together and did a great job of building Lake Meredith. So we were in great shape there. The point of all this is we felt like we don't want to come that close again to not having any water. So they started looking for a source of surface water. Many, many different hoops that we had to jump through when we finally decided that the most logical place would be on the Brazos River. Then we had to go to Austin and get permission to build a dam there from the water development board and that was very, very contentious. Many of the property owners in that area were very much against it. They didn't want to lay it down there. You know, you could go down there and see how beautiful it was and pristine and canyon buried deep. They just didn't want it and so they fought it and we had some tremendous opposition from property owners down there. So finally we were able to get a permit for the next step. The next step was to do water quality studies. That we did—actually, we didn't do it, the corps of engineers did water quality studies. In fact, I was talking to Aubrey Spear, the water development person at the city yesterday and we were talking about that we actually, we're looking at two different locations. We were looking at the location where the lake finally ended up which is on the double mountain fork of the Brazos River as opposed to the north fork of the double mountain fork which comes through Lubbock. Then there's a confluence about ten miles below where the actual dam is. Well, the idea was that we had water coming from both places, if we could build a dam, below where both of those come together, we could really have a much larger lake than we ended up with. But the water quality studies came back that the North Fork through the city of Lubbock, the North Fork was not good enough, it was very salty, there was salt deposits very near the surface. So they had to move it back and we settled on the general area where we wanted to investigate building. I was involved throughout this process. I went to Austin and testified. I worked with Sam Wahl, and not just me, other council members. Obviously I don't ever want to give the impression where we were not involved—we were involved, just telling you from my prospective that this is what happened. And so we finally, during my administration, I actually went down and met with some of the ranchers in Post at the Dairy Queen, and finally I guess I had enough credibility and they agreed to allow us—that they would sell the land that would be necessary. We agreed on the price of the land, but before we could buy the land we had to do visibility studies about exactly where the dam would go. Because there had been all sorts of rumors spread. One of them was that there was an earthquake fault. Unless they could drill and be sure what the rock strata was below, we weren't sure the dam would even work. Where I came in, and I think we were able to be of most help was during this time, when we were working with the ranchers, the property owners, and the state to come to an agreement. We actually had two federal lawsuits that were filed against us so they just had us stopped. Where I came in was negotiating and working with the ranchers to get them to agree. Or, I didn't get them to, they did agree that they would sell land and they would allow us onto their property to do the testing. See, at that time we couldn't test where the dam was, because it was on private property. At the time that I left, that agreement had been signed. I signed that with the ranchers shortly before I left office. That, I felt like that got it off high center. After I left

office, then they did do the testing. It turned out that exactly where we thought it would work, [it] would work. You know, there were a lot of other obstacles that came up over a period of time; the city still had to determine what would be the best route to build a pipeline up here. There was one school of thought the pipeline should follow the highway from Post because we would have been able to use estate right away and not have to buy any property. It was determined—once again, this is after I left the council—it was determined that going in a straight line would be more economical, even though we had to buy right away as we went. All of those things came together. I remember Sam Wahl, who was the director of water utilities at the time; and the council, at the same time they named the lake for me, they named the recreation area for Sam Wahl, W-A-H-L.¹ Sam passed away about six months ago, I went to his funeral here. But anyway, I remember Sam told us that you need to plan forty years. From the time you start a water project, to the time you turn your tap. And that's exactly what happened from the seventies through about 2010. It actually went on in 2012, if I'm not mistaken. It may have been a little earlier than that, but at any rate the forty years did turn out to be true. The naming of the lake was after I went off the council. Mayor Minn and the council folks that I had worked with named the project for me. I was very grateful. There were some times from that time till now, from when you weren't sure if this was really a good idea or not, you say, "Hmm."

DS:

Yeah, we did go an extended drought.

AH:

We did go through the extended droughts. In anytime you get into a major project like that, multi-millions and millions of dollars, one-hundred-fifty to two-hundred million dollars; it's not going to be smooth sailing. You're going to have to work your way through it. The council was generous enough to give me some credit for being involved for a long time and then maybe pushing it over the goal line at the end.

DS:

Another thing we hit upon earlier and what I'd like to cover are the properties here that you have here on 19th and talk about the historical—I think one of them is designated historical, right?

