

**Oral History Interview of  
Gretchen Scott**

**Interviewed by: Lynn Whitfield  
July 9, 2016  
Lubbock, Texas**

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## Transcript Overview:

This interview features Gretchen Scott. Scott talks about moving to West Texas and attending Texas Tech. She discusses her involvement with the community, particularly the library system, museums, and the Lubbock Heritage Society.

**Length of Interview:** 00:58:49

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### Keywords

community involvement, historic preservation, library, Lubbock, Texas, museums, Texas Tech University

**Lynn Whitfield (LW):**

This is Lynn Whitfield. I'm at the Southwest Collection and I am interviewing Gretchen Scott on July 28, 2016. Gretchen, could you tell us a little bit about your family, who are your parents?

**Gretchen Scott (GS):**

My parents—I have a wonderful family—my father was John Dayton Godyn, G-o-d-y-n, and his father and mother were both born in Utrecht, Holland. So, he was the first generation American citizen, and his father got his citizenship by fighting in the U. S. Army in World War I. He was here—somehow, I don't know how—he was here working in the United States, and when World War I broke out, he enlisted in the Army, and that's how he got his citizenship. My mother, on the other hand, Norma Marie Sturmer, S-t-u-r-m-e-r—her mother was a Clark, and Clarks had been in the Niagara River Valley since we don't really know when, so they were an old, old family in the Niagara River Valley. I was born in Niagara Falls; I was raised here, for the most part. So I met—so my family—and we're just now kind of trying to get into the history of the Clark family, because they are an old family. Farming, like I said, in the Niagara River Valley, and my grandfather always told the story of, my grandfather, Leonard Jackson Sturmer—that was my mother's father—was—his family was from Virginia but he was raised in Vandalia, Illinois, by his grandmother, and because his mother was in a mental institution and his father was killed during a robbery, and my mother remembers going back there when she was a child. And my mother was born in 1922, and there was no electricity and no indoor plumbing, and my grandfather roofed his grandmother's house and added a bathroom to the house and all that kind of stuff, so it was—they were interesting family too. Daddy's family I don't know anything about because they're all in Utrecht except him. So anyway that's my family. And how I met—how I ended up at Tech was I wanted to be a veterinarian. So at that point in time, A&M did not take female students unless you were a faculty daughter or wife, I think. Anyway, they didn't take female students, so I came here for pre-vet and I was—I lived in Gates Hall my first year here, and my roommate's name was Jerri Gill, J-e-r-r-i-e—J-e-r-r-i, I think, G-i-l-l. She was an architect major, and Steve, my husband, was an architect major, so they were dating. And I just decided, I thought, I needed him more than she did [laugh]. It made for some uncomfortable roommate situations, but I met him when I was a freshman, and we got married at the end of my sophomore year, in 1968. And then probably the only reason why I finished school—once I married, I figured out I wasn't going to go to vet school. And so I changed to Animal Science, and there was a business option in Animal Production, and I took that and I probably would have never finished school, but in March of '69, Steve was drafted. And so he was in Vietnam, and he was in Vietnam not very long, he went to basic training at Fort Hood and then he went to AIT [Advanced Individual Training] training at Fort Ord in Monterey, California, and then he got shipped over to Vietnam so I don't know how—I don't remember how long those took, but then in November, in mid—in late-November, right around Thanksgiving, in November of 1969, his brother got married, and we were all over in Roswell having a wedding, his grandparents, all his aunts from North Carolina, we got back home and the telegram was on the door. He'd been shot,

severely wounded, and he was on his way to Japan. So that's probably the only reason why I finished school, was that he was in Japan and then he was back at Fort Hood and then he was in Kansas and by the time he finally got out of the Army, I was so closed to being finished that I finished, otherwise, back in those days, you dropped out of school and became a secretary and put your husband through school. So that's probably the only reason why I finished school.

LW:

Now what is Steve's full name—

GS:

Stephen with a "ph," S-t-e-p-h-e-n, Stephen Robert Scott. And he was born in Fort Worth and raised in Wichita Falls, and he never did finish school

LW:

Okay

GS:

So we—but we were—we got married in July of '68, July 18—in fact we just had an Anniversary, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1968. So that's how I got in to animal science. It was just a back step from veterinary medicine, and I would have never made a veterinarian, because I would have never been able to take all those courses and pass them and get into vet school, and so it was fine. So I did that, and then I went—when I graduated, I worked for a real short period of time at a clinic on Parkway Drive over in Northeast Lubbock, for two doctors of osteopathy. I was the receptionist, but that didn't last very long, and I got the job in Range and Wildlife management, and I worked there from March of '70—I graduated in '71—Oh, and the most interesting thing, I put myself entirely through school with no help from anybody, no loans, no scholarships, no money from my parents. The first year, I'd sold a horse and made a lot of money off of that horse so that paid for my freshmen year. My sophomore year, I got a job at the Ming Tree Restaurant working for Ted Quan for thirty-seven and half cents an hour and I worked there—

LW:

You're kidding.

