

**Oral History Interview of
Sally Murray**

**Interviewed by: Andy Wilkinson
November 25, 2013
Lubbock, Texas**

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Transcript Overview:

This interview features Sally Murray, second wife of Texas Tech University president Grover Murray. Murray recounts stories told to her by Grover about his upbringing in North Carolina, his relationships with his family and friends, and his love of geology.

Length of Interview: 01:38:32

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Sally Murray (SM):

—having dinner with Martin Luther King Sr., partying with Stevie Wonder, and walking and talking with Dr. Grover Murray, so I got his e-mail address, and here's what he wrote me back.

Andy Wilkinson (AW):

Yeah, let me have a look at that. And let me say this is the twenty-fifth of November, Monday, a snowy Monday, and nevertheless, Sally Murray and I are still here at the Southwest Collection at nine in the morning when the rest of the world is still being very quiet, doing part two in our discussions about Grover Murray. Sally just gave me the copy from the twenty-second, just a few days ago, of an e-mail from Vic Hackett, which—

SM:

He is a member of the Texas Tech Alumni Association Board of Directors. He lives in New Jersey.

AW:

Well, let me just read this for the recorder. Again, the twenty-second of November this year:

*Dear Mrs. Murray,
Thank you for taking the time to write me about Dr. Murray. He was an exceptionally gifted professional who transformed Texas Tech into a university. He had the rare ability to relate to scholars and students alike. I will always have memories of the geologist with the bowtie, walking across campus, sharing his vast knowledge and wisdom with students like myself. Most importantly, he was a person who was also able to listen and learn from others. The Texas Tech we know today is a result of his vision.*

*Best wishes,
Vic Hackett.*

Really nice.

SM:

Isn't that nice?

AW:

Yeah.

SM:

He is with—oh, the girl told me, I got in contact with him with Jean Ann Cantore, do you know her? She's the editor. She knew him because when people come, evidently she plays a role in

getting them all together and getting their—whatever they do for board members together. So she knows his background, and it's—like when they had that terrible storm Sandy? He kind of is in getting things back to normal. I don't know what you call that, but she knew all about him?

AW:

Like people would do at FEMA or something like that?

SM:

Something like that, I think he stayed in New Jersey.

AW:

Is he a geologist also?

SM:

Oh, I don't think so. His degrees are—he got a social welfare degree in '76 from Tech and a master's degree in public administration from Texas Southern.

AW:

Yeah, okay, so—

SM:

No, he's not a geologist. But anyway, I just couldn't resist writing him and telling him that—when I wrote him, I said, “I've been told that that's one of the things Grover Murray liked to do was to walk around campus and greet students and say, “How's your semester going?” and all that. He wasn't afraid of student. And not that presidents are afraid, but a lot of presidents just don't want encounters with students. Because I've been to other schools besides this one, and I know—

AW:

Well, and not only that, it seems that more and more people at that level—provosts, vice-provosts, presidents, etc., seem to have less and less time. The times I've met with Dr. Nellis this year, which have been very few, they're in fifteen-minute increments.

SM:

It's like going to your doctor. Same thing.

AW:

Yeah. And he's a perfectly nice and gracious person, but that's his schedule.

SM:

I know.

AW:

And it's kind of sad because I remember not too long ago when I could call the provost—I mean, and I wasn't at the university then, I was just out doing my music and such, but I could call the provost—times with John Burns and say, "John, you got time for coffee or lunch?" "Oh, sure, come on by whenever you want." And you can't do that now.

SM:

No. No. And it's sad.

AW:

It is sad because it's difficult to—I think it must be difficult for them to maintain a finger on the pulse, you know, when you're surrounded by people telling you things that—

SM:

They want you to hear.

AW:

Exactly. It happens to all famous musicians, you know, they do great work at the beginning then after that, it's kind of—becomes stultified because they're removed from the world.

SM:

I know. Isn't that sad?

AW:

Yeah. It is very sad. Now, I looked back just through my notes, and what I had written down as something in particular to cover today was Grover Murray's stories. That's all I had noted.

SM:

The stories really revolve around kind of his life procession. But before I get that, I was throwing out some newspapers and this brought to me, to my mind, something about Grover. Plains Capital Bank has their advisory board, and all these people on here are people, you know, that are well-known in this city, Jim Galbraith, and so on, and then there's one down here, Dr. Donald Haragan, President Emeritus. Grover was not a member of Lubbock's good old boys club. We had a big discussion about this. And he said, "If you're not a member of the good old boys club, you're nothing in Lubbock." I said, "Well, how do you get to be a member?" He said, "Number one, you drink coffee with them every Saturday morning, usually down at the bank. Sometimes you go as far as playing poker with them. You're in on all the gossip. You are a real

religious person in some church. You put all those things together and that makes you a good old boy. I was never, and I paid the price for it." I said, "What's that?" And he said, "I was never asked to be on any banks' board of directors or advisory. I went back and checked, and all previous presidents had been asked."

AW:
Really?

SM:
I always thought that was interesting, that as gregarious as he was, he didn't want to waste his time with good old boys, yet he knew he was paying the price. Isn't that interesting?

AW:
That is interesting. Did he ever say what he thought he would have gained by being a member?

SM:
Well, you get—not that he wanted or needed the money, but you get—a monthly. And then it's just the recognition. I imagine Haragan is a real contributor. I think Grover would've been a contributor, because they can say, "Well now what about Tech? What can we expect from Tech?" And that good stuff.

AW:
And Don I know from many years—just many years of being around him is very judicious. He's not a—I mean, he is funny and gregarious in his own right, but when you mention the university or what should we do about this or that, he's—

SM:
He's right there.

AW:
And he stops and becomes very thoughtful about it. He's not a—he's not like you think of a good old boy as being.

SM:
I know.

AW:
But now, did Grover go on and say anything about an increased town and gown division or a continuation of a town and gown, because as both you and I know, there was a time when the locals wanted to do away with the university in some ways because they thought they were all socialists and, you know, useless do-gooders. There's always been that strong faction of further

extreme in the political spectrum in Lubbock, and they gain power from time to time and lose it from time to time. So did he ever mention anything like that about his time?

SM:

Yeah, he thought it was out of hand.

AW:

Really?

SM:

Yes, and he really tried to discourage it. And then after he left, he said—things would happen and he'd say, "Look at that, they're getting back strong again."

AW:

So how was he able to weather that for ten years? That's a long time, you know.

SM:

Well, he had that encounter with the editor of the *Avalanche Journal* the first day he was here. Not that—

AW:

Which we talked about I think last time.

SM:

Not that that put brakes on things, but I think that kind of got the word out, Grover Murray's not going—not somebody we can push around. I think he kind of was able to discourage maybe some events where they wanted to include Tech, include him, I don't know. I just—I think how he picked his friends—I think that—I think he let it be known, I'm an academician.

AW:

And he must have had a strong support from the board, the regents.

SM:

The boards came and went. There were some on there that he could not stand. He said they had the worst agendas he had ever seen of anybody. So he really clashed with one from TI.

AW:

Was it TI [**Texas Instruments**], the local TI office?

SM:

Fred Busey, Fred Busey.

AW:

Oh, Fred.

SM:

They had rounds. And then there was some others—

AW:

You know, I interviewed Fred Busey last year—

SM:

How old is he?

AW:

Oh, he's very old, and he's, you know, he's to the point in life where he's losing his faculties, although he has very strong memories of a number of things. For one thing, he was a target himself after TI reduced their workforce substantially, you know, to avoid going broke. In fact, he had to install bulletproof glass in his house in Dallas. I don't recall his comments about Grover being anything but—

SM:

Oh, I think they kind of patched it up over the years, it's just like presidents of the United States, you know, you detect that Clinton can't stand this one and this one and then later you see them palling around, I think as time passes, that sort of corrects itself, but he said Busey would even challenge him on some things. And I don't remember—some of the others were so supportive of him, he said he could've never gotten that medical school built if an Amarillo guy—because you know they're from all over—some of these guys, some of the representatives—

AW:

And all political appointments.

SM:

Yes. Out of the governor's office.

AW:

So they're going to reflect the interest of the governor.

SM:

Exactly. So I imagine if in some of Grover's writing somewhere he talks about that, I wouldn't be at all surprised.

AW:

I'd just be interested. And I'd also be interested as to if he had his hands full sometimes with the town and gown split promulgated by people here on campus. Because when you're on the campus, you get a certain taste of that from—not from everybody. In fact, not from what I think of the progressive people, but you'll get a touch of that.

