

**Oral History Interview of  
Louise Hopkins Underwood**

**Interviewed by: Andy Wilkinson  
November 11, 2015  
Lubbock, Texas**

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## Transcript Overview:

This interview features Louise Underwood. Underwood discusses her involvement in the art scene in Lubbock and her efforts to promote art and culture in terms of both visual arts and performing arts. Underwood also talks about changes in the art community and how to keep future generations interested and involved.

**Length of Interview:** 01:55:21

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## Keywords

art, artists, Lubbock, Texas, performing arts, Texas Tech University

**Andy Wilkinson (AW):**

I'm going to go ahead and start recording, because you always say really cool things when I have that off.

**Louise Hopkins Underwood (LU):**

Okay. Where did we stop?

AW:

Well, I've got notes, actually, about that.

LU:

Oh good.

AW:

But let me say for the recording, before I do that, this is the eleventh of November, it's 11/11.

LU:

Is it November eleventh?

AW:

Yes, 2015. Andy Wilkinson with—

LU:

This is my—is this my anniversary? I believe it is.

**Jane Henry (JH):**

I believe it is, 10/11?

LU:

It is! What do you know about that?

AW:

No, no, this is November eleventh.

JH:

Oh, that's right. It's 11/11.

AW:

Yeah, this is a month after your anniversary.

JH:

It is a month after. Sorry. It's Veteran's Day.

LU:

Okay.

AW:

We had gotten you to Lubbock and raising kids.

JH:

—me born.

AW:

And the notes I have were to talk about first of all, social events in Lubbock. We'll start with that.

LU:

The social events were the baseball games—

JH:

The Lubbock Hubbers.

LU:

—you know, the Underwoods had used the baseball players for their beginning—starting up their warehouses and sound presses, you know.

AW:

Oh, I didn't know that! Now, how had they used them to do that?

LU:

The baseball players became the—what do you call, Jane?

JH:

In the ware—the head of the warehouse?

LU:

Yeah, they—

JH:

Operators?

LU:

They were the ones that took over the business in the little towns around here. They were everywhere—in Big Spring and all—

JH:

They worked in the off season.

AW:

Oh, how cool.

LU:

Yeah. Well, they were in the warehouses, too, with the compresses.

JH:

But I mean when they weren't playing baseball, traveling.

LU:

Yes, it was a seasonal thing, see, so they were always available, and—

AW:

Well, because cotton is kind of a seasonal business, anyway.

LU:

Yeah, so that's what happened, and we always had a baseball team, it seems like, here, and we had the boxing—what was it—

JH:

Golden Gloves or something?

LU:

Golden Gloves, and by golly that was about it. Of course, the Little Theatre, and living in a college town, of course you're going to—you know, it was such a tiny school at that time, and a tiny town. There were 35,000 people here when I came, when Jane was born. So we made our own fun. We had lots of treasure hunts and the president—John—what's his name, that was the head of the Santa Fe Railroad?

JH:

I was talking about him today.



LU:

He was sent down here by the company, and he started out as just a—you know—whatever they do with the lowest man on the totem pole. He was in Amarillo for part of the time, and then he was over here. But we had wonderful people here, and we had lots of—that's what—that was our social. We had potluck suppers, and we'd all bring a dish or something, and that was it. We'd have those treasure hunts and—

AW:

Is it fair to ask if this was—if you felt a little bit like you were being banished to the French Foreign Legion?

LU:

Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. You can imagine. Of course, I learned how to play poker real well during the war when Harris was gone. We played for matchsticks, of course. I guess—yeah, I learned how to play bridge at the university, so we had some bridge games, but there really wasn't—and I belonged to a AAUW child development group, and then we'd have garden clubs, of course.

JH:

And the Wilson lectures.

LU:

Oh, well the Wilson lectures came along a little later that that, maybe, but they were wonderful, yes. That was Louise Arnold's parents, from—they come from Floydada?

JH:

They did.

WA:

Oh really? I didn't know that.

LU:

Yeah, and they put up the money—

AW:

So Jack Henry territory?

JH:

Uh-huh.

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LU:

—for the best teachers—I mean they were so open-minded, because people weren't very open-minded in those days. They were fighting over us, you know, because we were—I was one faith and Harris was another faith—rather, he was a Presbyterian and I was an Episcopalian, and so they were really kind of fighting over us. They wanted us. So anyway, that was—so of course it was a church thing.

JH:

Then they had—didn't the lectures have people like Rabbi Stein—Rabbi—

LU:

No, the Rabbi Kline came and gave those lectures—those wonderful lectures. There were no—there was no artwork in books in those days, believe it or not. He had—the Rabbi Kline—had cut out pictures from magazines and things, you know, that—that was what he—and his wife would put them on whatever the little machine was and shoot it up on the wall, but I guess that was a little later, too, maybe.

AW:

Well, when you mention the lack of art and that sort of thing—you know, if you've ever read Lawrence Graves's edited history of Lubbock book, which is the big thick book, and it's really well done. It was, I think, published in the early fifties by the West Texas Museum Association, and each chapter was written by a different scholar. One of the chapters I remember very clearly was in the 1930s but on into the '40s—the big schism between town and gown, and the efforts made by some of the more conservative religious people in town to get rid of a number of Tech professors—college professors—and I wonder if that sense of separation was there when you were here—first got here.

LU:

Actually, it seems to me that it was very close-knit.

AW:

Oh, so quite different?

LU:

Or at least the Underwoods were with—they had so many friends over there in the professorships, and also the theatre people—now this could have been a little bit later, but whoever that wonderful man was at Tech, in the theatre, he used to take people to New York for theatre trips. So really, we did have some wonderful professors out there, anyway—and there may have been that and I don't know about that.

AW:

I'm sure that you're accurate in your assessment of it. When you read that history, it doesn't really say, "Well, here's what happened later," you know, it was kind of all done there. So I was just curious as to how that—

JH:

Also, probably, you're one of those kind of people who would go find them. You wouldn't have been part of the ones who didn't think they ought to mix.

LU:

Right, and I can remember when it was really so close, because they were the—what Tech had to offer was just—well, the people for one thing. They were not just one—just—

JH:

Farming?

AW:

It certainly makes a difference to live in a community that has a university.

LU:

Oh, absolutely, yes. But there was a lot of the religious stuff going on, and there were some—there were rules, you know. I guess some of that was later, when they had the nude—they put the nude in the closet—

AW:

At the museum?

LU:

And I was talking about—Lynwood was telling—he could tell you about that—but they had it behind the door. People knew about it so they'd go and look.

AW:

Well you know we just put a statue of Zeus up behind the library—a Greek—and actually it's a copy of a Greek statue.

LU:

They did right now?

AW:

Uh-huh, just—my daughter can tell you about it since that's her purview now. This is one of my greatest experiences in life—now on campus I'm "Ian's dad" or "Emily's dad."

JH:

Oh, how fun. That's wonderful.

AW:

It is wonderful. This is a famous reproduction of a Greek statue that was found at the bottom of the sea, and of course it's completely nude, and it's anatomically correct, and there was all this worry about it, and there hasn't been one peep. Nobody even pays any attention to it.

JH:

Really. Is that right?

AW:

Yeah, so I think how different, you know?

LU:

Oh, how different. Yes. I think this—when that happened—see, Lynwood didn't come here until—when did he come?

AW:

It would have been the early seventies?

JH:

Seventies probably.

LU:

Well, see, that's a long way off, so they were—

JH:

Maybe the late sixties, because I think Gwen graduated in '69 and he was here then.

LU:

But the Charles Maedgens led the crusade, or whatever you want to call it, for the museum people and oh my, they worked so hard towards getting anything done. Curry Holden was one of their friends, and got that museum open with that—and had it in the basement, of course, for a long time.

AW:

Yeah, that's where I first remember going to it.

JH:

Me too, to the dugout.

LU:

So that nude in the closet was probably not until Lynwood came in the—whenever it was. But I was telling about it the other day—remembered about it—somebody had reminded me about that. Oh yes, you know.

AW:

Well, you mentioned when you were saying about religious issues, you said there were rules. What did you mean?

LU:

Well, I don't know. The Episcopalians didn't have very many rules, I know. So I was kind of shocked to find out that Harris's—well, his daddy, he really didn't like his wife playing cards on Sunday, and I don't think—I think there was a time when they could not do anything, like the kids couldn't go to the movies or something on—

AW:

And they were Presbyterian?

LU:

Yeah, but that family had gotten a little bit more advanced, I think, by the time they came out here. But that was going on in Lubbock.

JH:

Yeah, and a lot of people weren't allowed to play cards—none of the—you know, there were a lot of Church of Christ kids that lived out here close to us, and they—

LU:

—couldn't dance—

AW:

Yeah, because of the college?