GS:

No, thirty-seven and a half cents an hour, and believe me, tips weren't what they used to be, what they are now, thirty-seven and a half cents an hour. I worked there, lived in the dorm; I went to work there because I could walk back and forth from the dorm, because I didn't have a car. So I worked there, I took twelve to fourteen hours at school, and worked there—I didn't work there forty hours, but I worked there probably well over twenty. And I worked there all my sophomore year, and then Stephen and I got married and then I worked there a while during



my—I was trying, I also worked at the Textile Research Center, that was later—I worked there and then when Steve got drafted, I needed to make more money, so I went to work for the Rodeway Inn restaurant and that was Henry Trihart, he was a famous restaurant person here in town. And there I made sixty-five cents an hour. But there I worked forty-eight hours a week and went to school full time. I worked from four to midnight, six nights a week, and went to school full time during the day. So that's why it took me an extra year to get out of school. But I didn't know you could take out student loans, I didn't know you could borrow money to go to school, so I just walked along, on my own little merry way, putting myself through school. So, my last year—my last semester at Tech, my second to the last semester at Tech—Steve was back, and he was working at the cotton gin in New Deal working the scales there, and so I got on work study and I worked at the textile research center, and it was so funny—I worked for—the guy who was working there was, I think he was an exchange student. He was working on his PhD and he was from Germany. But when I went to work there I learned all these lab techniques, and that helped me get my job in range and wildlife, more than anything, because I first started out running the labs there. But I learned all that stuff and when you learn how to do stuff from a German, you learn how to do it right. And his name was Hans something—I can't remember his last name but anyway I worked there for one semester and then I graduated, worked at that clinic and then I went to work for Tech in the—in March of—it must have been '72. It wouldn't have been '71; it must have been '72. And I started out working in range and wildlife running the wet chemistry labs, and then I kind of branched out and I started running the—I started helping to run and organize all the fire crews for the prescribed burns. That was Henry Wrights' big thing, our department chair, he was world renowned, and we were the SCS Fire School so everybody that got trained in prescribed burns came to us and we trained them, and I always worked with whoever was Henry's PhD students at that time. So we all worked together—and then we acquired—leased this ranch at Justiceburg from Dan Griffiths who used to run Hemphill Wells [laugh] and who used to run the winery, Caprock Winery, and then I think he worked at Method—anyway we leased that ranch and Carlton Britton and John Pitts and Paul Cotter and I ran that ranch. We did all the fencing, we did all the cattle work, we ran—supervised all the research that was going on down there, so I did that and then I ended up at the very end also keeping the departmental books. I did the wet chemistry, the fire crew, the ranch, and the books. I know, and then I quit [laugh].

LW:

When do you—about when do you—what year do you know that you left range and wildlife?

GS:

'93. In May of '93. Yeah, and then I went to work with Steve—he and his dad had a business, they wholesaled propane tanks—they were manufacturers' representatives—and they wholesaled propane tanks in a six state area. Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Arizona—Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas, Arizona, Oklahoma, somewhere I'm leaving something out, anyway it

was six states. And so when his mom and dad decided to retire, I quit and went to work with Steve and I worked with him until two years ago, we closed the business two years ago. So we did that until then, so I retired from two jobs but the funny thing was—when I was in range—when I started school in the fall of '66, there were two other women in the college of agriculture that I ever saw. One of them was a girl named Sandra, and she was—she was from Lubbock and she wanted to be a veterinarian also and she was kind of not in to the animal aspect of it but more in to the science of it, and I remember she was still a Girl Scout, she was part of this Going Green Girls' thing, and she was kind of an odd duck in that department and then the other girl was a real nice girl, and I cannot remember her name—who was raised on a sheep ranch, so I'm assuming that was over in East Texas or Central Texas and she—I think she might have been just in Animal Production, not in pre-vet, but by the spring of that year they both were gone. And the rest of the time that I was in animal science, which was from, like I said, the fall of '66 to I graduated in—I finished in May of '71, but I didn't go through the ceremony until August because my parents couldn't be there until then. I never saw another woman. Now there may have been other women, but I never saw another one. And so I was always the only girl in my classes, so I had all the good guys, I had Dr. Harbaugh for anatomy and physiology; I had Frank Hudson for Sheep Production, he was there for forever. I had Ralph Durham for Beef Cattle Production and he was a—he used to—we had a big auditorium over in the meats lab that I had his class in and he would excuse me from class early so he could tell dirty jokes to the boys. He would say, "Now Mrs. Scott"—because I was married then—"You can leave now". And then he would look out the door to make sure I was gone, like I was going to hang around and listen to him. But he was a wild man, I just loved him. And he was—have you ever—does he have an interview here?

LW:

I don't know.

GS:

He had eight—six or eight kids—and then he left his wife and ran off with the departmental security Imogene, and I think her last name was Prather, that didn't last very long. And then he went back to his wife [laugh] again, but anyway he was—and he was in theatre productions, he was just wild. I had him, I had John Henry Baumgartner for feeds and feeding and animal nutrition. Let's see, I had Ramsey for Meat Production, but he was new when I had him. I had Dr. Aires for plant genetics, I think, and I had—I was going to try and remember all these names—Clark Harvey. I had Clark Harvey for another something in the plants and soil science department, and I don't remember what that was. So I had nearly all the old, the old standby ag teachers. I had almost all of them, and it was fun and I loved it and you know, I just remember they always called me Mrs. Scott—and I, oh, and Sam Curl, when we first—when you were a freshmen, you took Ag 101 which was an introduction, kind of let you know what everything was available, and Sam Curl was a brand new professor at that time and he taught that class and