SM:

Well, the town part loves to think that it has tremendous power over Tech. Because here's a pot of money, here's a pot or orders, here's all these people, and so I think that's what Grover really disliked, that they didn't want to say, "Oh, our power stops out here on this street and this street." It's just "Why, of course we have influence on those students and on those faculty." And I think that's the part that bothered him, is the—I think he thought some of them were just really intrusive. But that's all I know, is that he—a lot of people would love that town and gown kind of thing, that coziness. It was not to his liking. And just like not wanting to have anything to do with the good old boys club, because see, that's where a lot of that kind of stuff gets discussed.

AW:

Well, and the other thing is that at the time, he had a big job on his hands on the inside.

SM:

His plate was full. His plate was full.

AW:

To turn the college into a university.

SM:

And then there was something brewing, it's being written about right now. You asked me—Tech was being censored by some academic group, because they had fired some professors—

AW:

Oh, like the AAUP [**American Association of University Professors**] or something like that?

SM:

I should know more about that, because somebody the other day said, "Did you know that that's being researched and written about?" And I said, "No." When he got here, he was told, "You will get Tech off this sanction." And I found out later that part of it was a fine, and that's why he got to know the president of the First National Bank, Charlie Verner, so well. I think they didn't want to put it out in front of everybody, but I believe the regents had fired four professors in history because they considered them—you know, just off the board.

AW:

I know that that had been advocated earlier, I don't remember that in that time period.

SM:

But that was one of his first jobs was to get Tech off that sanction. And then, of course, he knew too that they were wanting a medical school. He knew a lot of stuff because Furr told him, "This is what we want." And when I listened, I've called Furr Dr. Furr and he is not a doctor. He was just chairman of the board of directors.

AW:

Was that Roy Furr?

SM:

Yes.

AW:

Well, that was from Furr Supermarkets and cafeterias.

SM:

That's right. And a little story about Furr—this is one of my stories. Those board of director's meetings that had to be set every month and sometimes they're special ones, and so they'd been having them forever like at ten in the morning or whatever, and so one time, Roy Furr, who was chairman, said, "We're going to have these at six." And that's all he said, and so Grover went home and told Nancy and he said, "Oh, this is going to be wonderful because I'll get to put in a day's work and then relax and then go down and six and we'll have our board of directors meeting." And Nancy said, "Did you ask him a.m. or p.m.?" And he said, "Well, of course it's p.m." And she said, "You know he's a grocer." So he had planned those at six—

AW:

So he could get to work.

SM:

So he could get that over with and have all the morning. And Grover said it was absolute torture, that Nancy would have to call him three or four times and get him two pots of coffee. He was not a morning person.

AW:

Really?

SM:

Oh, no, no. And so he said he just couldn't believe anybody would want a board of directors, and I said, "Well, did everybody show up?" He said, "Yeah, and about half of them were in about the same shape I was in."

AW:

Now there are—you know people talk about right-wing, left-wing, religious and atheist, but I think the biggest division in the world is morning person or not morning person.

SM:

Doves and hawks or whatever they call them.

AW:

Yeah.

SM:

But anyway, that's so funny to me that he just thought, Oh! Six! That's perfect.

AW:

The obvious time.

SM:

But boy, Nancy knew different, because he was a big grocer, and he probably was going to get up at four and do some work until like, five forty-five and then come to Tech and then finish, because the grocer's stuff starts probably at two a.m.

AW:

Oh, yeah, my first real job other than chopping cotton and you know, mowing lawns was at the grocery store. I worked at Piggly Wiggly instead of Furr's but it was an early—in fact, it was all hours. It was early, late. It was really a great job to learn to work.

SM:

Well, it gave you a work ethic.

AW:

Oh yeah. It either gave you a work ethic or a pink slip.

SM:

Yeah. Some of these stories, like I'm going to tell one about his grandfather, but they're kind of enmeshed into his life because his biography says he was born in Maiden, North Carolina on

October 26, 1916, and if you look at Maiden, North Carolina, it's just a tiny little hamlet. And so within like a year, his parents moved to Newton, which I think is the county seat of Catawba County, North Carolina. So it was a little bustling city. And of course, the reason that Newton existed was all the cotton. It was a textile town. And one of the first jobs he had was taking string off of—is it a shuttle that makes—that weaves?

AW:

Moves back and forth.

SM:

Yeah, I guess it was. Anyway, he was probably just a fourteen-year-old boy and it was taking string off, and he said that didn't last long. But see, his first job was associated with a textile, because the town was a textile town. And if you go there now, you see "Se Habla Español" and King Fu's Chinese because the only people that want to work in that are minorities. So the town has totally changed. It just broke his heart to see it the last time we went there because, I mean, it hasn't gone to a dump, it's just changed. So his parents moved to Newton, and his father decided he was going to take a pharmacy class to learn how to be a pharmacist. He thought, I'll be a pharmacist. So he took the class, and it—nothing like today. You probably just read a couple of books and took a test. And once he got in the pharmacy, they have a town square, he realized he didn't like that at all because was there all day on his feet, filling prescriptions. So he didn't like that. So—and I don't know the timeframe of all of this. I just know that this is the sequence of events. So he said, "Well, I'm going to become a fertilizer distributor." Because see there were a lot of local farms around there.

AW:

Yeah, because in that countryside, with that soil, you could make a living with a very small, much smaller farm than you could out here.

SM:

In fact, he used to say, how on Earth his grandparents raised all those kids on like forty acres or fifty. But they had little crops. And so—

AW:

Out here, you could get three watermelons on forty acres.

SM:

That's about it. And so he decided he was going to be a fertilizer distributor. And you know, there were some big meat packing companies out of—well, you know the rails would take the cattle up to Chicago and slaughter them—and I don't remember the names of those meat packing companies, but there were some big—Swift and places like that.

AW:

And Armor?

SM:

Of course, fertilizer was a perfect by-product of all that slaughtering, and so they would probably ship it somewhere to Newton and he would pick it up. And so he did well, and he had his clients, and he'd go around and say, "How much you going to need?" and all this kind of stuff. So evidently he did pretty well. And so Grover came home from school, and—I should have looked this up, and I don't know if it was when he came home from—I kind of think it was a master's in Baton Rouge. We're talking about '38, '39, '40, somewhere in there. And so he—he and a buddy drove all night during Christmas holidays to get there. And so his dad and mom met him and said, "Oh, we're so glad you're here." His dad said, "Son, go with me in the morning to run my—I've got—before Christmas distributions, so people want some fertilizer for end of the year. Go with me on my run." And Grover said, "Dad, I'm so tired, I've been on the road like twelve hours." He said, "I really need to sleep in." Well, you can guess what happened. He took off and one story is they were repairing the road, and it was a high and a low, and he was probably driving just a really primitive truck, and it bounced him, and it killed him.

AW:

The father?

SM:

Yeah. And see that's why I say that George Mahon has always been the father Grover never had, because he lost his father—he was either nineteen—

AW:

Did he feel some guilt about that, for not—

SM:

I think he did. He was either like nineteen, twenty, twenty-one, somewhere in there. And so—of course, it just devastated the family. His brother, totally different. To make matters worse, he told Grover later on that whoever investigated that wreck said that, "Yeah, and there were some whiskey bottles in there." And of course, he knew his father drank. He never thought of him as just a sot, but the fact that that younger brother would say, "Yeah, see he'd been sipping while he was driving," that just upset Grover to not end. So anyway, that turned that family upside down because that company, I think, wrote the widow, his mother, a hundred-dollar check. There was no insurance or anything like that. So that meant she had to somehow start managing. But now, the boys knew they weren't going to get paid for education. That was known. Grover got a hundred dollars. And like I told you on the tape, I don't know if that was for four years or for one, but it didn't matter, he had to hit the ground running. He had usually three jobs at one time. And like I said, one of them was serving in the faculty dining room, was just perfect. He learned

how to meet people and be polite and all that. So anyway, his mother then fell in hard times and she started working in stores. I think she worked in a jewelry store, she worked in a ladies' dress shop, and then, she met somebody who had antiques. And it wasn't like now, but there was still people kind of pushing antiques. And so she married this man, and once again, Brother Jim told Grover that one time he went up to visit his mom, and they had moved out in the country, and he said, "They were so poor there were hogs running in and out from under the house." Well, poor people did that, let hogs run under there. So that upset Grover too, to think that his mother had to live a life like that. She had a good life because that ended up in a divorce, and then she met a man named Williams from Hickory. That's just a little town, that's where all that furniture is made, and I kind of think she and her—Grover's dad and this man and his wife, they'd kind of known each other socially, but anyway, they got reacquainted. He was a widower and he owned the Coca-Cola franchise. Well, you know what that meant. That meant he was well-fitted. And I noticed in this that she has on a fur coat.

AW:

His mom.