JH:

We had a pool table and a poker table in our basement, and everybody came over to our house. If

their parents had known, they probably would've been real unhappy about what was going on in our neighborhood.

LU:

And look how late that was. We didn't build that house until '50. But there was—we had a country club, such as it was. It was just an old white building, as well as I can remember.

AW:

Which country club, Lubbock?

LU:

Lubbock, uh-huh. They had a—I think it's the same shape and everything that the one is, now, but of course it's come—

JH:

Wasn't it a fishing club for some reason? It's hard for me to think of Lubbock having a fishing club.

LU:

I don't know.

JH:

I thought I'd seen a picture of it.

AW:

Well, you know, at one time, Lubbock—here's an interesting bit of trivia—Lubbock in the fifties it was, you know, when it was known as the “Buckle of the Bible Belt,” it statistically had more churches per capita than anywhere. But it also had more registered boat owners than any non-port city.

JH:

You're kidding. How funny.

AW:

No, so if you think about it, I guess you have to hook your boat up here and go somewhere.

JH:

Five hundred miles in any direction.

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LU:

I'm trying to think, too, but it was really fun, the way that the crowds mixed. We had a lot of really good friends that were the Underwoods crowd—you know, the Jennings and the Kruegers, and a lot of—so those are doctors and coaches, and that was another way of getting, I guess—and the presidents of the college and all that. They had a wonderful diner—a dining room—at Tech. It was the best place to eat. I do remember that.

AW:

I wish they'd bring that back.

LU:

Yes, yes.

AW:

Do you remember where it was on campus?

LU:

Golly, heavens no. It was just right there at the middle of the campus somewhere. But that was a big thing, and the dances—we were—the assembly club was formed, and they—we were asked to join. That was right after Harris came home.

JH:

When did the symphony start?

LU:

The symphony—I don't know—I think maybe in the sixties—surely by the sixties.

AW:

I would think so.

JH:

I know they had the symphony ball.

LU:

With—and I can't remember—

AW:

Harrod?

LU:

William Harrod, yeah.

AW:

Yeah, one of his sons went to school with me.

JH:

And you all used to have fun parties.

LU:

Oh, yes. There was a great deal of creativity, like I said. We had the treasure hunts that you had to—and everybody was very clever with poems and writing. I don't know. I wasn't very clever with the—but Harris was really good at it and Carol Lane was absolutely marvelous at it.

JH:

I can remember, one time they put brown paper all over the basement and they drew Paris so it looked like a night scene, and the street scenes in Paris.

LU:

We did that at one of the little clubs here. It wasn't a club. It was a place on—I think it was on College Avenue, and it was kind of a tourist court building, and that's where we had some of the dances that we had. We belonged to a little club that we called the Forties Club, I guess. The kids were—the husbands weren't forty. I don't know why it was called forty. Maybe we had forty members; I don't know. But I know that we had our—Lambert—this was in the fifties, though, because we built our house over there on Seventeenth Street in 1950, which, by the way, we had our bricks stored on a lot that we had over there on—

JH:

Twenty-Fourth—

LU:

Flint and—it was in that area where they had that—anyway, they had a flood, so we had to take—we had to go out and find the—Harris went to look for the highest place in Lubbock because our bricks were all underwater over there. They said it would never happen again because they did go ahead and redo that little playa lake, I guess, whatever it was. You know where the park is, there off Flint? It was right off that. The Furrs, Don Furr, built on that lot later.

JH:

You were planning to have a basement.



LU:

Yeah, we had a basement for the children to play in. They had a fabulous little theatre down there and everything. It was just wonderful.

JH:

We actually lived in the basement before the house was finished.

AW:

Yeah, I think we talked about that.

LU:

Did we do that?

AW:

Yeah, it was really interesting. You mentioned when we first sat down this afternoon about the theatre—the Lubbock Little Theatre.

LU:

The Little Theatre was very good.

AW:

And I guess that's something that was important.

LU:

It was very important. It was, strangely enough, because theatres, we didn't have any. We had some movie houses, but you know how you see those old opera houses all over Texas? Well we didn't have anything like that.

AW:

No, I don't think—I can't think of one that we have had here—

LU:

The Lindsey was the nicest one that we had. The Lindsey Theater was the nicest.

AW:

Right, but even the Clifton before that, I don't think was like—you know, all over Texas are various theaters that served dual purpose, because they were built right at the end of the era of Vaudeville and such, but I don't think we have any of those in Lubbock. They were all built as movie houses. So they weren't as nice, for instance, as—yeah. That's really interesting.

JH:

The Little Theatre building was over on—Q

LU:

P, it's still there. I think it's still sitting there. I don't know what it's doing there, and there's now—it really—I was so shocked when I went in it later and found—you know, they didn't even have a—I think they had a stage, and then when they—they didn't have any dressing rooms or anything back there, and I think they just went out and come out together to—I'm not sure of that.

AW:

I remember going—when I was in high school—going to plays there, but it looked like a theatre to me. I didn't know any better.

JH:

Yeah, me too.

LU:

Right. Well we—Harris and I were on their advisory board.

AW:

Oh really?

LU:

Yes.

AW:

Was that one of the first arts things that you got involved in?

LU:

It was, yes. Actually, I didn't get really involved in the art part—the visual art—until Gwen—

JH:

Well you were on the museum board for a long time, though.

LU:

Yes, but that was later, too. I was a trustee there for a long time. Well, I worked over there for fifty years.

AW:  
Really?

LU:  
Yeah, I was very active for fifty years over there, but then when it got so—

AW:  
We're talking about the West Texas Museum, later the Texas Tech Museum, which was art and history and archaeology and everything else.

LU:  
Yes, right.

JH:  
Do you remember when Mr. Hurd came over and painted the mural?

LU:  
Yeah, uh-huh. I do, and I remember the Hurds very well. We had a party for her—for the—what was her name? Ms. Hurd, the artist. She was so wonderful.

AW:  
Yeah, her maiden name was Wyeth. I'm trying to remember—Henrietta or something—

LU:  
Henrietta. Henrietta. You know, we had museum parties—well everybody had to—we entertained a whole lot because we did not have any central place, as I remember it, to go.

AW:  
You had to do it if it was going to get done.

LU:  
Yes, uh-huh. Let's see, and probably that—wherever that luncheon place I was talking about—wherever it was at Tech, it seems to me that was—because we did square dancing. Now, where would we've done square dancing? I don't know. Maybe at the country club. That was big. We did a lot of that, believe it or not.

AW:  
Square dancing?

LU:

It was fun, too, uh-huh.

JH:

I remember taking square dancing lessons. Did you do that, too?

AW:

No, we did square dancing in PE.

JH:

Yeah, that wasn't fun.

AW:

It wasn't fun.

LU:

Oh, you did?

AW:

Yeah, at Monterrey High, and nobody liked that. It was pretty corny, and this was the sixties, and nobody was too impressed. But we took dance lessons with Mr. Band. Mr. Bandzevicius over just off Nineteenth Street, and we were in a dance club. We had our dances all over town—

LU:

We did that.

AW:

—I mean at Lubbock Country Club, Hillcrest Country Club, at the Hodges Community Center.

LU:

Did you have to do that, Jane? I know the boys did.

JH:

I had to do Stardusters. I hated Stardusters.

AW:

Yeah, we were the Belles 'N Beaus. Stardusters had gotten too big—

JH:

Had just died?

AW:

No, it was too big. They couldn't accommodate any more kids, and so when we came along in the early sixties, all the mothers got together and started another club.

JH:

A new one, yeah.

AW:

That's the one we were in. I still remember how perplexed we were at the whole thing. We learned some valuable things—tango and foxtrot, which of course, they were playing Hully Gully and The Twist, and that wasn't of much use. Still, it was something to get us out of the house. When did you become interested in the visual arts in our community?

LU:

Actually, it was—well, I think, really, when Gwen came back from—she went to a college—a junior college—

JH:

Christian College in Columbia, Missouri.

LU:

—Christian College in Missouri, and they discovered her talents there that she had in art. Of course, she'd been taking from Miss Lawrence here. A lot of the kids took from her. She was on X, I think, maybe Twenty-Seventh, or something like that, and X. Anyway, of course you're just naturally interested in what your kids are up to and doing, and we got to know all those wonderful professors over there—both male and female artists and everybody—Terry Morrow and all the—everybody over there. It was wonderful—and really got just deeply involved in that. Then we got to knowing the Lotts, too, John and—

JH:

Ryla?

LU:

—Ryla, and they started doing something very interesting, and I wish we had been able to afford it, because had we, you know—because Harris was really kind of wonderful about taking up with art, too, which was surprising to me. When we got interested in her—that was in the—I think she—didn't she get out in the seventies?