then he ended up being dean. And I had, I had a couple of ag economics classes, and I had Jim—crap, and I see him all the time now because he's in—he goes to all the museum stuff. I'll think of his last name in a minute—I had him for an ag eco class and I had—I had two or three ag economics classes and I had—from in the ag department. I just mostly stayed in agriculture. But it was fun, but I never saw—when we first started, when I first started in 1966, you know you got your little card and you had to go from building to building to register. Well, I had a little green card for agriculture and everywhere I went they would say “You've got the wrong card, this is agriculture. You need to go back and get your education department card, your home ec card,” your whatever, but everywhere I went they would say, “You've got the wrong card, this is agriculture, you're not in agriculture,” and I was like, Yes I am. And I never thought a thing about it, I never thought I was special, I never thought, Oh my god I'm the only woman in this class. I just went along and did my work and you know, I had full time—over a full time job—I was taking full time classes; I was married; I didn't have time to worry about what I was doing. I just did what I was doing and went on down the road kicking rocks. And when I as in range and wildlife, you know, supervising like those fire crews and any activity that went on at the ranch, I was the only woman in that department that had any authority whatsoever. Now believe me, I didn't have much, [laugh] but I ran those labs and I set them up on a paying basis where everybody that did work there had to pay X amount for what they were doing so they covered the cost of the—I set it up like a business so they had to cover the cost of the chemicals, breakage, a reasonable amount of second runs, all this kind of stuff, you know, supply their own help which I would train, and so I set that up on a paying basis and worked—did that, so I had that too, but there wasn't any other women in charge of anything in that department. Everybody else was the secretary, and I was pretty hard headed and pretty much did what I felt I needed to do and just did it.

LW:

Now what—backing up a little bit—so you were born in—

GS:

I was born in Niagara Falls

LW:

Niagara Falls and did your family stay in Niagara Falls or did they move to West Texas?

GS:

They all moved to Lubbock, and my sister is married to Dennis Burrows and Dustin Burrows is her son, our state representative, and I have no children of my own, but I'm raising—I mean I'm a grandparent to the kids on Steve's side of the family because of family situations, so I am smarter than most people because I have grandchildren but I didn't have to have any kids to have them. And I have five wonder grandchildren [laugh]. But yeah, my family all moved down here,

and both of my parents are deceased now but they both lived here. My brother lives in Dallas, he works for Sewell Lexus. He's ten years younger than I am, so I didn't get to know him real well because of being the age difference, and my sister is two years younger than I am.

LW:

Now, where your parents farmers in Lubbock—here?

GS:

Daddy kind of farmed around but mostly he worked for the post office.

LW:

Oh, okay.

GS:

He worked for the post office and mother, mother didn't work until Daddy retired, and then she went to work for Sears for a while, in their, like, money counting department.

LW:

Okay. And did you go to Lubbock High?

GS:

No. I did not. I went—we moved back and forth. When my mother's parents got sick in Niagara Falls, we moved back there and I graduated from high school there, La Salle Senior High School. It was out in the country, it as the stick school, we lived out in the country, and I graduated from there. So we kind of had a dual deal.

LW:

Now, where—Niagara Falls, what state is that one in?

GS:

New York.

LW:

Okay, I wanted to make sure there wasn't a Texas because you know, Texas has Paris and all these others.

GS:

Well and there's a Niagara Falls in Canada too, right across the river—so, but anyway, so we, that, but I really had—I had a wonderful time working at Tech. You know, I loved working at Tech, and I—and I, like I said, I just didn't think anything about going to school. I never thought,

Oh my god, I'm the only woman, this is so—I never thought about it. I just didn't do it, it just went school and—and like I'd said, there may have been other women there, but I personally never saw another woman, ever, in any of my classes.

LW:

Now when you came to Tech your freshmen year, you're female, were there any rules given to that were different from men like dress codes—?

GS:

Oh my god, you've got to be kidding me, are you kidding me? We had to wear, we had to wear dresses at all times, in the dining halls, everywhere we went, we wore dresses. You know, you couldn't show up in the dining hall with your hair in rollers, you had to be dressed for breakfast, lunch, and dinner at the dining halls. We all wore dresses to class, and we had real super strict hours. Your freshmen year, for at least the first semester, they had study hours—quiet hours—so we had to be in the dorm at seven, I think, it was from seven to nine was quiet hour. And then you couldn't leave dorm after that, but you could leave your room and you could, you know, mess around, and everybody griped about living in the dorm. I'm telling you, if I had it all to do over again, I couldn't wait to move back in [laugh]. I didn't have to do anything. You know, I had—it was great. And my mother was a horrible cook, so we had all this great food and it was—you know I—

LW:

And which dorm were you in?

GS:

I was Gates my first year and Chitwood my second year. And for years and years and years, there was these huge ruts in front of Chitwood where Steve ran up on the yard to get me back in to the dorm on time because he couldn't find a parking place, so he just drove up on the yard and dropped me off. And they were there, I couldn't—I thought, Well they're going to fill these in. Surely, they're going to fill these in. Well they never did. They were just there for forever, so I lived in Gates and then I lived in Chitwood and then after that I was married. And we lived in a—the first place we lived was a garage apartment on Twenty-First, just east of Indiana, and it belonged to Mary Beth Macey, and she had this big house and we were in the garage and she had a home in Florida, and this home here and she had a school teacher that lived in that house full time, but when they were home, you know, remember what Cadillacs looked like in the early seventies. She—I don't think she ever got the clue that that was a garage. She'd ram that car into that garage, would shake the whole apartment [laugh]. And she's one of the Maceys, but I don't—because she told—would talk about growing up on the ranch and cowboys that worked for her daddy, they carried six shooters, but not to ward off people. They used them to control the cattle, to move—you move them and move their big herds of cattle, and she always smelled