SM:

Yeah. We later had it appraised, and it was a very good ranch mink coat. But then also, when he died, she got some of his Coke stock, and then when he died and when she died, that passed to the boys somehow. And yet that man had two girls, and those two girls and these two boys never hit it off. Of course, they didn't have a lot of years together because I imagine it was ten, twelve years that that was going on.

AW:

Well, and Grover and his brother were already grown.

SM:

Oh, yeah.

AW:

So that's a very different dynamic.

SM:

Very different dynamic. So anyway, I'm not surprised that his mother came out—both boys said, "Mom likes you best." Competitive. They were very close in age, I think maybe like ten months apart or something, competitive all the way through. And so, one of the stories about Brother Jim, and I told this at his wake when he died—

AW:

At Jim's wake?

SM:

Yeah. When Jim was about ten years old, they went to the Presbyterian church, and the Murrays sat—he said about ten rows back—Dad, Mom, Grover were there, and Jim wasn't there. Well, Jim comes in a little bit late and goes all the way down to the front row and takes his little coat off and flaps it around the back of the chair and sits down. And so they thought, Oh my gosh, what are we going to do? Well, they said, well, we'll just wait it out, you know. We don't know why he's down there. Well, when the preacher started preaching, Grover said unlike a lot of Presbyterians, he gestured and he got a little fire and—

AW:

The preacher did?

SM:

Yeah, unlike most Presbyterians.

AW:

That is very unlike them.

SM:

And so every time he would gesture, Jim would gesture. And then he would say, "In the scripture it says," Jim would make this big show, and he mocked him the whole service. And so on the way out—by then, they'd corralled Jim—and when they got to the preacher, and the preacher said, "Well Jim, you paid attention." And his mother said, "Too much attention." And at home, he got a whipping, and Grover said, "That's the only serious whipping that Jim every got." That was his style. He was flamboyant whereas Grover was polite. Here was Jim always doing this. So Jim goes—Grover goes to Chapel Hill and Jim goes to some Carolina school, and he becomes a tennis star, he's their star tennis player. And so he goes all around playing at all these tournaments, and at one of the tournaments, he looked up and all the girls sitting there, the fans, here was this beautiful girl, and he found out her name was Bobbie, so he pursued her as a young college boy. And they married I think when he graduated. I don't remember here last time, but it was B-o-b-b-i-e. And so he and Bobbie—I think by then it may have been the wartime and he joined the air force—because see, he was the younger brother. Okay, and so Bobbie has a family, but then here's another Grover story, Nancy and Grover married in I think '41. She always told him, "Now, I'm not going to have a baby right off the bat. I think you need to know that." And she didn't. She had her first baby who was born February 19, 1943. See, that's nine days older than me, because I was born February twenty-eighth of '43. And so Grover goes to the phone and says, after he goes to the hospital, and he said, "Brother Jim, Nancy and I have a most

beautiful daughter.” And she was. She always looked, up until she got older, like a little Elizabeth Taylor. Black eyes, black hair. She was beautiful. And so Jim said—

AW:

What was her name?

SM:

Martha.

AW:

Martha.

SM:

And so Grover said, “We have this beautiful daughter.” And he said, “I just want you to know I beat you at one thing.” See, they were always—nine months to the day, Jim and Bobbie had Lucy. He was smart to name her Lucy because that was Grover’s mother’s name. And Grover said that when Lucy got older and started distributing things such as a big diamond ring, it went to Lucy, who had her namesake. So see, all this little family stuff. So anyway, he had Lucy, Brother Jim had Lucy and then had Jim—I met Jim, and all of Brother Jim’s boys are slow learners. Isn’t that funny?

AW:

That is—how many children did he wind up having?

SM:

Okay. Let me tell what happened; he got sent to Germany during the war, and he met a lady named Doris. So he divorced Bobbie and married Doris, and they had three children. And then, after the war, he comes back home and he’s into buying and selling planes and all this, and he meets Phyllis. Three wives and seven children.

AW:

Wow.

SM:

Yeah, wow.

AW:

You need a scorecard for that.

SM:

I know. And so Grover died in '03 and Jim died in '04. And so this Lucy is a tremendous girl. I think she saw all this mess her father did, she knew all these little siblings, and I think she said, "We are going to be a family." Very smart, very bright. And she met a man—I think she went to Brown University, and she met a man somewhere around there. They married, and it was right near Vietnam, and they were all visiting with Dad, and Dad said, "Well, I'll tell you one thing: don't get into the Marines, you'll get sent to Vietnam." So he advised his new son-in-law to go into something obscure, and he was out on the next plane after their honeymoon. Lucy's husband said, "Typical Jim, always going and blowing." Anyway, he survived Vietnam and came back, and had a very successful career in investments, so they had this beautiful home on—what's the island off San Diego, has that beautiful big old hotel?

AW:

Oh—so they wound up in San Diego, and not back in the Carolinas?

SM:

So Lucy kind of kept tabs on everybody, kept tabs on Dad, all these step-mothers. I give her credit for keeping that family together. Grover got reacquainted with her, oh in about the nineties, we started driving out to that island off San Diego and visit them, and then she came here. So when he died, the air force said, "Well, he qualifies for a—"

AW:

When Grover died?

SM:

No, it was Jim. Grover was already dead. And the air force said, "He qualifies for an Arlington burial," where you have a horse-drawn thing, and the ashes were on there. And there were—there was a band playing and all this. So at the time, he had three living wives, and none of them were present. So Lucy was so pleased that my sister and I came. The rule is, I think that his ashes are there, and I think the ashes of those three wives can be stacked up. They have some rules about that. But the wife he was living with will be on top. There are some real sticky rules. Because see, that happens.

AW:

So even the wife he was living with wasn't—

SM:

Never. And she claimed—she was born—I was in '43, she was born in '40. So both of those men married young women for their second wife. So Jim was something else. He got into Hollywood

and he had pictures on his wall of Arthur Godfrey and that era. He just loved that kind of life. You couldn't have found two more different boys. And what he did, when he started high school, he said, "I'm going to be an engineer." So that kind of made Grover think, "Well, I probably ought to be an engineer." So he went—when he went to his freshman year, he declared engineering as a failure and he bombed. His English and history did okay, but his math and engineering and all that, he just bombed. And he realized, "Well, that's not me." And that's when he got into geology. I think I told you that Jim was put on de-icing and ejection seats. And he's written up as some of the early experimenters in that. I told you, if he'd been in a private life—but he was in the air force. So these little boys grow up, and buddy around, and Grandpa Murray lived back in that town, Maiden. Grandpa Lore, his mother's mother, lived kind of in the outskirts.

AW:

How do you spell Lore?

SM:

L-o-r-e. And so, as little boys, you know, they were always wanting to go do things, and I'm sure back then mothers just said, "Well, go do it." So she—the mother, Lucy, Grover's mother, would pack them little lunches and off they'd go walking. And I imagine that was at least fifteen miles. And so they'd get out to the Murray homestead, and he was one of these little farmers, and he'd say, "Okay boys! Going to milk those cows in the morning." So here at this early age, Grover was hauled of bed, and helped milk the cows, feed the hogs, and all this kind of stuff. So that really made him decide, "I will never go into farming or agriculture."

AW:

Until he meets Roy Furr and his six a.m. meetings.

SM:

So anyway, Brother Jim loved all that. And then to show you how these grandmothers influenced him—one time this Grandma Murray heard him talking, it was Grover, his brother, and a girl cousin, and we later visited with this girl cousin who verified this, and Jim said some word, it was probably something like darn or damn or something, it wouldn't have been the F word or anything like that. And so Grandmother Murray comes in and she says, "I heard that." And grabs up Grover, and Grover said, "I didn't say it." "I heard you say it." And Jim would never say. And she literally took a bar of black soap and washed his mouth out. So he had little love for the Murray side. The Murrays were kind of down here and the Lores were kind of up here. I think they were kind of stratified. And so meanwhile, the Lore—Mr. Lore—first of all, I don't know how many aunts and uncles Grover had on the Murray side, but there were a lot. And then on the Lore side, his aunts—he had about four aunts that he adored and they adored him. He was the first grandson. And knowing his temperament, see, he would probably sit on their lap, and unlike

Jim that was running and dashing around, so Mama Lore really was one of the main influences in his life because she would say, "Have you done your work?" "Let me see your writing." And would give him books. I think the first book he ever got came from her. So she kind of set that academic pace. And so he said, "And all those Lore girls, they dressed nice. I just don't know how Grandpa Lore ever kept them up." So the last time we went up there in 2000, he said, "Now, we're going to go by and visit Bess." Aunt Bess was a just a few months from being a hundred. But she had that—what I call country club air about her. Always hair fixed, pretty clothes, pretty house. And so we were sitting there while I think a maid was fixing lunch and the doorbell rang, and so Grover goes to the door and comes back and the UPS man had brought boxes that were obviously shoeboxes, you could just tell. And he said, "Aunt Bess, this is for you, it has your name on it." And she said, "Oh, just put it down." He said, "No, open it. You know you've been waiting on this." And she said, "Oh, okay." She opened it and sure enough—I'm pretty sure it was two or maybe four pairs of shoes, and Grover said, "Oh, they're lovely." And they were. I think they were from Macy's.