AH:

Right, that's correct. Sandy and I, my wife and I, have always have been interested in historic preservation. We feel like Lubbock is a very young town and if we keep tearing down everything that's more than twenty years old, that we won't ever have any history. The three houses that you're talking about, we are here at 19th and Indiana. The two-story red brick that we were in, actually, it was built by my wife's grandfather. He didn't ever live here, he was the contractor

¹ The Samuel W. Wahl Recreational Area is a 580-acre tract owned by the City of Lubbock on the north side of Lake Alan Henry.

who built it for a lumberman named Frank Gray. The house was actually built; it was originally on Joliet and 19th Street, about a block west of where it is now. The early eighties, then Methodist Hospital, bought the land from Dr. Hull who had owned it at that time. The house had been owned by Dr. Hull, Dr. Clifford B. Jones, the president of Tech, lived here after he was president of Tech. This is where he lived for a number of years and Mr. Gray before that. Actually, when we moved this house, we moved it in 1982, just picked it up, brought it a block, reconstructed it, and had been using it for our offices ever since. So it had some historical value. It had some sentimental value because of my wife, my wife's grandfather and then just for the city of Lubbock. When we first moved this, I believe it was '82, we did ask that the city declare it a historic local historic structure. So we've really enjoyed it ever since. The houses on either side, the one to the east, the small brick house is actually the oldest of the three. It was actually built in the twenties and was actually built the same year that Texas Tech was started. At the time it was built, it wasn't even inside the city limits. The city limits were Indiana Avenue, which at that time was called Tyler Avenue, and I don't know when they changed it to Indiana. We found out after we were here that actually the gas line goes under Indiana Avenue because they had to do that to get inside the city limits. So that was built by some folks, I believe named Millboard. So that house was already here. We were able to purchase that sometime after we moved this house here. The latest owner, Mr. Vince Joe Errington, the Errington Cancer Center opened in Covenant; it was made for Joe Errington, a physician here. The Errington's owned a gift shop, it opened off Broadway, Barbara Errington. So when she went out of business we bought that. The third house which is west of the two-story that we're in has a very interesting history. It was built about 1945; it's the youngest of the houses. When you go by sometime you'll notice that behind that house is a small white house that you can see out the window. That was the original house on the lot. There's another little house there, a little building, that's the well house. That house is probably, it dates back to the twenties also. So the couple who lived there were named Mr. and Mrs. Bruckner. Mr. Bruckner was a construction superintendent for W.G. McMillan contractors. Mr. McMillan was the major contractor in Lubbock near the forties. So today the Bruckner's had owned this land which is immediately—well it's still in the rock fence. There's a lot of history there, we just left it exactly as it is. You can see that the rock fence that goes around it, it's just built of various and sundry kinds of rock. This, once again, was back in the twenties that they were starting to do that. For example, there are just pieces of concrete that you'll see in there. You'll say, "That looks very strange." And talking to the owner's son who we bought this house from, he explained that back then they didn't have building materials, they just used whatever. So this cement was from an explosion of a grain elevator back in the thirties or forties. And so they just got pieces of rock and put that in and built their fence out of it. The house part of the agriculture of this house next to me is the stonework. Mr. McMillan was having a two-story stone house built. It's now at 19th and Toledo, I believe it is. It's on the southwest corner of that intersection. It's been there forever. It's a two-story house built up the same stone that this house is made of. The point is, Mr. McMillan imported or brought in a stone mason from Scotland to build his home. And as he was doing that Mr. Bruckner said, "Hey, I've

got this lot. I would like you to build to build us a home, do the stone work on it, also.” You’ll see the beautiful stonework on this house is the same stonework as Mr. McMillan. All of that had gotten back in the forties. Probably whole lot more than you want to know about the three houses.

DS:

No, not really because I used to be with the Lubbock Heritage Society. I think you were on that also when it started back in the seventies.

AH:

Yeah, I did. I’ve always been a fan of the Lubbock Heritage Society.

DS:

I was thinking, you need to talk to Pam Brink.

AH:

Pam Brink.

DS:

Because she’s the president now and tell her about your wonderful stories because I know she’ll hit you up for a tour. She’ll say, “Let’s host something out there.”

AH:

You know, the one to the west, we just talked about, the Bruckner house, is actually exactly how it was as Mrs. Bruckner left. Now, there’s a lot of history about Mrs. Bruckner, and the fact that the story did not have a happy ending, because Mr. and Mrs. Bruckner did not have a happy ending, because Mr. and Mrs. Bruckner did not have a very happy divorce. Now, there’s a lot of stories about that. Now, she married a fellow named Turner and that didn’t last very long. Anyway, we knew her as Mrs. Turner. She passed away a number of years ago, but she moved out into an extended care facility. We bought the house and the lot in between from her family. So that’s how we ended up with what I call the insurance district nestled up against the medical district.

DS:

And this is what kind of makes it stand out because the older, you know, homes that you have and then you have the hospital that’s changing every other day.