like roses. She wore some kind of rose perfume, she always smelled like roses—and we lived there. And then we lived—and then when Steve got drafted, my sister moved in with me, and we moved in to those apartments on Fifth Street and Avenue U that got hit by the tornado, so I was working at the Rodeway Inn, my sister was at the drive in with her boyfriend when the tornado hit and we all got—and, I mean, you could feel the roof lifting up and down off that restaurant, and we all went in to the walk-in cooler and stayed until the tornado was over with, and my sister came back to our apartment and when we got back—and I drove over all this debris to get to our apartment, I had a '51 Ford, never ran, crappy car, but that's what I had. Got back there and most of the top part, second floor of our apartment was gone. They were two story apartments, most of that was gone. There was a big old beam right over my bed that had come through, and so Steve's daddy, Steve's mom and dad, lived in Lubbock then, so his daddy—she was back in North Carolina—his daddy came and got Gale and I and took us out to their home, and the back—the back end—the back window of Steve's mother's Pontiac was completely blown out. But he came and got us and we went out there, and so Gale and I were trying to get back to our apartment a day or two later to see what was left, and I found out that I had torn the brakes up on the car, and it wouldn't stop so I pulled in to a parking lot and let it coast. So we got back, I called Scotty, Steve's daddy, he came and got us, we got back to the house, and I called up—Steve was in Kansas then at Fort Riley, he was working for a civilian personnel lady—and I called that office up, and I said, "My apartment's gone, my car's gone, you send my husband home, I've got to have some help here," and they did, they sent him home. So Gale and I were cruising around—and—in her—I guess it must have been in Scotty's car, and we tried to get back over to the apartment and I said, "Well you know, I'm just waiting for Steve to get home," and Gale said, "Yeah, you know, there's a soldier over there, I bet he's coming home to help," and I looked over and it was Steve, and he had hitchhiked from the airport in to town, and he was just going for the apartment, I don't know what he was thinking, probably nothing. But anyway, he fixed the brakes, and we kind of got things straightened around, and then I started looking for another place to live because that—those apartments were a mess.

LW:

Yeah. Can I ask—would the tornado—can you recall what it was like? Could you see the tornados coming? Was the sky turning dark? Were there—were there sirens?

GS:

Yes, yes, there was—there were sirens, I don't think we heard sirens, it was so—we were all—you know, the—I don't know if you remember that little restaurant, it was the little stand-alone building by that motel, right on Fourth and University, and it had all these big windows all around it, and we were all dumb, we were in there working and we were—we just kept watching the sky get blacker and blacker and blacker. And when the Rodeway Inn sign came through the plate glass window in the restaurant, we were like "Things are not good here" and Henry who weighed about five hundred pounds, he said, "Come on" and he got us all in the walk-in cooler. I

never heard a siren but it was the strangest thing. You could feel that building breathe, when we were in it. But we all ran back—there was customers, there weren't very many, but I mean it was customers, and the cook, and the dishwasher, and Henry, and two or three other waitresses and I, and we all just got in that cooler and Henry said, "Get in this cooler, we're going to be okay," and we were. But it was real freaky. And my father in law worked at a steel company then that made propane tanks out on East Erskine, and they had just remodeled the offices—they'd had little crappy little office place, and then this big old huge, nasty shop—and they had really just finished, I think he had just moved in to the office, and the tornado took the back end off of that office building [laugh]. They just fixed it up, and it was gone. It was a mess. Everything was—you know it was, everything was a mess. We had no water, we had no electricity, we had no phone, and somehow, how I got a hold of Steve was—there was HAM Op—HAM Radio Operators that would call, and that's how I got a hold of him at first because we didn't have any hone service, even my father and mother-in-law lived way across town, they weren't affected by the tornado except for the utilities. And there was wells outside of town that people were saying, "Come out and get water, we've got water, you can come get water" and the HAM radio operators were saying, you know, 'We're going to let everybody know what's going on and if you can get a hold of us, write us, or something, we'll let people know' because it was like that for quite a few days after the tornado; it really knocked a hole in everything.

LW:

Yeah, because it ripped up all this area towards downtown, right?

GS:

Yes, that's how we got the Civic Center and the Mahon Library and everything else.

LW:

Because those are memorials to the tornado, surviving the tornado, the victims.

GS:

Yes, yes, yes and cleaned out of real—you know, cleaned out the—that part of town was really a bad part of town, but on the other hand, it was where people lived, and I don't know what happened to the people that lived there, I mean I don't know where they went because you know you can't—you can't clear out every low income housing area in the world. You've got—people have to have place to live, whether they have a lot of money or they don't have any money. They've got to have homes. So I don't know what happened to those people, I didn't think about it then.

LW:

You were one of those people.



GS:

I was one of those people, I had to go find a place to live and we rented this house on Thirty-Ninth and Flint, about two houses east of the corner, and it was one of those old farm houses that had two front doors, you know how you see? And it was horrible. When the dirt blew—when the wind blew, all the shades—I had shades up—the shades would blow away from the windows and my sister and I slept with washcloths over our faces. It was horrible. But there was no place to—I mean you were lucky to find a place to live because all the rental property was gone—it was all gone, so we lived there for a long time, even when Steve came home.