AW:

And she was almost a hundred?

SM:

Yeah. And so—and then she had a daughter living with her that wasn't too bright. Anyway, I'll never forget, because Grover said, "Aunt Bess, these are the prettiest shoes." And she said—she had a real southern drawl—"Oh, Grover, you know we Lore girls always love shoes." To her death. To her death. So the Lores were just a different breed of cat. One of them went into banking.

AW:

And this was Aunt Bess? B-e-s?

SM:

B-e-s-s, and then he had an Aunt Kitty that lived in Gastonia. Because see, he kept tabs and we visited these people. We visited them. I believe there may have been one boy that was born late, Uncle Jim Lore, and I remember he came out to see us one time, and I got the idea that he was just the baby boy—and maybe Mr. Lore did have like four, five girls in a row. No, I take it back. There was one oldest boy, here's another story. The oldest boy—that would be Grover's uncle—I don't know what year, but times were hard in the Carolinas, and he said, "I'm going to Canada." He had read about Canada. So he loaded up his wife, they were just newlyweds, took a train to Calgary, and evidently you could get some good property, and he went out and bought some property for probably cheap prices and became a farmer. And so this uncle—he had a funny like Zeke, Zeke or Zeb or something—he settled into Canada, and Grover said they were always called the black sheeps, because see they left all the South Carolina bunch and went up

there. And so he had three boys and a girl, and Grover was very fond of them. Now, how he kept up with them, I don't know, but I do know Calgary became an oil city like Houston, and he went to a lot of meetings. He would always meet with them because they lived around there. And then they would come down in the winter when they didn't have anything to do and come through Lubbock and we'd entertain them, take them to the Ranching Heritage. They had their last family reunion about three years ago, and Barbara Murray and her husband and Sally and Caroline decided to go. So we flew up there and rented a car and went out to this little town where this—and by now, the Lores—there are probably fifty of them, because he had those four, and then you know how those families—and so they were all there. Of course, he had food and we were wined and dined. And then they said that the tradition was to have a campfire at night and tell stories. Well, this oldest cousin of Grover's gets up and he said, "I'm not going to tell you a story—I'm just—by regular words, I'm going to tell you a story by poem." And he puts his hands in his pockets and he said, "I'm going to tell you about the killing of Dan McGrew." He went on, in poetry, I know at least twenty-five minutes.

AW:

Robert Service—that's a very long poem.

SM:

We just couldn't believe it, because he at the time would've been eighty-five. And then he'd say—he'd get his voice real quiet, "blah blah blah, and *then*," he knew all the gestures. It was unbelievable. *The Killing of Dan McGrew* or something.

AW:

Yeah. Robert Service.

SM:

Yeah, so I'm telling you all this stuff because Grover's family, even though they weren't our next-door neighbors, were very important to him and he visited. And I told you on that first date that his secretary said, "You'd better get busy." This was October. "There are 450 names on the Christmas card list." And a million were these kind of people, family. And then as you know, Grover went to North Carolina. All this time, he'd been corresponding with a girl back in Newton, given her an engagement ring, and so she—word got to him that she was dating somebody else, and so Grover came come like one Thanksgiving, maybe his senior year, and he said, "I just want you to know I'm going to the top and I need a loyal wife to go with me." And by top, I think he meant—by then, he kind of knew how geology worked, that you started basic and you went on and then you got in your profession, so he got rid of her. Her name was Alma, and the reason I know this is every year, this nice Christmas card came with "Love, Alma," and I said, "Is this an aunt I don't know about?" And he said, "No, it's an ex-girlfriend." So then he got involved with a girl, one of the first geology major girls. He met her, and she did the same

thing. They had a date one night, and she came in, and he said her skin was chapped, her hair was windblown, and she finally admitted she'd been out with a guy who had a convertible. So he had bad luck with women. So I think that's why he went back to Nancy, who he'd known through school. And so they married right after his graduation from LSU, and he had interviewed and gotten a job in Jackson, Mississippi. And so that's where they started their life, in Jackson, Mississippi. And so like I say, she said, "I don't want a baby right off," so baby Martha was born and then—in '43 and then in '48, Barbara was born, and that's when he got a call from LSU and they said, "We're getting covered up with people," because see, the war was winding down, and so he said, "We need a stratigrapher, we need—" He named all these kind of classes that Grover could teach. So he packed up the three and him and off they went back to Baton Rouge. And they moved in what you'd call a subdivision, and everybody there was a young professor, everybody had little kids, and so those girls grew up with all these children and stayed friends with them over the years.

AW:

Plus Baton Rouge is such a nice town.

SM:

Yeah, it is. I got an e-mail from Barbara the other day and it said, "Look what happened." Headlines: Murray New President of Society of Infectious Disease. And I thought, You are your dad's daughter. So you know, Grover took that route, professional societies. And here Barbara is, and that's a very prestigious job. In fact, when our next-door neighbor was the doctor that got in trouble with the med school, Butler—when they moved in, Grover said, "Well, we're the Murrays, who are you?" And he said, "Well, I'm Tom Butler, I'm at the med school, I'll be in infectious disease." And Grover said, "Oh, really? My daughter is in that." And he said, "Barbara Murray? Oh, I met her in Africa." Because these meetings meet all around the world, so Barbara has reached the pinnacle, just like Grover did.

AW:

Yeah, and where does she live now?

SM:

She's at Houston. She's chairman of infectious disease, University of Texas at Houston. And she's had that job for a long time. The reason I'm talking about these kids is—you remember what happened in '51, that disease that scared everybody? It was polio.

AW:

No, I had a cousin who had it, never so bad as she was in the iron lung, but I remember how terrifying it was in our neighborhood. A kid would come down sick and you couldn't go out in

the front yard. No kid—you'd drive down the block, you wouldn't see any kids anywhere, they were all in the backyard. Moms wouldn't let them.

SM:

So you were little. Because that was about fifty—

AW:

I was born in '48—

SM:

See, you were that age.

AW:

I do remember also the relief that washed over America when we get to our vaccines. You know, that was—and I was very small, but I still remember.

SM:

Oh, sure you do. You were three or four. Oh yeah. Well, the only thing I could trace it back is that Barbara and Martha went to an ice cream party, became sick, and both of them came down with polio, and no other child did. So in Baton Rouge, they were put in the hospital. Barbara mentions that in her acceptance thing to this new position that her early acquaintance with polio and all of that—quarantine and all that—probably sent her into medicine, infectious disease. She came out no sign. The older girl, though, if she were sitting here, and I said, “Barbara, hand me that pencil,” with her left hand, she would have to—

AW:

Oh, you mean Barbara or Martha?

SM:

The oldest girl. The one my age.

AW:

And what's her—

SM:

With her left hand—

AW:

What was her name?

SM:

Oh, that's Martha. Martha and I are almost twins. And so if I said, "Hand me that," She'd have to—this whole side, paralyzed.

AW:

My friend, Red Steagall, the musician, his left arm—he can play the guitar with his fingers, but he can't reach the arms up, so he has to take his right hand, move his arm up to the—

SM:

See, same way. They learned to cope. And he never did the iron lung, and Martha didn't either. But the sad thing is—

AW:

I don't think many people got out of an iron lung. I think that was the—

SM:

That was the end. The sad thing is—see, look how old they are now. Of course, Martha had three children, and she learned how to pick those kids up, so this was overused, this one—and so she has to take a lot of pain medicine.

AW:

Plus, there are many of them that are having relapses.

SM:

Oh, it's awful.

AW:

Maybe not relapses of the polio, but effects from it that have hastened their—

SM:

Yeah, she'll be in a wheelchair. It's just a matter of time. So that kind of sent Martha in the direction away from academics. And then I just think that Barbara just got some DNA of brilliance. She majored in math, and she holds the—in her medical class at—what's the one in Dallas? Southwestern? Highest grades. She goes all over the world lecturing because she's gotten all this research about antibiotic rejection. I just think she got some DNA that was incredible. And—

AW:

Did she ever marry?

SM:

Yes. Let me finish this girl, and then I'll go to Barbara. Martha—I think Martha felt like—I just want to get out of this house, so she fell in love with one of Grover's students, a real bright geology student named Wiley Poag, and Martha would go do filing for her dad in the summer. It's where she met Wiley probably as a junior in high school. And so they dated through her high school, and I'm pretty sure they married in '62, which would have been the year after graduation, she graduated in '61. And so he's done well. He's worked for USGS, gotten all kinds of awards, and they've had three children, they've lived in Massachusetts—here's the funny part—Massachusetts liberalism has definitely been something they've picked up, and of course Barbara and her dad, that'd be the furthest thing.