JH:

'69, I think.

LU:

She was the first or second class of the fine arts, when they graduated.

JH:

I think '69 is when she graduated.

LU:

Anyway, it's always been a fine school, but they really—and they still really nurture those kids. They just—Gwen was dyslexic, which of course we didn't know about in those days, and she had a terrible time getting her letters all mixed up and stuff, so they had her at the board doing all the artwork when she was just in the second and third grades. So she was always—she was really skilled that way.

JH:

She made a lot of campaign posters for me.

AW:

Oh, did she?

LU:

She what?

JH:

She made a lot of my campaign posters.

AW:

Well, you know, as I recall, getting to do some of that board work when I was a little kid, I almost flunked the third grade because I spent all of my time doing the boards and didn't learn my multiplication tables, so I wonder if that happened to Gwen.

JH:

That would be Gwen.

LU:

It did. They literally pulled her through her schoolwork because she had such a time—and of course, we came to find out what it is, because she's smart as a whip, I can assure you.

JH:

But you all were always involved with different artists. You always bought people's work before anybody knew them.

LU:

We did, yeah.

AW:

How did you approach that as a collector, as a patron? How did you get to know these people?

LU:

Well, I guess it was through the art department, and they used to have sales. They would bring in—and I think they still do it—where they would bring lots of works in. The only people interested in fine arts that I can remember was the Baker Company, you know.

AW:

Yeah, because they had a gallery.

LU:

They had a gallery, and they—but, unfortunately, it was mostly southwestern art.

AW:

Yeah, they were pretty much hooked into that New Mexico, Santa Fe—and it was always pretty—it wasn't cheap art, either, if I remember correctly, for the time period.

LU:

Right. So this was just—these were—particularly when prints came in and things like that, you know—

JH:

I remember Lynwood telling a story about a print that you had bought of his, and he—it may have been the only one he sold, or maybe somebody else—

LU:

We were very involved with the—you know, he got involved with his color print, and he used to spend hours taking Harris and I through the—you know, whenever he had an exhibit of the color print artists, and he would take us through, and that's where Harris really got so involved and bought lots of prints to go in his office. He had a good collection down there when he died.

JH:

I think it was the tornado that Lynwood was telling about—anyway, he said that something hit and maybe he had one thing at Charles's being framed, and the tornado hit, and now the only two copies of that print are the one he has and the one mother has.



LU:

Yeah, and Harris was real good about that. He liked to see things go and help people with things like that.

JH:

—before they got discovered.

LU:

Yeah, and as I said, it was so nice—we knew the Lotts, and they were beginning to—well, I guess, maybe John had started even before that. What they did, they found this woman in New York, and she would go around—and we went with them the first—on maybe their first or second time that they'd ever done it. I've forgotten her name; somebody could tell you what it was. She did not have a gallery of her own, but she was knowledgeable of where all the art was, and then she would take you—if you went to New York, she would take you around to—she would spot the kind of things or show you what was the latest thing, and she was wonderful because you could buy—if you knew what you wanted, you'd buy a piece, and if you outgrew it in a few years, you could turn it back in to her for something of equal value or more valuable, and that's how John got started in his collection.

AW:

Really?

LU:

Uh-huh. And then, one time, the museum had her bring a whole—had a whole show at the museum, and that's where this one came from, this Hawthorne here. My mother bought that for us.

JH:

She hung it in the dining room for a while. Daddy said it looks like she smelled bad cheese.

LU:

No, she looks like she's shaking her finger at—

AW:

She is rather severe.

LU:

Yeah, so he made the—he put the dining room table in such a position so he didn't have to look at it, but he liked it, and he had a wonderful time bargaining with the guy that owned it. He came down here for the show, and it turned out—well, I can't tell that story.

AW:

Oh, do I need to turn off the tape?

LU:

Yeah, I'll tell you about that later.

AW:

Okay. I need to find out about that.

JH:

Where'd you get Sylvanus Green? Why doesn't he have a light?

LU:

Oh, well, maybe we didn't turn it on. I don't know. But it never did hit.

JH:

I knew it wasn't quite right. Where did he come from?

LU:

Huh?

JH:

Where did he come from—Sylvanus?

LU:

I don't know, but I guess—well, my mother's always been involved in the art, and she wanted all of us girls to have our portraits done. That little portrait over there, that little watercolor, is my brother.

AW:

Oh really?

LU:

Yeah, and she—

AW:

Last time I was here, we looked at all the beautiful girls.

LU:

Did we?

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AW:

Yeah, but—

LU:

Well, and this, of course, was done when he was a baby in New York.

AW:

That's a wonderful painting.

LU:

She was a wonderful artist in New York. I don't know, I've been around it all the time. When we were in Dallas it was the thirties when they had the—they belonged to the—they had a print society, and I've been trying to get a print society going ever since I came here, because what they did, they agreed to buy maybe two prints from these artists a year, you know, but they all would come and talk to them and show them how to—where they bring their artwork and a potluck supper, and it would go around—different people would have it—and I don't know whether they went to their homes, to the studios, or whether they gave lectures, or whatever they did, but anyway, they were always around the artists all the time, all during that period, ever since we moved to Dallas.

JH:

Why wouldn't that be a great thing to do? Would Lynwood do that with you? He's the best—knowledgeable about prints.

LU:

Well, I have never gotten it on, and I've tried ever since—

AW:

Yeah, and we have others, like our friend Dirk Fowler, who does these music posters—hand-pulled, where he sets the type and then does a design, does the woodcuts—and you know, there's a guy that's famous all over Europe for his music posters, and he lives right here in Lubbock. Wouldn't it be nice to do something similar with that—

JH:

It really would.

AW:

—and plus the fun of getting people together. That's great.

LU:

I've been trying to do it down at the center.

JH:

And you know, young collectors—young people—don't know how to buy them. I think that's a fabulous idea, because you want to be knowledgeable when you go out to spend some money.

AW:

Yeah, and you know what else would help—and we'll be talking about this here in a few minutes, when we get to the center—but one of the difficulties of not having an educated public is that the prices that people ask are all over the map, and when people can't—you know, people who want to build a collection can't learn what the marketplace is, then it runs them off. They do something they—

JH:

Yeah, they're scared to do something dumb.

AW:

Yeah, they don't know if a piece is really worth five thousand or it's only really worth five hundred, and having some education—like a print society—would be—or this woman that took people to New York. Well, you know, from when we talked last time—and of course, knowing you—I know that you've had a lifelong interest in art, but what spurred you to take on—I mean you were out in front on the big white charger with a lance.

JH:

Now she's behind you with a lance.

AW:

And still is, and what moved you into that dynamic of being so much in the forefront of getting our art community together? It's a marvelous thing that you've done, but where on Earth did you get the energy and the drive to do all that?

LU:

Well, it's just part of—I've got to—and I really think—I told somebody—I knew you were going to ask me that, and so—I don't know, but I had a conversation with our mayor one time, mayor—you know, Tom Martin? We were begging for some of those old buildings and stuff down there, and anyway, I guess he just couldn't understand, but he did give them to us. He didn't understand about the—he said he just didn't have anything, and I said—well, I think that's where this comes from. I just couldn't do it. I did one—he said he'd done a pot when he was little, at school.

AW:

Tom Martin had?

LU:

Yeah, and what happens to us is that the art teachers so often just cut us off right there.

AW:

Yeah, you have talent or you don't have talent.

LU:

Yeah.

AW:

Kind of like the math teachers, you get it or you don't get it. Yeah.

LU:

Yeah, and so I think the fact—and I was the—I had two sisters who were really, really good actresses. They were really good. One of them was a legitimate—she was a graduate of Northwestern Drama School, then went to New York to that famous school out there—whatever that was—for several years and got her card, you know, and then she was in Dallas—

JH:

Little Theatre?

LU:

Oh they were all—both—in all the Little Theatre plays, but what was it called? Theatre One or Theatre Two or whatever it was in Dallas. It was a professional one that Jane—Madeleine was the real professional.

JH:

Did Frank Lloyd Wright design the theatre?

LU:

He did, uh-huh. Not that—not for that—he did the theatre, the one that—the Little Theatre, or whatever it became, and it's still there, you know. It's very much still there. It's a beautiful building. I was always passionate about the theatre, but the visual art I had to—and we got—actually, I guess we—well, it's just fun to—I guess when I sat for my portrait, too, that really made an impression. I didn't want to do that at all.

AW:

Really? Who painted that?

LU:

Dickson Reeder painted mine.

AW:

Oh, we're talking about the one when you were—

JH:

The one on the piano.

AW:

Yeah.