LW:

But Tech Terrace didn't sustain much damage right?

GS:

No, no they didn't. You know, it hopped, around, but I—but anyway yeah we, it was hard to find a place to live. And how I got involved with ARCS [**Achievement Rewards for College Scientists**], this was the funniest thing, because let me assure you, I was not in a class with those women, socially or financially, I can assure you of that. I was not. But they wanted to put on a Concours d'Elegance as a fundraiser. Somebody had seen one in Fort Worth. So they approached Paul Bush about—in our car club—about “Oh we want you to do it” and Paul Bush said, “I’m not going to do that, but I’ll tell you who you need to get to do it. Don’t ask her husband, if you want something done, ask Gretchen.” So they asked me to get the cars and like a fool I was like, “Oh yeah, well I can do that,” you know [laugh]. And so I helped get the cars for that event and it was not financially successful, but it was fun. And so after I did that, they asked me to join. And I’m positive that I was the poorest person in that organization [laugh]. And I had the least social standing of anybody in town, but I want you to know, I learned more from those women. They were wonderful, they were welcoming, they—they were the—they did not go around acting like they were rich or important; they just wanted to raise money for these scholarships, that’s all they cared about. And I learned more from those women than I have ever learned from anybody and still to this day Gail House and Jerry Pridmore are two of my best friends. I just learned so much from them. And then I got involved with the museum by—I’m trying to think of how that happened. I joined the association because my mother-in-law was in it, and then I think through Gail House and Jerry, they asked me to be, like, recording secretary for the women’s council, and they asked me to be treasurer, and being treasurer was always what I did. I was treasurer for ARCS, started out being treasurer for Friends of the Library, was treasurer for the Women’s Council, treasurer, you know, for the Heritage Society, so that was always my forte, was bookkeeping. Not an accountant, but bookkeeping. So that’s how I got involved with those things, was just through the Car Club and then through those women I got involved in other things.

LW:

And what was your impression of the museum at that time? Because that was still early days for the museum, wasn't it?

GS:

It was pretty early, and you know, I was so peripherally involved at first that I really didn't know. I just thought it was wonderful, and the lectures—I loved going to any lecture they had there, I just loved it—and you know, working with the Women's Council, we kind of did stuff to raise money. I remember we bought the first digital camera for May Campbell to use to photograph the—start photographing and digitalizing the clothing and textile collection, and we did other stuff like that. And I really, I just didn't know anything. And then when I found out—when we dissolved the Women's Council, and that was when Jerry Pridmore was president, and brought it all in to the Museum Association, then I found out about all these horrible problems with that Gary Edson, oh my lord, my lord. If you haven't heard about that, you need to talk to some of those ladies. He actually thought that was his private museum. He tried to get rid of the Association; he really didn't want any guests in there. He just wanted to run it as his own little fiefdom. And the whole time I volunteered there—and I was always trying to do something, you know—that man never spoke to me. He would never speak to me. I didn't have enough money; I didn't have enough prestige in town. He just wouldn't—he would not speak to you unless he thought he was going to be able to get some money from you. He would—oh it was—so—

LW:

Yeah, he was chair of my graduate committee.

GS:

Oh my god, well, bless you heart. And so, you know—then we had Eileen, and she really didn't want the job, and I think it was forced on her. And now we've got Gary Morgan, and I just think he's—he's killer. He is so dynamic, and I really feel like maybe now that museum is going to come into its own because I think his vision, and the way he sees it, and the way he wants it to be, interacting with other departments on campus and in—definitely public. I think he's really got the idea that's really going to take it to the next step it should go to, because it's a great facility.

LW:

What about—let's talk a little bit about the library because I think a library is very important to a community.

GS:

Oh my—I think it's the most important.

LW:

What do you think about Lubbock's library system?

GS:

I will tell you that, to me, the two most important things in Lubbock are the library system and the museums, because those are universally accessible to anybody who wants to walk through the door; there is no charge, everybody is welcome. And so, our library system is—and this is a funny thing, I started—oh I forgot to tell you this. In 1972, right as soon as I got out of college and started working, I helped start the first Lubbock Humane Society. It was myself, Barbara Baldwin, Mary Looney, Judy Edwards, Tom and Jean Crites, and Carl Looney—Mary and Carl Looney—anyway, I helped start the first Humane Society, and we took on the animal shelter, and we made them—we forced them—to do a lot—they were, we didn't, they didn't become immediately what they are today. But we built—paid for and built—a humane euthanasia chamber. We forced them to have standards for their adoptions. I could tell you horror stories that would make you sit down and weep about that shelter.

LW:

No, don't do that, because animal things like that—

GS:

I know, they do me too. I never forget them. I never, never forget them, and they bother me for the rest of my life. But anyway, we did that, and I did cruelty investigations.

LW:

Oh.