AW:

Oh, really?

SM:

Oh, yeah. They—and so, I mention this because when we'd all get together, we did not talk about politics at all because it just—not that—Barbara really isn't real staunch, but Grover didn't want anything to do with some of that Massachusetts liberalism. And so one time Wiley said, "Well, I used to have a nice staff to help with our research, but Reagan cut all that out." And of course, Grover just—like that—so we had to be really careful. But Massachusetts has its own politics, and Wiley and Martha were young when they got up there, and I just think they just got caught up in it, and to this day, they are definitely that kind of political people. Isn't that interesting? Meanwhile—she had three children, and it broke Grover's heart that they were not high achievers. The boy went to school in Rhode Island and took RIM—Research institution management in hopes of managing a hotel. When he did his internship, he had to do it in a pizza parlor, and I think he was robbed and hit in the head and all that and he just decided, "I don't want anything to do with this," so he ended up at State Farm. And he had a girl that came down here that majored in creative writing and some of her teachers have told me that—let's see, what is her name? I can't think of her name right now, that she was the best person in the class, and so Grover said no, you get your master's, you get a good school that has creative writing and you keep going. Well, she met somebody somewhere and just went off to—I think it was maybe California or somewhere with him. Grover had already told her, "I'll pay for all of your master's," can't think of her name right now. And then little Marla, the third girl majored in social work. Her internship was a girl's school in Boston and it was a horrible experience. So those three children didn't have good experiences, and I think it determined where they ended up as adults. Now, Marla and her brother work for State Farm and they've gotten high so they're

okay, they're certainly not careers that their grandfather would've wanted them to have. And then this one and creative writing, she just gets unemployment checks. And I've often thought, I'm glad Grover didn't have to live with that. It would have just really bothered him because boy he wants high achievers just like this man we read about, I mean Grover probably picked up that he was a high achiever. And so Barbara, yes. Barbara went to Rice, majored in biology and math, she was probably one of the highest of the graduates and met a young man down there that was on the football team, Grover said—I've seen his picture, he was tall, German, and of course Grover and Nancy liked him and when they announced they were getting married, it was probably one of the biggest weddings they had here. Grover said his liquor bill at of the country club was like \$12,000. He remembered that.

AW:

Oh my gosh.

SM:

He remembered that. Her dress is in the museum. It was one of those blow the top off. Okay, they married at the end of her medical school, that was about '78, I guess, and then Grover said he and Nancy said, "This isn't going to work," because they went straight to Boston Hospital, where she was going to do his residency. And he said, "We tried to tell him Barbara is going to be under stress. When you're in residency, they deliberately make you work thirty hours straight." And he said, "We tried to tell him, they wouldn't listen to us." Off they go. Well, Barbara is the highest achiever we've ever seen, and so she'd go and work and come home and he'd still be in bed. And so sure enough, she started saying, "How many interviews have you had?" And Barbara is a real—person. Martha is kind of laid back. And, "Well, I don't have an interview until next week." "What do you mean, you don't have an interview?" Because see, he did not have a job. And then he started taking little odd jobs, and then finally got a job at a bank. So by now, we're probably in our second year, maybe third year. One time he came home and he said, "Well, I'm going to quit that job." And she said, "Why?" And he said, "Because we're going to all get laid off and I want to leave. I don't want on my record that I was laid off, so I'm just going to leave." So she said, "You are not." And supposedly, the gossip says, she said, "If you quit that job I'll divorce you." And knowing Barbara, she could've said that. But then, dear Barbara, if you listen to this, forgive me, I'm just repeating gossip. But anyway, I think they both knew this wasn't working, and I'm sure by the third year, she was under stress. You know how those residencies go. And so I don't know—I doubt that she kicked him out, I just know that it was announced they were going to get divorced. They finally got a divorce and she left there and came back to Houston. Meanwhile, he gets on with NCR, National Cash Register, and computers are just starting, and he has a knack for writing programs. And so when Grover and I married, we're on our honeymoon out here, and then daughter Martha said, "Y'all come up, and we want to just entertain you." We went up and went out to Martha's Vineyard, and Grover said, "I want to show you something." And it was a letter from his ex-son-in-law that said, "Dear Grover, so

glad to hear about the marriage and so on, and I want to give you my home on Martha's Vineyard for the weekend."

AW:

His home on Martha's Vineyard?

SM:

So he—

AW:

So he'd done well.

SM:

Probably multi-millionaire. But it just—it's just like the grandkids. Things can happen that can set you on the wrong stage forever. Okay, so she runs—she's a marathoner. Rice University is this a big square, beautiful big trees, and so she started running, and she started noticing when she'd run this nice little guy that would speak, so after a while, they started to run together. It turns out this is Ernie Baca, and he's a student—a graduate of Rice who's working for an environmental company. He is seven years younger and quite a bit shorter. She's real tall. And so they get to know each other and live together for a while and finally decide to marry. And they made a trip up here when Nancy was alive, and Ernie says they were sitting there and he was real nervous, so he reached over and he moved something—he was so nervous meeting the family for the first time. So finally Grover said, "Well, come on, let's go eat out." So he said Nancy got up from her chair and came over and moved whatever he had moved back. She was just a perfect housekeeper kind of person. About that time, Nancy died, and so they continued to live together and be friends, and then Grover and I'd been married a year—we married in October, and he said, "Barbara and Ernie, come out, let's all meet in Ruidoso." And they had a snow like we had, and so she brought snow skis and they skied on the property of whatever that big, nice hotel is out there, the Indians own it. And so we had a good time. And so they announced they were going to marry in Hawaii in February. They went over there and a priest took them out on the beach and they married, and Grover sent flowers and she said there were so many flowers that they didn't even fit in their hotel room. So anyway, he was glad that it happened. So they've been together all these years. They're so different. And Martha calls Ernie Barbara's lapdog, because he's just always there and just so polite, smart as a whip. He's Ecuadoran, and his family came from Ecuador, and he's traveled all over following the oil business, so he's real smart. So the girls, see, are just as different as night and day, totally different. And luckily, I think they thought, Okay, so they've lost their mother and Dad is sixty-nine years old, and he needs another life, and so I think they were—I know Martha was very glad that we married. It took Barbara a while to come around. But you know, I thought, What if my

daddy had come home and said, "Sally, your mother's been dead over a year now, and I'm lonely and I met this young gal and she's twenty-six years younger than I." I probably would have gone through the roof, gone through the roof. So I give those girls credit, and I think I may have told you this, one of my girlfriends one time, I was telling her about how the girls have taken me in, and she said, "Sally, you're the most naïve person in the world. Don't you realize that they've lived away and when you came on the scene, they knew you'd take care of their dad? That's why they were so nice to you." And I said, "Well, I guess I am naïve." So anyway, that's all the girls. They had a little saying, because Grover would put them in the car and take them to Mexico, take them everywhere and they said, "Stick with Grover and go all over." That was their little saying.

AW:

Stick with Grover and go all over.

SM:

And he would take them to field camp in Colorado when they were little girls. Like I say, to Mexico, and they had some big—I can't remember—kind of the car, but they'd put the dog in there and the camping equipment and off they'd go. So they of course were very fond of Grover. The only thing I've heard them say about Nancy is she was so strict and such a neat housekeeper, and the girls are not geared that way. When we came home from our honeymoon, Grover put his coat on the kitchen—on the dining chair and said, "I got to get out of these shoes," an hour later, I was in the kitchen and he says, "Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to leave that coat there and my shoes." I said, "What are you talking about?" Because see, he didn't do that with Nancy. I said, "This is your house, you do what you want to." But we're wired that way. I'm glad I'm not wired that way. Okay, so now you know all the family. See, I had a list, and I'm embarrassed to tell you that I did not bring it in my haste to get away. But I want you to know about his family because that's a big part of his family. And as far as stuff that happened here on campus—see, I wasn't here.

AW:

Yeah. Well, what about his friendships? Did he develop any close friendships here at Texas Tech?

SM:

He really did. One time—and I couldn't remember the name on that last tape—that went to our wedding down in Van Horn. It was Clyde Kelsey. He was in the education department.

AW:

Kelty?

SM:

K-e-l-s-e-y.

AW:

Kelsey.

SM:

And he had lost his wife, and so he married Jaime, whose husband was a banker, and so—and so those two and Grover and Sally did a lot of things together. That education meant—he was in the education department. No good friendships in geology, and somebody's really going to rip me for saying this—geology was a disappointment to him because they probably resented him. See, those people over there in geology were hard rock, they didn't really care about petroleum, and I don't know how big petroleum geology was at Tech at this time. I doubt it was very big.