AH:

That’s exactly right and it’s one of those things that—like when this house became available, what had happened, the hospital purchased the land and left Dr. Hull with, “What do I do with

the house?" It had a lot of sentimental value to him, but there were a lot of people trying to find a place to put it. You can't just take a fifty year old house with columns and put it in southwest Lubbock. You know, there were lots out on a farm and that looks just as bad just sticking up there by itself. It won't fit into just any neighborhood so we were really, really fortunate. The house originally was built on a hundred-twenty-five-foot lot with a garage connected by a breezeway to Joliet. So that was a lot longer. But we could only find this eighty-foot lot where we are so our architect said all you have to do is detach the garage and set it behind rather than attach it to the side. So we were able to make it work. We were just really lucky that we came up with the idea because everybody else was looking for a wide lot. You know, in Texas with everything forty years or younger, there are no places where you could put it where you fit in other than 19th Street.

DS:

Yeah, as soon as you were talking about that detachment or the garage and the breezeway, I was thinking, Oh okay, you're talking about the garage that sits behind you.

AH:

I'll show you when we leave, we have a painting that was done by the Hulls. It was very interesting because they obviously loved the house. They spent quite a bit of money on this painting that shows how it was before it was moved. So apparently all of this came up pretty fast with the hospital, it was Methodist at the time, and he just told us, "Well, we have this painting and it's down at the Baker Gallery if you want to buy it or whatever, we don't need it because we'll be out of the house." I could never get Dr. Hull to come back in to look at it afterwards. Just too many fond memories and his wife, they had been very prominent. They were very much involved in the symphony and a lot of the symphony artists would come here for receptions afterwards, after the symphony. Then before him, of course, was Dr. Clifford B. Jones, and the history of all the things that came about when Dr. Jones was here. That man wrote two or three books. It's a lot of history, we love it. I guess it kind of shows how eclectic we ended up. I guess that's why we've enjoyed Lubbock so much is that we have been privileged to be involved in different aspects.

DS:

Yeah, in fact when we were talking it kind of reinforced the idea that your wife is important in her own right with the Science Spectrum.

AH:

Yeah, you need to do one of her. You talk about something that she just came up with the idea. In fact, she can tell you about the whole story, but the Science Spectrum just started in our basement. That was in '86. She's the one of the two of us that, you know, you talk about being able to sell, you know, she went around to these folks, the people and some of the leaders of the

community and said they need to start something called the science center. They said, "Yeah, right, uh-huh." So she was able to put together a board and get some seed money for a facility that not one of them had ever seen or knew what it was other than her description. Of course, there were many science centers around the country, but I give her all the credit in the world.

DS:

You're going to have to put in a good word for me and then give me her number.

AH:

You got it. Yeah, you got it. She would love to visit with you about it. It's been a very interesting home grown project and it never could have happened if there weren't people in Lubbock that were forward thinking enough that said, "Yes, let's give it a whirl." It worked out.

DS:

I think that can be said about a lot of things. I mean, they had to be forward thinking enough to say Tech, to go after Tech.

AH:

Absolutely, and it's never easy.

DS:

It's never easy. Well I think, you know, I've probably bothered you a part of two hours already. I thank you.

AH:

I thank you, I appreciate it very much. The single-numbered district years and the years since that time—but the times that I had, I was privileged to be a part of, when I was elected. In 1974, it was very interesting: there were only five members of the city council and three of us were elected at the same time. Roy Bass. Roy, I think, in my opinion, is one of the great mayors that we have had in Lubbock. He was well respected, had done his homework. He was well known in the community. He had a way about him that he could bring people together and frankly, I'll have to say, if I had a mentor, if I had to describe a mentor as far as being mayor, it would be Roy Bass. Because probably because he was the first one I knew. All of them had been great, but Roy and I went on at the same time and he defeated a couple of very well-known people. Actually, Jack Baker was the head of Lubbock Post, the billboard company here. I had mentioned to you earlier that he had then been on the city council several years and he decided he would run for mayor. So he resigned from the council. Then I was subsequently elected to his seat. Jack was good, he was very involved in Boy Scouts, chairman of the South Plains Council. And Dub Rushing, Dub Rushing, very well-known name around here was a developer and so Roy had some really stiff competition. He actually beat both of them without even a runoff. It