GS:

I know, it was horrible, it was horrible, horrible, I was kicked out of places, run out of places that I'd never wanted to be in the first place. It was horrible, but we did that. So anyway, Pat Tucker—have you ever talked to Emerson? You know Emerson—

LW:

I know—

GS:

Anyway, Pat Tucker was one of our volunteers; she worked a phone bank that took calls. So one day, when I was out at work with Steve, she called me up and she said, "Gretchen, I want you to come down here to the Mahon, and I want you to be recording secretary for Friends of the Library." And I was not a member, and I don't think I'd even ever been to a book sale. And I thought, Well I absolutely love libraries, and I said, "Well, okay," and so I went down there and

that's—and I started with that and I've been volunteering with them since 1993. And so—and I was treasurer, I did that, I was recording secretary, then I helped to rewrite the bylaws. Then I was treasurer for five years, and then I was president for four years. And I'll tell you want I think, number one, if it wasn't for Friends of the Library because we raise and designate, to the library, about \$160,000 a year.

LW:

Wow.

GS:

And that's been going—I mean, when I first started, it was about—I don't know, one twenty maybe, but it kept going up—I think it's about one sixty, it could be even more than that now. And we don't give the money to the city, we have a budget, and we approve invoices and we pay the invoices. Our treasurer pays the approved invoices. But without that—and then we have a grand—have you ever interviewed Travis Birdwell?

LW:

No

GS:

It might be too late, because I think he's starting to get dementia, most wonderful man that ever lived. He set up an endowment through the Lubbock Area Foundation; it's about a six hundred and fifty thousand dollar endowment, and depending on what it generates every year, that pays for the summer reading program. All of it. We designated it for that because Laney Birdwell's love is kids. So we designated it for that. But other than that, we pay for all of the leased books, which are the new books that come in; we pay for all of the computer programming that goes on so that they can—like all their overdrive, all the things that you access online through the library website, we pay for most of that. We—what we don't pay is utilities or salaries. And we don't pay for things—we try not to pay for things that benefit the staff. We pay for things that benefit the public, and that's what we do. Without the Friends of the Library—if you, if anybody thinks our library system is abysmal now, they should try it without the Friends. I mean, it's unbelievable. The money we raise, the volunteer hours, I mean, it's like twenty-five thousand volunteer hours. And then the money we raise—also the library comes down and pulls any book, anywhere of course, and we figure we save them about twenty-five thousand a year in their book budget by them taking books from us to put in to the collection. So—and I was president when we went through all this stuff with the Goedke. And what I have to say about this is number one, the Goedke is in hideous location, not accessible. Number two, in Lubbock, south of Nineteenth Street and west of University, there's no community center, and there are no community rooms. All the locations the Goedke has been through, the one at Slide, and now this new one, has no community room. You cannot hold children's programs there, so all these fabulous, wonderful summer reading programs and children's programs throughout the year are



not available to the children in the southwest Lubbock. I mean they've got a reading room , but there's no community room where they put these programs on. So the highest property tax area in the city has the least facilities. And I just hate it that they don't have a community room because all those summer reading programs are overbooked to begin with because Daycare Centers bring their whole—you know if you're a poor little single person with your kids at home during the summer, it's hard for you to be able to take advantage of those programs. And so then they have one less facility that offers them.

LW:

And the children are often given books aren't they, to help encourage them to continue reading, or learning to read?

GS:

Yes, yes, or learning to read. And I know that when—because I always work all the book sales and I always work check out, and I know that some of those kids that come through with their ten cent and twenty five cent books from the children's area, I know in my heart that they would never own a book of their own if it wasn't for that book sale. So not only does it do all of this for the city, but it's wonderful to have a book of your own. It's important to have a book of your own. And they are so—and we fuss over them, and I don't care how long the line is, we look at them, “Oh, is this your book, what are you going to do with this?” you know, da da da. So anyway, I am so disappointed in the fact that the city will not bite the bullet and build a stand-alone library really in southwest Lubbock, like in Steven's Park, or there's another park that's—its east of slide road but just like a block or two and outside the loop, between the loop and Eighty-Second Street, there's another great, big, huge park back in there. And our parks are pretty much underutilized, you know, and so—what I had hoped they would do, this was my plan, and I told Todd Klein—Todd Klein and Victor Hernandez and Floyd Price were the three people most interested in the Lubbock, in the library in southwest Lubbock. Not the people—not the congress, not the council people that lived over there, but these three guys. They came to all the meetings, they came to all hearings, they were so supportive. And I told them, “If you all want to get a library, first of all, the city needs to donate the land, then you need to take the plans from the Patterson Groves, double the size of the library, triple the size of the community room, just take those plans, whoever did them, get them to modify them, and then let Friends of the Library take that to the Talkington Foundation”—and this was when the Talkington Foundation just started, this was nine years ago—and I said, “propose it to them, say you'll do matching funds, say you'll donate the land, here's the plan, we'll do matching,” and I felt in my heart that we would have gotten that money. Well, I was not president then and the people that were president didn't even know—the next president didn't even know there were foundations in Lubbock. They'd lived in the basement sorting books, so they hire for ten thousand dollars, some big library architect person from Dallas, and they come in and they draw up a ten million dollar architect library plan.



LW:

Yeah.