AW:

You know, I took geology when I started in the fall of '66, I had—I'll never forget—a fellow named Kirby—

SM:

LaPrade, I knew him well.

AW:

And I didn't like him that semester, but now I don't know what he was like otherwise, but I distinctly remember—

SM:

Antarctica. That all he talked about.

AW:

Antarctica—that's all—exactly, and I'm sitting there in Lubbock, Texas, growing up in cotton fields, and I'm thinking, Antarctica?

SM:

Yeah.

AW:

I don't care about Antarctica.

SM:

Well, see, he went with Alton Wade. I can't remember how I got to know Kirby LaPrade, but I got to know him through something.

AW:

So, was he a good guy?

SM:

I never thought he was all that bright.

AW:

Yeah, I just wasn't impressed with him. In fact, I think had I had a different teacher—I enjoyed the idea of geology a lot. I do remember he—I do remember one thing he taught me. He taught me about monadnocks, and still to this day, when I see a monadnock, I think of Kirby. So that's—I guess something stuck.

SM:

It stuck.

AW:

No, I don't there was much petroleum.

SM:

Not at that time.

AW:

And if there had been, it would have been in engineering and not in—

SM:

That's right. And so Grover comes in here, you know, obviously they know he's a big shot in the American Association of Petroleum Geologists—I mean, he'd been the president, the vice-president, and all this kind of stuff—and so—and then he wanted to bring some people in. I think the old-timers here just didn't like it. And he said that one of the biggest disappointments was that geology department never got off the ground like he wanted to. And then a young man who came in that really kind of got things started took a plane over to Mexico and the plane crashed. And so that took him out, and so that stopped.

AW:

That killed him?

SM:

It killed him. And he started some mapping and some good stuff.

AW:

Do you remember his name?

SM:

I can't think of it right now. I sure can't. And then Grover I think tried to get some grants and some other things for them. Other people have told me that the geology department really kind of resented Grover because he wasn't one of them. He hadn't worked in mining, he hadn't—he just wasn't one of them. So that was a disappointment. And then other faculty people—yeah, I think he knew some of them pretty well, because people would come to me and say, “My dad and mother used to invite the Murrays over to dinner.” One of them is Carla Moran. Carla Moran's mother and dad taught—I don't know if it was language or what. She told me she remembered one time when she was about five, and they said, “The Murrays are coming.” And Dr. Murray came and—excuse me—just grabbed her, and I said, “I'll tell you why. I bet you look just like Martha.” Carla is a very attractive brunette, and I can just see her looking just like little Martha did. So, yes, he did have some friends among the faculty.

AW:

Well, I know it's a difficult thing for the big boss to have friendships with subordinates. It's tricky to manage.

SM:

It's tricky.

AW:

And then if he wasn't, as he said to you, part of the old—

SM:

Good old boy.

AW:

Good old boy networks, then that didn't leave a lot of people in town, so what about the people that he had met in his professional associations?

SM:

Yeah, he brought some of them here. He brought Frank Counselman and Frank always wrote letters to the editor, he was very controversial. Arlo Childs, who was 6'6, and he had to fire Arlo. Arlo did real good in School of Mines and in the professional societies, and Grover said that he

had the most wonderful letters of recommendation, and when he got here, he said he was nothing but a lazy bag of bones. He thinks it's because it was late in his career and Arlo thought now he could coast, and one time Grover said, "I'm going to show you." And he pushed his chair back and he said, "One time I called Arlo and I said, 'Arlo, you and I need to talk,' come over like Tuesday afternoon." He said he walked in and he said Arlo's long legs and feet were up there, and he was doing this—

AW:

He was taking a nap.

SM:

At his desk.

AW:

When he had an appointment with the president.

SM:

Yeah. And it was—

AW:

Not good form.

SM:

I think Arlo may have been what you said a while ago—who was provost and head of research—he wasn't a provost but he was kind of head of research.

AW:

Like the vice provost or something?

SM:

Or something. He was high up. And so Grover had to fire him. And he was a personal friend.

AW:

Oh, yeah. Sad.

SM:

Bessler, he really appreciated Bessler over at the med school.

AW:

Spell Counselman.

SM:

C-o-u-n-s-e-l-m-a-n, I think.

AW:

That's what I thought, but I wanted to make sure that I had—

SM:

You'll find thousands of letters in the stuff. And then Grover did something that was very controversial. Who was the man who was dean of students for the longest time? Allen. Allen. They asked Allen about 1990, '95, they said, "Okay, we want you, Allen, you've been here to so long, to describe every president as well as you can—series"

AW:

And put it in the *Texan*?

SM:

Of course, he did not know those first ones, but there were probably at least five he knew. And boy, he knew Grover. And he started out and, he said, "Grover Murray started out doing one of the most controversial things any president had ever done. He hired a woman assistant." And did. And he had been going at LSU, I told you that he could finish up in May and then catch a plane and go to Australia and do all these drilling deals? And so he met a woman, and boy a lot of people remember her. I can't think of her name right now, I will. He met her with one of these drilling companies that he contracted with. And he was so struck by her ability to just do everything, like, she could handle permits to drill, she could handle drilling records, she could handle everything. And he was so impressed with her, that he thought, Boy, I'd like to have her on my staff. I'm pretty sure she was—

AW:

Was she American?

SM:

She was British, and she had gone to Australia, and maybe with a man, and divorced. And so—see he went down there at least three years in those summers and winters before he came here. And so I'm sure that there was some discussion about, Oh, I'm going to go to Tech, I'm going to need somebody. So she did take the job of his assistant, and it took forever to get her papers from Australia to get her into here, whatever was a green card kind of thing, kind of wish I could think of her name right now. People remember her. I mean, she took control. She tried to run his office like she ran that oil company, and like somebody would say, "I need to speak to Murray." "Well, what is your business?" You know. Boy—in fact, one girl told me one time that—

AW:

That would have been very different for this culture.

SM:

Oh, my gosh.

AW:

I mean, man or woman doing that job, you know.

SM:

Two things: woman, and then her abrasiveness. In fact, a girl told me at the Women's Club one time, she said, "I know you're Sally Murray and I've been dying to tell you a story." And she said she called his office and this woman answered, and she said, "I need to speak to Dr. Murray." And this woman said, "What's the nature of your call?" and she said, "Well, it's personal." And this woman secretary said, "I'm sorry, but I have to verify this"—whatever this appointment. She said, "It's personal, I said." He had forgotten to pick up his check, and the rule was only you pick it up, and so this girl, who was in that department where they made those checks out, she came to the office, came in to this woman and she said, "Here's my business!" It was Grover's check. And she said, "This is as personal as it can get." And she showed me how she did that, and she said that woman just looked at her and she said, "I'll make sure he gets it." And she said, "I will put it on his desk." It had sat there, like, you had to pick it up in four days and it sat there six days or something, so that was a typical reaction to this woman. But he tolerated her. And I think he kind of liked the fact that she could screen intimidating people. So she kept a lot—and like when the students wanted to protest, when she'd come, they'd be lined up out in the hall, and she'd finally go to the door and say, "What's the nature of your visit?" "We want to talk to the president." So she handled that kind of stuff. She was just so efficient. I have no doubt. I don't know what happened. I know that she got real friendly with—not Salem, but another man, another famous doctor who's now dead. Anyway, she got friendly with that doctor—one time, Grover said, "Are you all still dating?" And she said, "Well, I think so." And he said, "I think you better realize that he's dating some other young woman here in town." So that ended that. And then I don't know what else happened. There were a lot of rumors that Grover had something going with this girl, but he said at LSU he had a woman, girl, there that he inherited when he took that job. He said, "That just goes with it." So he just blew that stuff off, but I know there were talks, because a lot of people have told me there was a lot of talk about Grover and this woman. But she finally left and went back to England. And I don't know if it was because that doctor obviously rejected her, but I think she was here, I bet she was here at least four or five of Grover's ten years.

AW:

Really?

SM:
Yeah.

AW:
And right at the beginning?

SM:
Yeah. But anyway, this Mr. Allen—if you can ever get your hands on that copy—sometime talk about this woman that Grover brought from Australia to be his assistant. She wasn't his secretary, she was assistant. And then he got a girl who had been—I'm pretty sure it was—in fact, I think she told me that he hired her out from under Haragan and Haragan never forgave her because she was really good. And she went through Grover and the next five presidents.

AW:
Really?

SM:
Can't remember her name either. So stories about Grover—in fact, he had a girl, Brenda. Do you remember Brenda, the large, heavy girl? Brenda Simmons? That was his last secretary. She was his secretary for twenty-seven years.