LU:

Yeah, but I was—I had just had my third baby when I had—he painted this gorgeous creature, you know. I think I sat for him for—I know I did a week, maybe ten days, I'm not sure. Harris loved it, too, and he would come in every night to see it, and he wouldn't let me see it.

AW:

Oh, Reeder wouldn't?

LU:

No, never would let me. But he was fascinating, and he had a school, a Shakespearean school in Fort Worth. He was one of those—oh, Jane, get that book over there. He belonged to—anyway, I didn't want to—I did not—I was not the least bit interested in doing it, until—I said, “Okay, I will do it if I find an artist that I really am interested in, and stuff,” so when I saw this—she bought this painting—this one of Ella Ray is a—what do you call them?

JH:

Something prize?

LU:

She gave a prize and it won the prize—one that when you give a prize, but you get the prize—you get to keep—

AW:

Like a claiming race.



LU:

Or whatever, but anyway, there it is on the wall, and I just love it.

JH:

And when you saw that painting—

LU:

So when I saw that painting, then I said, “Okay,” that I would let him do it. Then he became—he was a fascinating person, you know, he and his wife did all these costumes and all the sets, and they belonged to a—well, I think we were telling you about that, weren’t we, when we probably quit? We went down to Dallas when I loaned this painting to the Carter—

AW:

Yeah, because we talked about—that was one of my last notes, was the Amon Carter—

LU:

I think so, yeah.

AW:

Yeah, and when I saw the title of the book, I went, “Oh, yeah, I remember.”

LU:

Yeah, and it’s in there, of course. But they weren’t doing windmills and all that kind of stuff at that particular period, when everybody else was. They were all into Western art, and they were really having a ball, too. Most of them were trained, and had been to Paris or somewhere to—you know, were really good artists.

AW:

Yeah, there was a real split between Dallas and the Dallas Nine, and the Frank Reaugh, and the Fort Worth group.

LU:

That’s right, yeah.

AW:

It’s interesting. We talked to the Amon Carter about maybe—because they have a nice Frank Reaugh collection—as we do at Tech—and I talked to them once about doing a show, and the curator said, “Well, Amon Carter is dead, but his spirit lives on. We probably wouldn’t show a Dallas artist.” Isn’t that interesting? That’s only been about seven or eight years ago.



LU:

Oh, my word.

AW:

But there really is, there's—I mean, the stylistic difference between the two school, and—

LU:

Absolutely.

AW:

It's quite interesting. Well how did you—what did you see in Lubbock that made you think that we, as a community, could support something like what has come to pass?

LU:

Well, it was not over visual art. It was over performing art, again, and that was when Neil Hanslik came back to town, and he had been coming for years. I think he had been in New York, trying to be an actor, and maybe he was successful, but I don't know about that—but after a few years, he was into the producing—I mean, they sent him out—it wasn't his production, I'm sure, but—

AW:

He'd take a show on the road, or—?

LU:

He came—he would go places and train them to—they'd go to the Junior League, for instance, and he'd put on that Junior League play, or whatever that thing was. You know, we had one almost every year.

JH:

Follies?

LU:

Follies! He'd pick the—you know, they'd put one on and that was their fundraisers, the different ones. He would do that more than just in Lubbock, but he did it. Well, when he came home—retired—and he came here, and he became the head of the Little Theatre, and he was whatever the different—he was the head of the Arts Alliance, if I'm not mistaken—the president?

AW:

Probably board president.

LU:

Yeah, board president. You know, his father was a very prominent cotton man, and so—do you remember a girl named Swain?

AW:

No, I don't.

LU:

What was her name? She was very passionate about the arts, too, and she connected us—he was raising money for a thing called—oh, gosh, I forgot it upstairs in all that stuff. What was the name of it? See, I should've done my homework.

AW:

Was it a production, or like an event?

LU:

Yes.

JH:

This wasn't the Windmill Playwrights?

LU:

Oh no, that was later. That was later. That was when—well, you know—

AW:

Yeah, I was involved by then.

LU:

You were involved in all this stuff.

AW:

Well, not back at the very beginning, when Neil first got back.

LU:

You weren't?

AW:

No, I was on the Arts Alliance board, but—

LU:  
Well—

AW:  
—back when Russell was still at the Arts Alliance. That's how far back.

LU:  
—he was—he got something—he got like seven hundred and ninety performing arts people that wanted to get on the stage. They—what did they call it? There was a music festival. It was connected with—who is that wonderful guy down at the Cactus?

AW:  
Oh, Don Caldwell?

LU:  
Yes, it was in connection with that, and they did a music festival. They had it. Do you remember when he was doing that? It was a successful thing.

AW:  
Yeah, well we did a—in 19—

LU:  
This was in 1916—I mean 1996, excuse me.

AW:  
Oh, okay, so—

LU:  
The year before we started this—we've got all this on the roll.

AW:  
Okay, yeah, much later, because we had had—before that we had had a bunch of music festivals—West Texas Music Association—

LU:  
Yeah. Well, they set up like five or six stages outside—

AW:  
Oh, the Fourth on Broadway kind of thing.

LU:

Well, it was even more so. This was his creation, and it was a huge success, except it rained. But it proved to us that there was a huge need for theatre here, and there was absolutely no place to go.

AW:

Now, as I recall, in the nineties, the Lubbock Little Theatre was not as robust as it had been.

LU:

No, they were down at the—they had just bought an old department store that had a pole in the—

AW:

Yeah, S&Q.

LU:

With a pole in the middle, and they had to put that in every script—

AW:

I know it. Yeah, I went to several plays there, and it was—on top of remembering where you used to buy a club tie, here was this pole in the middle of the—yeah, the blocking was pretty unusual for—

JH:

Yeah, I bet.

LU:

But anyway, it started with that, and she got me—and then she introduced—she got me because I was a widow. Harris had died in February of that year, and this was in the fall, in October or something.

AW:

And this was Swain?

LU:

Swain. I'm sure you knew her.

AW:

Yeah, I probably did. I'm just having trouble.

LU:

I can't remember her first name. But she was a go-getter, too. Anyhow, so—and I helped him with the backing of it, and because of the rain, I guess, or maybe I still wasn't going anywhere because of Harris's death, but I did go ahead and give him the money to do it, and then it was just a huge, huge—it just showed—proved that we really had a lot of talent here, golly. So anyway, that's why we—then that jumped over to—while he was the—I guess he was the president of the—or he was on the board, anyway, of the Arts Alliance.

AW:

Yeah, because we were actually on the board at the same time.

LU:

Okay, and it came out of the fact they got me—I had always been a member, but that was all, because I didn't have any artistic talents.

JH:

Expertise?

LU:

Yeah, but anyway, we hooked up together and decided that “Well, we're going to go see if we can't—what we can make out of this,” so we got a committee together, I think. Maybe we didn't have a committee then. Maybe there were just the two of us. And we sent out something like ninety-eight—

JH:

Questionnaires?

LU:

—questionnaires to see if anybody would be—what they thought about—you know, to all these wonderful people we—and I'd been taking art from Betsy Sasser, you know. I'd been auditing all of her classes, so I was—I had gotten a little bit knowledgeable there. I'd forgotten about that. And then of course the Rabbi's things, and so—

JH:

Connie Martin?

LU:

I knew enough people that between us, and so forth, and of course with the Arts Alliance, too, so anyway we got a whole lot of replies—way up there, seventy-something replies, “Please do it,” do it, yeah, they'd be willing to—because it said, “Would you be willing to do something—

either give us money or get involved?" And they—so that's how it all started, and then we got a committee together, and then we tried to get—we had that bond election—you know, that bond thing that came up—and then Neil and I went down to Dallas and Margie Reese—

AW:

—to see one of their facilities, right?

LU:

Well, we got in touch with Margie Reese—somebody put us in touch with her. She was over all the activities in Dallas. It seems that Dallas does pay for their—they pay to help their cultural things, and so—

JH:

What a novel idea.

LU:

—she was in charge of even putting the light bulbs in the Myerson. She just did it all, so she made us a list and got us with these different ones, and we spent two days down there. We went to the Frank Lloyd Wright, we went to the Bath House that they had out—it had a little theatre that's a little black box theater, and that other one, and let's see—then we went to the Myerson, we went to four or five that really spent time with us, and stuff.

JH:

Did you go to the Sammons then?

LU:

We did, and the Sammons was the old waterworks, and she—oh my goodness—her name was—is, because she's still the director down there—Joanna St. Angelo—

AW:

Oh right, right.

LU:

Oh, and she's wonderful. Did you come to her lecture that—she came out here—

AW:

Yeah, I remember that.

LU:

—and then—yes, then Neil figured out—I don't know where we were. I would like to know where we went to have that thing. It was—

AW:

Well I just remember our first meetings were right in this room where we're talking right now.

JH:

The first committee meetings.