GS:

Now Lynn, those of us who live here, you know, you don't need—you need to be practical and ask for something that you stand a chance of getting. I figured if the city kicked in—I don't know, three or four million and the Talkington Foundation did the same, which was chump change to them at that time, we could have gotten a really nice library, a very functional, nice library over in southwest Lubbock with real parking, with real access, and everybody would have been happy. But the chance is gone for that, the chance is gone—and I talked to Don Graff, and you know, I asked him, he was the boss at the CH Foundation then, and I said, “Do you know, do you think I could get all three of the foundations: CH, Helen Jones, and Talkington, do you think if I presented this right, is this something that you all would consider?” And he said, “Well yeah, this is something we'd look at.” But—

LW:

Yeah. The community rooms were the big thing that people kept asking for, you know when they had the sort of town hall meeting

GS:

Yes, yes, yes. It's just—it's horrible because those community rooms are used and used and used. You know, it's a shame to not have one. But the killer thing is, it's a shame to not them for the summer reading programs because all those crafts and the magicians they bring in, everything they bring in, they can't have that in the library proper. It's got to be in the community room. So that whole part of town and all those kids that live over there, you're just saying, “Well, too bad for you”. And the summer reading program is killer. It has always been killer. That Erica, whatever her last name is, now, that's the children's librarian—she comes up with stuff like you wouldn't believe, just—

LW:

So they're heavily attended?

GS:

They are over attended, they are like turn away attended, which is—you know, you shouldn't have to turn away a kid to a publicly funded event in my opinion.

LW:

I think I remember someone talking about the Dr. Seuss program where they had so many children showing up that the place was just packed.

GS:

And the fire—you know there's fire marshal limitations in every one of those rooms, so you can't have over what is the allowable—so they, they—as money allows, they have doubled the program, they'll have two, one in the morning, one in the afternoon, as we provide the money for them, as money allows. But that's—you know, they—it's absolutely turn away.

LW:

It's sad.

GS:

It's just maddening.

LW:

But it also means that the Friends are stepping in and filling a very important need.

GS:

They're doing everything—and you know, that's not—and we have a fabulous online component now, listing books for online sales, so that really helps some of our senior citizen members. But moving boxes of books and standing on your feet for hours on end in a basement on cement and lifting books and lifting boxes of books is not an easy job. It is not an easy job. And Steve and I pick up the books that are donated at the Patterson, and the books that are withdrawn from the Patterson and move them in his pickup to the basement of the Mahon, and we've been doing that this summer. But Mason and Avery, my great niece and nephew, Mason and Avery Scott, they go every single time with us and work like little dogs.

LW:

Well you're teaching them community service at a young age.

GS:

When we had no—when the Godeke was gone, we had bins in some of the community centers, they weren't wildly successful, but that Scott—he's the assistant city manager, nicest guy—he said, "Gretchen just go put those bins in those community centers and see what you can do."

Well, when Mason and Avery were tiny, little bitty kids, we would go pick up those books, and Mason could barely carry one little flat of books, but then we would go pick up all those books and put them in the back of my Suburban and take them down to the Mahon. So they have always worked ever since they could walk, they've hauled books. They are ace book haulers [laugh].

LW:

Now what about the future of Mahon? Because there's discussions about, Well it needs renovations.

GS:

Well they just got through renovating it.

LW:

Did they, okay?

GS:

Yeah, they got huge grants. This was my last—that was going on about my last two years as president, and they got federal grants, they overhauled—one of the big issues was that the heating and cooling system for the Mahon was operated out of the civic center, and so we were always having issues with heating and cooling, mainly with cooling. And so they got a separate—they got their own heating and cooling system, and they completely renovated it. So it is in much better—you know it's in great shape, it's got tons of room, it's a beautiful library, and it's too bad it's not in Southwest Lubbock, but historically main libraries are downtown, and it works great. They've got a beautiful huge computer area. We have that whole basement. I remember when I was president, Tom Martin and Paul Bean were my biggest supporters in the world because—I mean, I'm not dumb, it's because we gave them so doggone much money—but anything I wanted, they made sure I got, and if I called them, if they weren't in, even if I didn't ask for a call back, they would call me back. They never—I mean they treated—they always called me Mrs. Scott, and they treated me like a queen, so whatever anybody says about them, they were certainly gentlemen to me. Well, right when we were at one of the book sales, starting at one of the book sales, Tom Martin said, "Gretchen I do these morning radio shows, I make a round of these morning—I want you to come with me," well I'd meet him out in the parking lot and he was smoking and drinking coffee and blowing smoke on me then—you know. But we'd go in and he'd let me say anything I want and then—I mean, that man was so smart, and then he'd say, "Yes and I just want to remind everybody that the City of Lubbock donates the entire basement of the Mahon for Friends of the Library." And then he was saying, "We pay all the utilities and we provide them with internet service down there," and I mean it was like he was not taking away from us, but he was certainly saying, "Yes and here's what we do, so we can do that," and it's true, they don't have to let us have that basement. And it's a wonderful space.

LW:

Good deal.

GS:

Yeah, it's great. It's wonderful. And I think Jane Clausen does a wonderful job. She does absolutely the best she can and she uses us as an advocacy group because there's only so much she can say and do.