AW:
Yeah, no, I don't think so.

SM:
She said that one time she was somewhere and this woman came up and said, "You work on campus, don't you?" And she said, "Yeah, I'm Dr. Grover Murray's secretary." And she said, "Oh, are you his latest flame?" And she said, "What?" She said, "That's all I've heard about Grover Murray, just all these women he's had." And she said, "Well, I don't know the Grover Murray you're talking about," but people do like rumors. Do you know Paulina Jacobo? He would take her to Mexico to translate. They had some things going with Mexico, not that there were any stories about him and Paulina, but he just appreciated women who had talent. Really did.

AW:
No, this is an interesting town about that. If you have a—you can't have a friendship between the sexes.

SM:

And here in the 1966, he tried to pull that off. And he did for at least five years. God, it makes me mad I can't think of her name. But I know one time, I asked the girls, I said, "Did that bother Nancy that Grover brought that girl from Australia?" They said, "Oh Mother just said, 'well, there he goes.'" I mean, she obviously knew that he'd had this girlfriends before her, I just think she thought—well, it was his way of finding—running an efficient office, I think that's part of what Nancy said.

AW:

Yeah, but you don't have any doubt that that it was—it was because of her ability.

SM:

Oh, I know. Grover just appreciated people that were good at what they did. It could be a housekeeper, it could be a server in a restaurant. He didn't want to put up with somebody that he had to train. He wanted somebody to walk in and knew what they were doing. But as far as friendships on the campus, see, I just—

AW:

I was just curious, I was just curious because he was here a long time.

SM:

Ten years.

AW:

But it is difficult to maintain friendships with subordinates, especially in a highly political environment like a university. You know, university—in a sales force, you have numbers that you can ascribe people's success to, but it's really difficult in a university to say, "Here's a better teacher, here's a better researcher." So friendships get pretty dangerous.

SM:

But whoever writes Grover's biography, and I'm convinced somebody will sometime, like the Allen article, they're going to run into references to this woman.

AW:

Yeah. If we can just remember her name.

SM:

Well, I'll remember when I get in the car and go home.

AW:

No, that's what I do. That's what I do. But I wouldn't know her name anyway, I was just a lowly undergraduate student at the time.

SM:

But like that woman that told me she went to deliver his check, I mean, see, she had some real encounters with people. And people don't forget that stuff.

AW:

Yeah, particularly in West Texas. First of all, if you had an accent, they wouldn't forget you.

SM:

Yeah. And I'm sure she did. He couldn't believe how she practically ran that oil company that he dealt with. And you know, that would impress you, you know. All the work you do, and then I'm sure every time he'd go he'd run into her, and she'd have all these records and everything.

AW:

Yeah, in 1966 the grocery store I worked for, the assistant manager was a woman, and that was—and that was the grocery store in Monterey Center—it was at the time—well, in fact I know at the time it was the largest-volume grocery store in the whole state in terms of sales. It was—

SM:

What was it called?

AW:

It was the Piggly Wiggly in Monterey Center, but it was—that was a time when Lubbock was fairly prosperous. There were just the two stores, they were sort of rivals, the Furr's in Caprock and the Piggly Wiggly in Monterey Center. It was a—and Monterey Center was a big deal. We didn't have a mall, and that was the closest thing.

SM:

Hemphill's was out there?

AW:

Hemphill's was out there, and Montgomery Wards, nice restaurants, the best women's clothing store was there, Margaret's. It was as upscale as it got in Lubbock in the mid-sixties. So the clientele that mattered were all women. Men did their grocery shopping in the mid-sixties because their wives or girlfriends sent them to do it, you know. So it was very much—women customers dominated the customer service in that business at that time. So the fact our store we

had a young and handsome and very well-liked manager—you know, we thought he was an old guy, but he was probably in his late twenties, we were all sixteen and seventeen. So when we got this female, this woman assistant manager who was just great, she was terrific, we loved her to death. But our customers, you know, it was a constant source of discussion, you know, and they would drop little hints and little questions to us when we were carrying out their groceries about trying to determine if our manager, whom they adored had something going, you know?

SM:

See, in a grocery store, in a grocery store. So you imagine a **inaudible**[1:14:31].

AW:

That's what I mean. It was—

SM:

Speaking of Margarets, one of the things that always impressed me was the fact that Grover and Nancy were taken in real quickly by some very prestigious people. And he got to know Charlie Verner through the bank because you know I told you there was something where Tech had to pay a fine or something.

AW:

Was it Verner or Signer?

SM:

No—Charlie Verner.

AW:

Yeah, because Charlie Signer was at that bank, too.

SM:

And he came from Tahoka, and his wife, Myrna. Very flamboyant.

AW:

And Charlie's wife was Empress Signer.

SM:

Okay, this was Myrna. Tech got this thing called Partners with Peru, and that's where Lubbock and a town down there kind of became sister cities, and then I think they wanted to even maybe get some academic stuff going. And so Grover and Nancy and Charlie and Myrna flew down to a reception that was held—I want to say it was in the mayor's home, and Myrna was like Marilyn Monroe. I mean, she was flashy and all this. And she studied—because she wanted to make sure

she had good Spanish—and so they get in line and Grover said that Nancy goes through and Grover goes through and then the man standing there, and he had a German wife, so he turns and he said, “I’d like for you to meet my friend, Charlie Verner and his wife, Myrna.” And he said Myrna kind of prisses up and she said, “When in Lubbock, mi casa es su casa.” What she wanted to say, but she said, “Mi cama es su cama.” My bed is your bed. And he said that German lady went—because, you know, if like an ordinary woman had said it, but Myrna looked like she was absolutely just saying, see you in my bed. And so I had heard that story many times, and so when we married and one time Myrna and I were somewhere, and I said, “I think that story about you and—” and she said, “Stop. I don’t want to hear any reference to that. I’ve heard that too many times.” So anyway, those two were good friends. Margaret and J. T. Talkington, they were good friends. Louise and Harris Underwood, they were good friends, and so—and then Grover and Nancy. And I’ve often thought, isn’t that incredible, that quickly? But I think they wanted a change in the president—see, and it was Goodwin. Goodwin. And so I think they thought, Oh, here’s a young man—see, Grover was fifty, and he’s got enthusiasm—

AW:

Well, you know, and the people you just mentioned, they were in the thick of Lubbock society, but they weren’t in the good old boys club.

SM:

That’s right.

AW:

They had—they were independent achievers, the Underwoods and the Talkingtons.

SM:

Yeah, and so they all packed up and went to somewhere in Mexico. Grover had been there, and it’s one of those ruins where you climb up the stairs and you go out in the jungle, and so they all went on that trip, and they had a lot of stories about that. Louise told me one time, she said, “You know, Grover has done so much fieldwork that he just doesn’t realize that women have needs.” And of course, the girls needed to go to the bathroom, and they couldn’t find one, so I think they found some kind of little—I’m not going to call it a sacrificial thing, but they found some kind of little depression, and they said, “You watch out for me,” So they were watching while everybody was taking a turn, and some guard comes roaring up and kicks them all out. So they all remember this hilarious trip. And this is right when Grover was president, so I think that convinced them that he knew how to have fun, and that kind of set the stage. But—what was I going to tell you? About having fun—well, anyway, these couples remained friends of Grover’s throughout. I will always give them credit for being so nice to me because they could’ve said, “Oh, my Lord, Grover’s lost his mind,” but I mean, they just took me in, and I’ve always appreciated that.

AW:

I didn't know the Verners, but I've known the Talkingtons. And I never knew Harris, but I've known Louise well, and that doesn't surprise me about her at all. She's just the very kind who'd say, "Come on in."

SM:

Yeah. They all did. Nancy was the first to die, and then Harris died second, and then Talkington died third. It's been interesting to see how that group has just diminished. You're right. I think the fact that those people accepted him, he felt like, I don't care about the good old boys.

AW:

Well, they were the new guard in some ways, you know, because they had made their money on their own and had—really weren't beholden to anybody else. And so they could sort of forge their own identities and they didn't have to—they didn't rely on—you know, if you'd been selling real estate, you can't do that by yourself, you've got to be part of a network, you know.

SM:

You really do.

AW:

But when you're running a successful cotton company—I mean, a lot of other cotton companies in Lubbock, but they were all in some way—well, they were all competitors, so, you know, they were your acquaintances, but were not particularly your friends.