AW:

The first meetings were right here.

LU:

Yeah.

AW:

In fact, some of us came just to hang out with you. That's why we came. Well, going back to that first start, because I happened to be involved with the Arts Alliance at the time, and I remember the people in the Arts Alliance, not all of them were as enthusiastic about this as I was. What was that tension like from your perspective?

LU:

Well, it was too bad. It was just a shame, because—oh, I know what happened, too. I was on the Texas Commission for the Arts. Yes, that was really what gave me the—enough confidence to figure that I could be helpful. I couldn't do it myself, but I could—I knew some people that I could grab and get in to help.

JH:

And you sort of knew the artists and the theatre people in the community enough to know that nobody could sell here. You had to go to Austin or Santa Fe or New York or something. Everybody left. We had all the talent, but not the place for people to show or be seen—

AW:

—or even to learn.

JH:

Yeah, or build an audience.



LU:

Yeah, even when they graduated from college, the college really didn't help them beyond that—they graduated—and so they didn't want to stay here, and all of our talents were scooting away. We had all the good talent out at Tech, but—and in the other colleges, too, I must admit. Yes, but that's what—because look who was on that—

JH:

Committee?

LU:

Uh-huh. Peter Fox was really involved with us, and he and also—I bet it was the Arts Alliance who put me on that—got me on that commission with—I was on the first arts commission of the city council. It had been a committee of arts, and that David Langston was the president of that—or the director, whatever you call it.

AW:

Yeah, when he had his—put together this giant group of us, the arts, culture, and entertainment on the Llano Estacado. Do you remember those giant meetings we used to have?

LU:

Yeah.

AW:

They were lots of fun. I don't think we got anything done, but we had a lot of fun.

JH:

But you know, that was kind of a recurring theme from the time of that wonderful booklet that they made in '70 or '71, right after the tornado, about where Lubbock should go. If they had done something with that initially—I mean, we're still saying the same thing.

LU:

Yeah, and Jim—

AW:

Jim Bertram.

LU:

Jim Bertram, yeah.

AW:

Yeah, we—you know, and I'll tell you about this in a few minutes, about the history of Lubbock that I'm helping work on, but you know, Jim Bertram doesn't get nearly enough credit.

LU:

Oh, he does not.

JH:

No, he doesn't. He's fabulous.

AW:

For, you know, a city now that has the civic center, and has Canyon Lakes, and has no billboards and all kinds of other things that he was so instrumental in.

JH:

What was his job title?

LU:

City planner.

AW:

He was the director of planning, and he was that even as a young man, but he had just taken that job when the tornado hit, so it was quite—that was quite a confluence of events. I mean here's a forced urban renewal project, but you had a person there—a young person—who—

JH:

—who'll actually do something.

AW:

Yes, and you had a community that was willing to salute and take orders, because everybody pulled together to do that, and so that was really a great opportunity. I think back to how significant that is for our—

LU:

Right, and Windy Sitton was the mayor, and she was—she, herself, was not that interested—because she's never been around since, or anything—but she was then. She knew to do it, anyway, and then she appointed me to be the first theatre person on that commission.

AW:

Well let me throw this out as sort of a topic, not a question, but there's always been some interest in the arts—

LU:

Oh yes.

AW:

—and people trying to do things, but we hadn't had any real success until you got involved in it, and I wonder if your role—and tell me if I'm mischaracterizing this—but you crossed so many strata in our community—so many groups, I don't mean high or low, necessarily—but so many different groups that when you became involved, I remember it being a sea-change here in Lubbock, that, when we started actually having those meetings over here, the whole thing altered. Now, I know you're too humble to take credit for all this, but there was a big difference. Is it because—I mean, I'm just thinking. I listen to you talk about how you were involved in the community in the fifties and sixties, and all these parties that you had to get together—and I don't mean like crazy parties, but you would make your own entertainment—that sort of integration in the fabric, is that part of what the success of our community being able to move forward to create this wonderful center?

LU:

Oh, I think so, yeah I do. There were so many different branches—you're right, but it scattered—the museum people were kind of hoity-toity, everybody was snooty, and they thought that the best way to get places was to be exclusive. Well, I don't believe in that. That is what being at the museum at the time that I was being there, we were—trustees had meetings at all these fabulous museums, you know, including in New York and Pittsburgh, and all around—Minneapolis and stuff—and we got all these wonderful ideas were coming in, and that's where—you bet, it just seemed to—and everybody—so there were just little strings that we could pull together, and Bonnie Aycock was one of the ones, and there were just some—

JH:

Louise Maedgen.

LU:

Louise Maedgen, yeah.

AW:

I just remember those first meetings that we had here, there were people from the business community, there were people from the law community, from Tech, there were artists—

JH:

—musicians—

AW:

—musicians—the odd musician here or there, theatre people, and it was not a “you have to be on the board of the museum to be here” kind of thing. It was really a diverse group.

LU:

Yeah, and I think you came once, maybe, when we brought Margie Reese out here—

AW:

Uh-huh.

LU:

—for one of those, and we had—there was a neat guy down at the city hall that was just beginning to—I’m sorry he didn’t get to be the whatever he wanted—he was headed towards the top—

JH:

—city manager or something?

AW:

Are we thinking about Tommy Gonzalez?

LU:

I think so. Was that his name?

AW:

Yeah, he was terrific.

LU:

But he was here, and he really caught on to what she was saying.

AW:

Yeah, he was an interesting guy. He grew up in a family here, and they were—not sharecroppers—they picked cotton.

JH:

Migrant workers?

AW:

Well, they lived here, but they lived like migrant workers, and he could even remember going out as a little tiny kid to help that out. So it was really quite a diverse group.

LU:

It was, yeah.

JH:

And you did things like the kite fly, you know, when they did the—at the museum.

LU:

Yeah, that was an idea from one of those museum things, where we learned that the kids were scared when we'd bring them in from the school, but they'd be scared, they didn't want to leave their coats—they didn't know what was going on. People would take their coats—they'd never seen a hatcheck girl or anybody like that. They didn't know whether they'd get them back. So we came up with that—well, we just had a whole lot of really interesting, marvelous people here at the time, and since then we've lost so many of those good people.

JH:

I think that's one of the things you've done, though, is pull it together, all these different folks from different—because you've never—and this is a fight she keeps fighting. This is not a competition. We are all in this together. Granted, there're limited cultural dollars, but if we fight each other, we're going down. If we can all be together and all pull together, then we improve the whole community, and I think that's been the real gift of LHUCA.

AW:

Well, we might as well just jump forwards, because one of the things you mentioned last time we were together was that you really wanted to talk about the state of things now. What is it like now? How much—I mean, there is this wonderful facility, and of course anybody who goes to First Friday Art Trail now—especially if they went in those very first First Fridays we did, when there were more of us standing at the locations than there were people coming to them to begin with, and now it's such a crowd. It's phenomenal.

LU:

Oh, it is, but now we're beginning to be looked at, also, as—the money's getting scarcer, you know, and the donors are dying off. We haven't—they have not—

AW:

Were y'all building a new group?

LU:

They're not—well, we've got a new director, and I believe that that's going to happen. I believe she's got her—

AW:

Well what I mean is a new group of people in the community who are stepping up to fill those roles that the Maedgens, for instance—

LU:

Well, I don't see—we went into the visual arts, actually, because that's where all the interest was going, and so that was—you know, we did the playwriting, which was wonderful, and we could've branched that way. We should've—

AW:

Yeah, well there were several of us who were really—me included—who were very big on the performing arts side of it, but we quickly were in the minority.

LU:

Well that's what happened, see, and then we couldn't—I don't know—and the trouble with—I hate to talk about Neil, but he knew he wasn't going to be living very much longer and he always had the ambition to have a theatre and have it go—and he knew all that and he had no sense whatsoever about money, or you know—and so we couldn't put two cents together and keep it or do anything from it, but it was well that we—we had to split in order to advance, and he went one way and we did the other. But he definitely—you know, just—and I'm so sorry—well, I don't know whether I ought to talk about that, either.

AW:

Well, no, I think it's good to talk about it, because people will be listening to this fifty years from now, and—

LU:

Right, well, Chris Caddell, see, was up for the—being a director—being the director, and oh my, it was wonderful. He was just the perfect person to do it, but there was somebody on the board that came out and—on that committee—that said he didn't have a degree. Well, Don Haragan had put him up. He had the most wonderful recommendations from every single one of the arts groups, and unfortunately that's what turns everybody. They all wanted Chris, but they also were listening to that “No, we've got to have a degree.” Well—and you don't—the theatre people—I don't know how many people in the theatre get a degree. They just—



AW:

Well, they study theatre, but then they go become actors and directors.