LW:

Yes, well is there anything else you want to like touch on about Texas Tech maybe that we haven't touched on? Because we talked about your dormitory and the regulations for women, I'm trying to think. We may have to—

GS:

I don't—I know there's a, you know—you're always frustrated by where you work and any—I remember this, Mike Weiss was our accountant when we had our own business, and he was a regent here and I called him up one day to just gripe, I said, "I'm not calling you as a customer. I'm calling you because you're on the Board of Regents," and they were tearing down the old power plant here on campus. And of course I am, you know—and I mean every day I feared for the Dairy Barn, every day of my life. And I did a commercial for KTTZ—KTX—about saving the Dairy Barn one time. And I mean. I just thought, Am I going to have to chain myself to the doors of this Dairy Barn? What are we going to do? I called them up and I said, "You can't let them tear down—you know, rawr rawr rawr rawr rawr," and he said "Gretchen, when I got on the Board of Regents," he said, "I thought it was the most wonderful thing in the world," he said, "I thought I was going to work in the ivory towers. It is nothing but dictatorship from start to finish," and I said, "Yep." You've to know this right? If you are staff, which I always was, you are treated extremely poorly by the higher ups. There's no—I mean if there's just a tier, and there is no questioning those people, whoever they are, they have complete control over what they're doing, and unless something horrible happens, they really don't answer to anybody, and that's the truth. And it's a hard system to work under. And the other thing I have a real issue with, because I saw this first hand, I saw professors that worked three hours a week. They came in and they taught their one hour class Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and that is basically all you ever saw of them, making six figure salaries with tenure, no possibility of being fired. I mean, I guess they could be, if they did something horrible. But I saw them waltz in and waltz out, and that was it. I saw people who I know had never updated their class notes. I know because one of my friends father's had the same class I had from Frank Hudson, and we had the exact same notes. Exact same notes. So there's an unaccountability that goes on that I don't think that anybody that doesn't work in the system realizes, and I think it causes—I think things could be done so much better and so much more efficiently if that wasn't the case, if there was more accountability and more input from the people doing the actual work. You know, I had a friend who worked for environmental health and safety here, and I mean to tell you his life was a living hell just trying to get people, the academic departments and the administration, just to follow OSHA guidelines so they wouldn't get sued. I mean all he was trying to do was protect them



from being sued, but I mean they don't listen. And I think they are missing out on valuable amounts of information by not listening to the people who do the actual work.

LW:

Well, I guess we can kind of wrap up along those lines with the Lubbock Heritage Society. The Society actually watches what's going on around town and makes commentary and raises a hand up and says, "Hey, wait a minute; you can't tear down that building."

GS:

Right. It's wonderful. It's—Pam Brink just about single handedly revitalized the Lubbock Heritage Society in 2009 I believe, and she called me up and asked me to be president, and I said, "No, I will not be president, but I'll be treasurer," and since then—let's see Paul Carlson was president and then Daniel Sanchez and then Pam and we pretty much won't let her go, I think she would love to go [laugh], but we won't let her go, and she has been so dynamic in being able to call press conferences and call attention to the things that are going on. And of course we have rescued the Underwood Pullman car, and I initiated that, I told the board, I said, "I want us to have one project that we can do, that we can show the city that we're going to actually—the community—that we're going to actually do something," and I said, "The only thing I can see that we could really have a shot in hell of getting is to take care of that Pullman car," and Lauren Prather had already approached us once with a really good, you know, telling us everything. And I said, "I want permission to proceed with this, let me see what I need to do," so I met—Jane Henry and I and Laney met with Lauren, and he told us everything he'd done, gave us all this information, and he said the problem I have is I cannot find a home for it. And I said, "Let me try to find a home for it," and this is the strangest thing, at Marie Meyers' house, we were having a museum board party—little thank you , afternoon, happy hour, get together after work party. And Eileen Johnson said, "Well you know, the Beyer Museum of Agriculture just got this million dollar grant," or whatever they got from the Talkington Foundation, and she said, "They've got a lot of land and I think that's who you ought to approach," and so I did. I approached them, and Lauren Prather, Jane Henry, and Busty Underwood, and I cannot remember his real name—and I got the Board from the Museum of Agriculture, then it was just the Museum of Agriculture, and met them at the train car, and Busty and Lauren just charmed the socks off of those people. The stories they told, and the things they showed, and what they did made the Board decide to accept it but under the premise, they would provide the land and when it was totally renovated, we would turn it over to them. And we've turned it over to them prior to that because of some very good legal reasons to do so. But our responsibility is to raise the money to restore it and—I don't know, Pam has not told the Board this, and I don't know why because I asked her to, but she hasn't done it. We got money from CH and Helen Jones. We got thirty-seven thousand from CH and fifteen thousand from Helen Jones. Talkington turned us down even though they gave us money last year. We've got the \$37,000 for the windows and the \$15,000 from Helen Jones is for educational materials which we desperately need to do. I mean



there can be a lot of stuff put out there even if you can't go through the car. And Steve Moffett, who is Paul Bush's son-in-law and who runs Lubbock Electric has volunteered to hopefully use his crew, you've heard that, to work on the exterior, and my husband Steve is also trying to round up old car people to help work on the exterior. So I think we're moving forward. But once I got it moved, I was happy. I contacted the movers, I contacted Trumble Crane, and I got all that set up, and then after that, I'm not a grant writer and Mary Crites knows what she's doing. But the hard thing was finding—so it was just, you know, it's like there's only thirty volunteers in town and we all know each other, and so Eileen Johnson put that thought in my head, and that's how it came—it's just weird. Why nobody thought about that I don't know, it's the perfect place for it. It's the only place for it. But "Duh," you know? We were all sitting around going, "Well let's see, the Ranching Heritage won't take it? Well no, it's not ranchy. Well there's no room downtown, rawr rawr rawr rawr rawr, and the city won't take it for a tourist center." It was just so—it was so—it made so much sense.

LW:

Well, thank you so much for doing the interview with me. I got some really good things on the interview, and I enjoyed the experience [laugh], so let me—

GS:

You know, you probably didn't realize I could talk that much or maybe you did—

*End of Recording*

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