shows you he was really a very well liked, very well-known person. I appreciated him an awful lot. The second one was Dirk West. Of course Dirk, everybody in the world knew Dirk. Dirk was—the only question you could ask that nobody could ever figure out was why Dirk ran. He didn't need the publicity and I'm not sure exactly, you know, because everybody already knew him and loved him. I mean, Dirk did a good job, a great job actually, and then he was elected mayor after four years. Dirk, he was one of those guys that whenever you were having a serious meeting, it could turn into just a hilarious meeting instantly because he had such a keen wit, was a smart, smart guy and he could pick up on things really fast. But frankly, he would be the first one to tell you some of the things he was interested in and some of them wasn't. He ran for mayor and was elected and could have easily been elected a second time, he just didn't want to do it. He felt like he had done it enough and been there, done that. He retired after being mayor just one year. But it was that first council that put into place a lot of the projects we had talked about earlier. There were actually five of us. There were the three that I just mentioned and Dr. Brice Campbell who was a dentist here and Carolyn Jordan who was the first female member of the city council. You probably, I think you may have done some interviews with or talked about Carolyn. She's out in California now, but those were the five of us that were on that council. So we had a lot of responsibilities regarding the construction of the air terminal, the civic center. All of that was under the first council's watch. The widening, for example, it doesn't sound like anything at all, but the widening of University Avenue on the east side of the campus, there were some real issues that had to be negotiated there because Texas Tech—there was a question about whether Texas Tech owns that land or whether Lubbock does. And so, you know, you think, "That would not be a big issue." It was a huge issue about whether Tech would get permission to widen on their side. So we were able to get that worked out and Roy did an excellent job on that. We were also involved when Indiana—we were looking out here actually was allowed to go through the campus. Up until that time, Indiana just dead ended at the Tech campus. Texas Tech was not interested in having a public street go through its campus and you can't blame them from their standpoint. There's no question that if you've got a beautiful campus there and you've got pedestrians walking all over it to have a major city thoroughfare through it, it could have some problems, but that was actually resolved. Interestingly enough, that was resolved when Texas Tech was awarded the Health Sciences Center and University, UMC, which back then it was called—what was it called? What was the hospital called back then? I'll think of it in a minute.

DS:

Was it Lubbock General?

AH:

It was Lubbock General; you're exactly right, absolutely. Lubbock General Hospital. Well, we had an issue where here's Lubbock General Hospital being constructed and the only way you can get an ambulance from Southwest Lubbock is to go around to Quaker or around to University

and go back. Tech finally relented and agreed at that point to allow this street to go through. Primarily it was to get access to the new Health Sciences Medical School.

DS:

We're talking about how things go back and now that's been taken back, too now. Now you go through the parkway.

AH:

Yes, later on they did the parkway and that's been a whole lot better for them I'm sure and partly for the general population without any question. That was one of those very rare city councils. We talked a little bit earlier about experience on a city council versus new blood on the city council, the pros and the cons. In this case, with only five members on the council and three of us had never been on the city council before. So you only had Carolyn Jordan and Bryce Campbell and a majority of us were not, did not have experience on this city council. And it could have been a problem, it really could. You could give most of the credit there to Roy Bass and the fact that all three of us, Dirk, Roy, and I were pretty widely known in the community and had some credibility in the community. We also had known the other two members. Once again, you go back to Roy, giving him as much credit as I can, there was never any question about a conflict of interest, having any access to grand about anything like that. We just never had anything like that and he was the leader of our council. In those early days whenever we were talking about the planning of Lake Alan Henry, the planning of all of these things, this was the first council that I was a part of. We need to keep them in mind, as I say, we had one more at-large council and then went into single member districts. For my personal standpoint or any success for failure that I've had, I have to give a lot of credit to them and I'm also going to bring up Larry Cunningham who was our city manager for most of that time. Larry, we mentioned earlier about the fact that the staff and all actually worked for a city manager. Larry was somebody that was very good. We had a couple of other managers before him, all of whom were good, but we had some turnover there for a while before Larry took over. We had Mr. McCullough who didn't want to be city manager; he had been director of public utilities, LP&L [**Lubbock Power and Light**]. He did a great job, but it was certainly not a job that he coveted. All of these things have to go together. I did just want to give some credit to this first city council that I was privileged to work with.

DS:

And that would be right after Granberry?

AH:

No, it actually would have been Granberry, then Morris Turner.

DS:

Oh, that's right I forgot.

AH:

And he was there for two years, and then Roy took over after that. Anyway, I appreciate you letting me because what little of I've been able to do, it's just been because of being at the right place at the right time and getting to work with good folks.

DS:

And I guess your learning curve was helped by the fact that you had experience working with people through your business and also through your D.C. connections and all that.

AH:

Yeah, you've just got to put it all together and hope it works out.

DS:

Well I'm glad we took an extra twenty minutes.

AH:

I appreciate that very much.

End of recording

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