LU:

Yeah, so anyway it broke my heart and certainly broke his, but I think this one is going to be—I think Jean is going to be really wonderful.

AW:

Good, I'm glad to hear you say that.

LU:

But, it's going to—the theatre's not going to be back in the prominence, I don't think. I don't know. We have two back on the board now that were originally on there—Brad Green is one, and Linda Whitebread—and both of them, of course—you know, Brad's a musician and she's a theatre-goer, and—

AW:

Plus, they've been there at the beginning, so they have the institutional memory for—

LU:

Right, and had Missy not had to leave—but see, Alan got sick, and so she left—she was on the—

AW:

I didn't know Alan—

JH:

Really, really, really sick.

LU:

—committee, and she would've calmed that thing down. I think they wouldn't have paid that much attention to this one person about that, but she had to leave—

JH:

Maybe there'll be some way that it can come back around. Maybe Jean can get them in a fiscal stability place where they can get Chris back and hire him to do the theatre part.

LU:

I hate to say it, but it was definitely going down in my book, just being an art gallery, and we could not sustain it that way. We would never have been able to do it, I don't believe.



AW:

Well, no, because it's an art gallery for people who come and look—window shop. One of the things that—I'm a little bothered about First Friday now is that you don't see people carrying pieces of art out that they bought. You see them coming, and they eat the free hors d'oeuvres and drink the free wine, and then they go on to the next place. That's—at some point it quits being sustainable as a—

LU:

Yeah. Well, they're doing—they are selling some, but it's going to people from out of town, which is—two of those things sitting down there right now sold to—

AW:

Oh, that's good.

LU:

Uh-huh—to—but they're going to places back east.

AW:

Well, what—because no one has the experience around here that you have on this, or again, the institutional memory, because you've been here long enough to see the community grow and change in a lot of different ways. What would your advice be to the rest of us? What do we have to be doing now to keep this growing and developing, as opposed to always being back to trying to keep it just afloat, you know, how do we make it possible?

LU:

Well, I think that's what we're going through right now. We're going through the strategic planning, and we've got—Jim Bertram came back and did—he did one of these for us at the beginning when he was president, you know, and by golly we did the five-year plan, and we did it in two years. We had done everything we came up with. So—and I had a sit-down—I mean she came out and talked to me for over an hour on Friday, and her ideas are—just be wonderful.

AW:

This is the new director?

LU:

This is the new director, yeah. So taking what is coming out—what people want and so forth—but—Jane's observed her, too. She's always writing down things, ideas—I mean she's always taking notes, and she takes pictures of everything. So she's pretty wise, I think, and she's—she has took a photographic club and turned it into a really good—it's a photographic—I don't know exactly, but yeah—and then she also has been—she and another woman have been consultants

for if you needed somebody to do strategic planning, or if you needed somebody else to do something else, they could help startups and people do all that stuff.

JH:

Another good thing is she had shown some work at the International Cultural Center, and she'd acted as a judge over there, and she wanted to move from Houston here. She was—

AW:

Oh really? What was her last name?

JH:

Caslin.

LU:

Caslin. C-a-s-l-i-n, uh-huh.

JH:

So that's kind of—you know, she was tired of Houston and interested in moving somewhere else before she retired, and that's kind of exciting that she wanted to.

AW:

Yeah, that is exciting, to get someone who wants to be here instead of complains about—

LU:

Yeah, she said she wanted to run one more, really, and she's been very successful at fundraising—writing grants and stuff, which of course is always nice. She had—even with main arts from other places, but I don't know—I think she'll be—one of the things, I was thinking that it'd be so wonderful for us if we could have a book festival. I love to watch them on CSPAN and stuff, and that was one of the things she was thinking about.

AW:

You mean something like the Texas Book Festival, that sort of—?

LU:

Yeah, because I thought—you know, our—but anyway, she's going to—she meets with the other arts directors around each month, and that was one of the things that Chris was saying, that he wanted to do that for sure. He wanted to get the directors all together. I'm just sick he didn't make it, because he would have kept everything—all the balls going.

AW:

Yeah, I'd have sure voted for him.

LU:

Yeah.

AW:

Well, over these last two sessions, what have I not asked you about that I should have?

LU:

Oh, I don't know.

AW:

Jane, have we not covered something that we should?

LU:

I don't know where we've been. I think I've just talked too much.

AW:

No, no, you haven't talked too much. You've done just great.

LU:

My life has certainly been a wonderful one, and I've traveled everywhere, and Harris was a wonderful husband, and he was right there. He helped Grover with the museum, you know, he went out and—

JH:

And with ICASALS a little bit.

AW:

Yeah, Grover is another person that—Grover Murray doesn't get the credit that he deserves.

LU:

He certainly should, because—

JH:

He was wonderful.

AW:

To me, that's when Texas Tech became a really—

LU:

It did, and he did—and he took them so far beyond where they thought they were going. He had such big ideas for that museum, and boy, he needed all the help that Harris and everybody else could do.

JH:

I wish ICASALS would come back into being ICASALS. I thought that was a fabulous thing, and we're desperate to study arid lands.

AW:

I know it. I never have understood why it sort of disappeared, because it was a really—there was a lot of interest and energy at the beginning, and then—

JH:

And it's even more important now. We're more aware of it, anyway.

AW:

Yeah, right, although if you read—one of my favorite things I have—you know, the department of agriculture has a yearbook every year, and at least in the forties and fifties, each year would be a topic—like one year was grass, and another would be cattle or something, but I've got one from the early fifties, and the topic was water. If you blacked out the dates in the essays—

JH:

It's today?

AW:

—it's today. This is not a problem we are only now coming to know. We've known it for so long, we just have ignored it, and why we don't have an ICASALS organization that's working on that, I don't know.

JH:

I don't either. We should be in leadership. Tech should be, with our campuses going from Amarillo to El Paso—and we don't have anybody working on solar energy?

AW:

No, we're lucky to have somebody working on wind, but we need solar—and the other thing is we need water, and that's a worldwide problem.

JH:

Absolutely.

LU:

Well, we're—one thing that Jean has really caught onto is that we had—the community that this—and I felt like that she was going to be the right one when we chose her, because if we don't—I can see that—and there are, on our board—they know that it just cannot go on as being just a visual arts—it's—you know, nobody's there during the week.

AW:

Well, and if you have First Friday, it's another month before you have another First Friday, so you have to have people coming to—

JH:

And Charles is doing the vibrant stuff. Charles is the one who's really—he's bringing people down there and getting people engaged.

AW:

Yeah, I had Bale Allen was so excited about his residency, and just can't talk enough about how much he got done and how much he liked it.

LU:

Oh, really? Tell us about that.

AW:

Well, he did a residency during the summer, and he's told—he and his wife and Emily and her fiancé all got to be big buds, and so I would expect him to tell me yes, he liked it, but he just raved about it to them, and he raved about it to Terry and Jo Harvey, to his parents. So when you take someone who grew up in the hippest art household in the world—

LU:

That's right. He came out here once. We had him out here one night.

AW:

—and has his work, music, and visual art all over—lives in Austin. For him to come up here and be that knocked out by the experience and the opportunity is really a very heartening thing, I think, for us.

LU:

Right.

JH:

It's true. Yeah, we felt that way, too.

LU:

I don't understand why somebody with money—evidently there are people here, south of us—

JH:

Somebody's building houses.

LU:

Somebody's building those big houses—but why they—because he needs to build—he needed to build some more studios. There's a great need for—

AW:

Oh yeah.

LU:

And of course, we let the—so many of the artists went on to Slaton and couldn't wait for us to—you know, so—

AW:

Yeah, we need cheap space. I'd love to have a space, but I can't afford much, you know, and you just can't find—

LU:

Well that's the thing, and those things that he's building now are just—they're not going to be residences at all. It's just a—but they're just so expensive, and I know that if somebody was investing the money in it, we could get a wise businessman to do it—to get interested—then they could knock a lot of that money—

AW:

Yeah, and it's more than just the cost. I'm going to be building something probably in my backyard before long so I can have a space, because it's cheaper for me to do that in my backyard than it is to rent.

JH:

That's crazy, isn't it?

AW:

It is crazy, and the other crazy thing is that you're then—you've lost the community.

LU:

Yes.



AW:

There's a real synergy when you show up, and you work in your own space, but if you want to step outside and have a cup of coffee with the artist next door, the musician next door, the sculptor across the way, there's a huge value in that, and you get that in something like those spaces over—

JH:

I've been talking to Cathy Pope, who is a—what used to be mental health, mental retardation and is now called StarCare—and I'm sorry that they had to change the name, because at least you knew what they were talking about. StarCare doesn't tell you anything. But anyway—

AW:

Seems like there astronomers, yeah.

JH:

—she is very involved in the eastside Promise neighborhood and trying to find ways to bring energy back into the east side. One of the things that we went to look at is the old Iles school—the original Dunbar, I guess, which I didn't know. It's a fabulous place. It's been empty two years, and she would like to see that turn into a community center and artist's place.

AW:

Well, and some of the prettiest parts of Lubbock are over there.

LU:

Oh yeah.

JH:

And then they're doing some good new stuff—oh yeah, all the good-looking terrain is there.

AW:

Yeah, and people think, Well, it's an unsafe part of town. It's just not true. There's hardly anybody that lives over there anymore. They've all moved out.

JH:

That's right, and this is Chatman Hill, which is right there off of Avenue A, and it's a dynamite place. We need to do something fast, because—

AW:

—it'll deteriorate.



JH:

I expected it to be falling apart, but it's not.

AW:

But if it sits there very long—

JH:

But if we don't do something quickly, the school board will just let it go to pot. The other wonderful places down there where those big warehouses are at High Cotton. There are some fabulous spaces down there.

LU:

Yeah, like some—if we could just—

JH

We just need the vision.

AW:

You've been to Chris Taylor's space?

JH:

Yeah, I love Chris Taylor.

AW:

I'm having lunch with Chris tomorrow. His space, you know, I've thought about that, too, but to afford that I'd probably have to do what Chris does, which is live in it. I haven't got my wife convinced for that yet.

JH:

Not quite yet? I keep wondering about how Ron Peek talked Rita into living in a dugout for seven years.

AW:

That was a cool dugout.

JH:

I wish I'd seen the dugout, actually.

AW:

Oh, it was really quite nice.

JH:

I bet it was.

AW:

In fact, we used to go out there a lot more when they lived in the dugout.

JH:

They've gotten uptown now that they have a straw bed?

AW:

Well, like the rest of us are getting older, and they don't throw the parties that we used to go to out at the dugout.

JH:

Yeah, but this would be so cool. There's so much potential. I just read about a warehouse in Waco—I'm trying to talk Jack into going to look at it on the way—we have to drive from Fort Worth to San Antonio.

AW:

Well, and warehouse spaces, if you—there's a—I've seen several of these, and I've seen some new ones here in Lubbock, and what they are is, you take the warehouse—or even an old cotton gin or a structure—and you build another structure inside of it. So you have this—

LU:

That's what we had hoped so—the architecture department even drew plans to do that, and our last director just—

AW:

Yeah, well you have to appreciate it for its function because they don't look too snappy from the outside. They look like a big tin box.

JH:

Except for the ones at LHUCA. Those are the best-looking buildings in town.

LU:

They were—yeah.

JH:

We've got to do something before they—we've got to find the money to put a bathroom in, for

one thing, and do a little insulating—but they're so fabulous. That ought to be—I wish I were involved in something that isn't poor.

AW:

Where do we get the next group of interested people in our community—not the artists, although they can be artists, not the musicians, they can be musicians, but the people—I don't want to say “of your generation,” but let me say of your group, your colleagues, the people that we've just been talking about, the Lotts and the Maedgens—

LU:

I don't know.

JH:

And we always used to have them. Look at 30,000 people build a \$14,000,000 college—I mean how'd that happen? It just—where did we lose those visionaries?

AW:

Yeah, and there're all those houses going up out south, and my wife tells me from her work at the title company that on a substantial number of those, when they close at the title company, they close with cash. These are people that—

JH:

Really?

AW:

Yes.

JH:

I was assuming they were all mortgaged to the nines.

AW:

Not what you'd think. It's—and so I think there's money here, why is it so hard to—

LU:

Why is it?

AW:

Some of it—it doesn't have to all go to the arts. We know that they're other things, too.

JH:

But it doesn't all have to go to football, either.

AW:

No, and—or sports—and I love sports, but we need some of the arts.

JH:

Or, frankly, Tech. That's a big hose in the—

AW:

Yeah, and that's another part of that is what it costs to run a university nowadays and what poor kids have to pay, and what their poor parents have to pay.

JH:

That's right.

LU:

Right, that's awful to me.

JH:

And that's another—I wish Tech would come off campus a little more, you know? That would be a huge—look at Savannah and what happens to downtown.

LU:

Well see, we were going in that direction, and I don't know what happened.

AW:

Well, we've got—we have—and you were two who would be great to encourage this—we have—our best shot that I think that we'll have for a long time right now, with Duncan. He is terrific. When we get done with this interview—in fact, that's probably what we ought to do, is stop this and let me just tell you some things that are going on that are really cool. Well, I'm going to go ahead and say “Thank you,” and if you think of some other things you'd like to talk about, jot them down and give me a call, and we'll—it doesn't mean that we're through talking. I love to come over—I like to come over and hang out.

JH:

You don't mind meetings? I'm going to get you a glass of wine, then.

AW:

Oh, thank you.

LU:

Yeah, I'd like to just have you kind of review what we did say. Did we say anything?

AW:

Oh, yeah!

LU:

What did we say?

AW:

Well, first of all, the first time I was out we got an idea of your life, which is fascinating and wonderful to be able to do, but the thing that really has jumped out at me today—although you talked about it last time—was your and Harris's participation first as a couple and then as a family in this community of people, and what I sense in—and this is just my conclusion—is that that community participation ultimately led to the LHUCA center after a long period of years, because being able to marshal those connections that you've built over all this time and get people involved made the difference. That's why I'm interested in "How do we recreate that community sense?" because I'm not sure we have that sense now—maybe it's the difference between 300,000 people and 35,000 people. I don't know, but I think it may be something deeper than that.

LU:

No, I think it's deeper than that. That's the thing that—I'm hoping that we can somehow—I don't know, there's—

JH:

White or red?

AW:

I'd rather have red, if you have it.

JH:

I'll see.

LU:

—I don't know, because it's certainly not going to—I was even talking to Bonnie Aycok the other day, and she said, "There's just such a difference between our attitude and the attitude of what's going on today, and I don't know, but I'm not going to give up. I do think that this was just the beginning of the strategic planning, and if it goes the way I think that it should go, and if

people are—I think maybe we'll figure it out. I've discovered that people are so—there's so much going on that nobody wants to take time to really—it's not very deep thinking.

AW:

And sometimes if you—right, and I think just—thank you.

JH:

Tell me if I need to throw that out and open a different one, because—

AW:

Oh, I will.

JH:

—it's leftover—mother and I don't drink it, so it's from the last sister.

AW:

Smells good.

LU:

It may not be any good.

JH:

It may not, so feel free—we dump a lot.

AW:

Well, when you were talking about Harris buying art and looking for people who were yet to be discovered, you didn't describe that in the way that he was looking for people yet to be discovered so he could make a lot of money on it. It was quite the opposite. His interest was finding somebody that needed a patron, not an investment for himself, and I—

LU:

And that got him started, and then he got into listening to critics—spent hours with us, and he was so funny, of course, and—he was just so wonderful to listen to. I just loved to be around him, anyway, and has a great sense of humor—and Harris had a great sense of humor. I don't know, he just really—he got a great kick out of doing that.

AW:

Well, I mean, that's just a different—

JH:

People used to want to do things for Lubbock. They wanted Lubbock to—Charlie Guy wanted Lubbock be a better town.

AW:

And he wanted the traffic lights to work.

JH:

And I think one of the things that bothers me now is the things—for example, the two new movies we have, one is—we went the other day to the Alamo Drafthouse for the first time. That's a unique movie theater. The IMAX is a unique movie theater. The Lubbock Area Foundation and the CH Foundation—all of those things wanted to go downtown and they could not find a place that they could buy. Now, there's something sick about a dead downtown where you can't afford to buy a place.

AW:

I know it. Yeah, my wife and I looked for several years to buy a place downtown that we could live in and I could have some space, and—

JH:

I'd love to move downtown.

AW:

—well, everybody priced it to us like we were going to be putting in a bar, and were going to be making a squillion dollars every night selling beer. Of course, we weren't going to be able to do that, and didn't want to do it anyway, but you're right.

JH:

That's crazy. I don't know if just a few people own it, or if it's—I don't know what the rationale behind this is, but that's crazy.

AW:

No, I don't either—other than when people see a high-use rental property like a restaurant or a bar, then they think, Well, that's what my places ought to be. That's the only thing I can think of. Then some places were large. Before Kim McPherson bought the Coca-Cola building, Cindy Snell showed that to me—took me over and said, “Well, here's a place for you,” and I said, “There's a million square feet. We'd have to do a co-op to do it,” and in fact, some years before that, my wife and I put together a group of people to buy the Pioneer during one of its many times—



JH:

Oh, damn, I wish you'd bought it.

LU:

Oh, yes, before it was—

AW:

Well, we couldn't quite get enough. Our plan was to get—it has twelve floors, right, they say thirteen, but it's really twelve—we looked for twelve—eleven—other couples, and the idea is you're going to buy a whole floor worth, and you didn't have to have all of it—

JH:

Use whatever you use and sell the rest.

AW:

Yeah, or have some sort of co-op thing, but we just couldn't get enough people—or they'd say “Oh, that's a great idea,” until it came time to write a check. The idea of living downtown was what I think—and they were worried about tornados, and I said, “Well, it's already been through one and it did pretty well.” If you can go through that, you can do anything.

JH:

Exactly, no reason to worry.

AW:

Well, it's that community that you and Harris—and I'll brag on Jane and Jack and all your kids—they have it, too—but we don't have it as much in this community as we did, and that's what worries me.

JH:

I wonder if something like your print—the idea of having something like that wouldn't engage people.

AW:

Well, it's something you can do that's affordable, but most importantly, you can have—you talked about Lynwood Kreneck. You haven't talked much about his prints so much as you've talked about him and what you learned from him—and I know it's not because you don't like his work, but what you're talking about is not—

JH:

It's the man.

AW:

Yeah, it's the person and the things that you learned through him and with him by doing that. That's a very interesting thing, and it takes—that's a different kind of artist, too. I think Paul is one of those kinds of artists, Paul Milosevich.

LU:

Well, he was another one, yeah—and Harris liked him, too, and had him do all of your portraits.

AW:

Well, in addition to being a great artist, though, he participates in the community, and he loves to talk about art just in general—

JH:

—and gives back to the community.

AW:

Exactly.

JH:

And we've got lots of artists like that. But I think we need—one of your philosophies in the theatre, when you gave up the notion of being involved with Tech and the city about doing a big place like the Performing Arts Center, is one of the things that—the people who helped design the center suggested it, I guess, wasn't it Malcolm that said, "Start small. Do it with a small theatre and build an audience."

AW:

Well, and we need small spaces. Not everything—there's a great book, David Byrne of the Talking Heads, wrote called *How Music Works*, and it's one—Terry Allen turned me on to it. It's a great book. One of the interesting things that David Byrne says is that different kinds of songs and different kinds of music are made for different kinds of places—and that's true with theatre. Some theatre works great in a big hall and a big stage. Some music works that way. Some music works great in an arena, but some of it needs to be small, in a small, intimate space, and it's the same with theatre. If you go out today in Lubbock to get in a small space, there's only one place and that's the Firehouse Theatre. Cactus is too big, Tech—

JH:

And Cactus is uncomfortable, unfortunately.

AW:

It's uncomfortable, and it's a movie house. It's not a theatre. There are few places in there that

you can sit and enjoy a show, but only a few. So you don't have that experience that you can get at the Firehouse, which is just such a wonderful spot.

JH:

And we ought to have music in there all the time. We ought to have symphony music—you know, when they did chamber music there, it was fabulous. It's okay at the—I know they need to go to the Legacy because they have more seats, but it's not chamber music. It's not the same experience. I wish they'd do two or three people.

AW:

I wish we were doing songwriter nights at—

JH:

I wish you were, too.

AW:

—and doing it with no PAs.

LU:

Doing what?

AW:

Without sound amplification.

JH:

Yeah, just the acoustics of that room.

AW:

Just the acoustics, and if you have to have a little amplification, you can do it with an area mic, but the reason is—first of all, the music sounds different when it's not coming through the electronics, and the other thing is the intimate—the connection between the performer and the audience is far more different.

LU:

Oh, it's so wonderful there, yes.

JH:

Absolutely. I wish we could do a whole series like you did at Tech when you interviewed the—Lloyd and—

AW:

Yeah, the Lubbock Lights? We can do it.

JH:

That was fabulous. It was just fabulous—and there ought to be something in there every Friday, whether—even, as Robert said, do a rehearsal. Let people walk through and watch a rehearsal like the ballet did—she does.

AW:

I agree, yeah.

JH:

It's fabulous to know the behind-the-scenes stuff.

AW:

And people—that's one of the things about doing music like that, is that you can stop and talk about the song, and you can screw up and start over, and people love that because you can talk about, "Well, here's—," they don't understand that it's harder for those of us who write songs to remember our own song than it is to remember songs we learn, because when you learn one, you learn something that already exists, and it's a whole thing out there. When you forget your own line, all you—your brain starts working and it remembers the two or three other versions you thought about, and so you get completely confused. So people never think about that until you talk about it, but having an approach where people can, in a sense, pick up the art—I mean, it's music or it's theatre, you can't really pick that up, but you can see it in its most intimate setting, and you become part of it. I try to tell my songwriting students this. It's like a love affair between you and the audience. It's a give and take, and if they're not out there, you don't count, and if you're not part of it, they don't count. You've got to have both sides of that, and it's exactly true for the theatre. I watch—I've gotten a chance to write some plays, and thank goodness no one has to watch me act in them, but I've gotten to write some and I've watched the same play in different environments, and how they come to life when the venue and the audience is a part of it. It's incredible.

LU:

It really is; it's true.

AW:

And it's all connected. We've done those same plays in places that were big and fancy, and nothing happened like it did in—not because they were big and fancy, but there was just something wrong with them, you know.

JH:

Yeah, I wish you'd do the—what's your Cowboys—?

AW:

*My Cowboy's Gift?*

JH:

Yes, I love that.

AW:

I'd like to do that again, although Donnie Allison—I don't know what we're going to do to replace Donnie.

JH:

Oh, yeah. That would be great at the Firehouse. That's a good size. It was great at the Ranching Heritage Center.

AW:

Yeah, when we did it outdoors? That was really neat. No, it'd be fun there, it'd be fun to do it without—again, having to put mics on people and that kind of thing.

JH:

And when Robert did his play, they had wonderful luck with the talkbacks. They did it both Sundays and once they had the guy who's the head—it was about Vietnam.

AW:

I'm so sad I missed that. I heard such good things.

LU:

Oh, I'm sorry you did, too. Golly.

JH:

I was very proud of him.

AW:

Yeah, I was traveling, and I would really love to—

JH:

They loved it, and they learned so much, having to do everything themselves. But they had the—it was about Vietnam, and they had the head of the Vietnam Center and a psychologist—West?

LU:  
Psychiatrist.

JH:  
Is she a psychiatrist?

LU:  
I think so.

JH:  
Is her name West? It slipped my mind. But anyway, she counsels a lot of people with PTSD, so one time they really focused on Vietnam veterans, and Bernie Mitemeyer was in the audience, and people that talked about their experiences. Then the next week was totally different. They talked mostly about acting, and both weeks it was just—it was amazing, how many people stayed. I'm always astonished when people get up and leave. I wouldn't leave for anything if—

AW:  
Oh, no, no.

JH:  
But, they're always wonderful, and I'm always proud at Tech to hear the caliber of questions people ask, even of people like—who was there last year that did *Angels in America*, Tony Kushner? I thought, What are they going to ask him? you know.

AW:  
Yeah, and plus he's kind of prickly.

JH:  
He is, yeah, but it was great. He was good and so was the audience. It was impressive.

AW:  
Yeah, we had—who was the performance artist who was just at Tech? Nice guy—how quickly we forget—but he did a talk and a presentation, and I really enjoyed—I enjoyed his presentation, but I enjoyed the questions and his answers a lot more.

JH:  
Cokie Roberts, too.

LU:  
The one that impressed me was the richest man's—



JH:

Oh yeah, Peter.

LU:

His son. Did you hear him?

AW:

Oh, no, I was gone.

LU:

He's a pianist.

JH:

The train man. Warren Buffett. Peter Buffett.

LU:

He was just fabulous.

AW:

I would love to have seen that, too. I travel too much. I don't travel too much—I like to travel—but I don't like to be gone when there's good things going on.

JH:

When there's good stuff? But there's good stuff all the time. You can't get to all the good things you want to do. Anybody who says living in Lubbock doesn't have anything to do is—

AW:

When they tell me that, I say, "Would you plan something and tell me when you're going to do it? Because you're not going to find—"

JH:

Exactly, a day that's free. Crazy.

AW:

Well, I'm talking too much, and we're rambling, so I'm going to say again, thanks, and we'll talk a little bit more, but—so I'm—this is like I'm signing off. Thank you again. What a wonderful time.

LU:

Thank you.



JH:

Thank you, Andy. Seriously, thank you for doing this. I think this is wonderful. I think of people that we missed that are gone that we didn't get in the Southwest Collection and it's sad.

AW:

Oh, gosh, you just can't—and that's the saddest part. You can't get them all, but you sure want to. All right. That's it.

JH:

Phew.

LU:

Yes.

*End of Interview*



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