SM:

Yeah. When I met Harris, he said, "Where you from, Sally?" I said, "I'm from Tyler." "Oh, Tyler! Oh, Tyler. I grew up in Athens. Little town about thirty miles." He said, "You know, Sally, I'll never forget those Tyler roses." Nobody's in the room but just Harris and me, and he said, "When we were in high school, we would get our nice clothes together and put them in a bag and put them on a stick like a bum. Then we'd go down to the railroad and we knew which train was going into Tyler and we'd just act like one of those bums and we'd get on one of those trains, and then ride to Tyler and get off in front of the Blackstone Hotel." That was the hotel in Tyler. And he said, "We'd get off with our little bags and then go into the men's room and put on our tuxedos and we would just join the dance." And he said, "Those Tyler girls could dance, and they were just the prettiest things you ever saw." I said, "Are you making this up?" And he said, "No. Tyler had such a great society going on, and I guess the dances were so big nobody noticed here's these strangers. We got to know some of those pretty Tyler roses." So I always thought, What a funny story. And so one time, Louise was talking about Harris—he was a wonderful guy, he really was. I said, "Well, he told me a funny story." And she said, "About the Tyler rose?" I said, "Yeah." And she said, "He really did date a girl in Tyler." Isn't that hilarious?

AW:

That is.

SM:

Yeah, Tyler rose. Tyler is unusual because it's probably the only city that has two Heismans. And Earl Campbell came from the west side of the town, he was one of like fifteen kids.

AW:

You know, I don't think I remember that he was part of that.

SM:

Yeah.

AW:

And who was the other?

SM:

Manziel. He's a new one. But they were hardworking poor blacks, but real decent, on the west side of Tyler. And on the east side of Tyler, about thirty years ago, Mr. Manziel—they are of Syrian extract—and he built something called Tyler Sports Arena, and he had racing, boxing, everything in the world.

AW:

Yeah, Tyler always struck me in some ways as sort of an east Texas version of Lubbock, you know, in the sense that it was very—or it is very the essence of its region. And it's a sort of a mid-level city, it always had its own very strong identity, you know. And I think that's—I mean, it's not that you go to one and you say, "Oh, this feels like Lubbock," that's not what I mean, it's—Bakersfield, California is another one like that. They're all kind of the same size, but they have this identity that's very much their own.

SM:

Proud of it. But isn't that interesting? Manziel—he was born in Tyler, and when he was about fourteen, his family, probably to get away from all the other family members who went to Kerrville, and I think they went into real estate and stuff, but he—Tyler is his birth city, Manziel.

AW:

I didn't know that.

SM:

Yeah, lived there until he was either thirteen or fourteen.

AW:

He didn't have a very good weekend this weekend.

SM:

No. So here you've got Manziel—wealthy, wealthy, wealthy—then you got Earl Campbell, poor of the poor. Isn't that interesting? I just find that so interesting.

AW:

You know, and Frank Reaugh, the pastelist, has lived a long time in Tyler,¹ when he was young, before his family moved to Oak Cliff, which is—

SM:

I didn't know that.

AW:

Yeah, which is kind of where he—they had a little farm outside of Tyler. Now, he was late teen or early adult when they moved to Oak Cliff, which at that time was a town, you know, across the river and away from Dallas. So Tyler was a very important place for his art. It's where he went on the first cattle drives was with people that he met in Tyler.

SM:

That's interesting.

AW:

That's very interesting. They have a long—Tyler has a long cultural history as well as I think very interesting.

SM:

No, Manziel was really hoping to have it be the second one to have two—two in a row. But boy he isn't going to get a second Heisman. No. But—

AW:

I think it'd be hard. I think they'd be awfully prejudiced against you if you'd already had one, you know, even if you had a brilliant season.

SM:

Yeah, but now there's somebody that's had two Heismans. There's one person that's had two. They went over that on the games. Yeah. Anyway, I don't know much about it, but anyway, I think that's interesting that Tyler would have two, and that they'd be so different. So different.

¹ Wilkinson likely meant Terrell, Texas here.

But Grover kept friendships with these professional people all around the world, literally. Like I say, we'd go to California and he knew people in San Diego, LA—he didn't know anybody in Bakersfield, but we went through there. He'd write letters, he'd call, it was just amazing how he stayed on top of friendships. He was a big letter-writer. Big letter-writer.

AW:

Are those—do we have any of his letters?

SM:

Yeah. Because he had a rule that—

AW:

He made a copy?

SM:

Brenda always kept a copy.

AW:

Good. Good.

SM:

It'll still—Carol and I have like thirty-three boxes at our house, but I think most of that stuff is here. I don't know how well-cataloged it is, but—

AW:

Well, they're pretty good in university archives about getting things in—they're attentive to detail, but I've just not had the time to—

SM:

I still—I still am in hopes that somebody will say, "That's who I want to do my PhD on." Doesn't know a thing about Grover Murray, you know, just start digging around and find—clues are everywhere of kind of what made him the way he was, and then his role here at Tech.

AW:

Yeah, I think that's interesting. You know, one of the—and I think we talked about this in the first interview—I've had a chance now to do some oral history interviews with people in different aspects of the university. I interviewed most everyone involved in the Crosbyton Solar Power project, which was a real interesting event.

SM:

That could've put Tech on the map.

AW:

Yeah.

SM:

What did Haragan have to say?

AW:

Well, I haven't talked to Haragan.

SM:

Oh, he's the one that knows. He knows.

AW:

Yeah, I haven't—I've talked to everybody in the engineering, electrical engineering people that are still alive, including—but now I'm starting to interview the people in wind science, so they're—they're studies in contrast. Here was this comet in electrical engineering that started from nothing and zoomed and flamed out and here is this group in wind engineering who started much more laid back, but it's persisted for a long time and developed, and not that one is better or worse than the other, but when you look at the two, it gives you a real insight as to how organizations like theis work. And so I think that someone could take the materials, not just the interviews, but the materials of those two very different things—and then a presidency like Grover's versus a presidency like David Schmedley's, or a presidency like what Duane Nellis may have, you know, because he's in some ways more of a Grover kind of character. He's a scientist and he's well thought of and he's grounded in the scholarship of science and seems to have affable personal qualities. You know, so who knows—of course, he's brand new, we don't know yet what that's going to be, but those—looking at those contrasts will give you real insight. I'm hoping that someone will do that.

SM:

I think Haragan will tell you that a California company, or the state of California—I know California had something to do with it, that ended up getting all of that. But definitely put Don Haragan on your list.

AW:

Yeah, yeah.

SM:

Because he really knows a lot about that.

AW:

Yeah, and they were dealing with the federal government, too, at the time, who was biased to a contrary set of ideas about how solar should be developed. And here was this upstart university doing something different. Still, it was quite interesting.

SM:

Well now people ask me all the time, “Why did Grover travel so much?” And when Roy first said, “We want to bring this little college out and make it a university.” Grover felt that one of the best ways was for him to get on the National Science Board. And so—what made me think of this is that once something happened, then somebody from the board had to go look at it and the Very Large Array over there at Socorro, New Mexico, see, he even went to that installation and then the dedication, and he kept up with that. So that took him there. And then there was some kind of astronomical—not astronomical, but some kind of big optical thing in Peru—so they went to Machu Picchu, however you pronounce that, went to that. Antarctica, two or three times, because the National Science Foundation and the National Science Board had a lot going on there. He remembered one time they gave him a tour and he’d go into offices, and there was an office, and there was a man under the desk in fetal position because he simply couldn’t take it. After that, they started really started doing a lot of psychological testing to find out, What is all this period of darkness or all this being away from family? And so they had to pass a test.

AW:

Well, I can understand it. I spent a few days in Alaska in the summer at solstice, and I can’t—I could barely tolerate sunlight all day long, I know I couldn’t have tolerated night all day long either—it would’ve run me crazy. I don’t know how those people do that.

SM:

I don’t either. But his travels took him all over the world, and then his societies, like the AAPG, they’d have a field trip where you fly into maybe Calgary and then a plane would fly back to Newfoundland, and then they would study the geology that they had crossed.

AW:

So he had to—to do all that, he had to not only be tolerant of it, but he had to enjoy it.

SM:

He did.

AW:

You couldn't do that without really having a predisposition to it. I think you mentioned that earlier in the first interview, talking about him getting out and you know, how you met him.

SM:

Well, and—whoever writes his biography, he kept a journal every year, not a diary, but one of those journals, day by day, and so he might say—

AW:

Like appointments?

SM:

And then he might take—right—a whole page about, “I had a meeting with so-and-so and blah blah blah,” but anyway, those are there. I have seen those.

AW:

We have them here. Great, that'll be extraordinary information.

SM:

One of the first things he did when he got here is he hired a speechwriter. And I thought, Boy, that was good, because he was not a good speaker.

AW:

Really?

SM:

Yeah, he was not a good speaker.

AW:

Well that inaugural address that you brought is terrific.

SM:

He was a great writer. But there's a difference in being a great writer and being a great speaker.

AW:

So he was not good at the speaking, but he could write it.

SM:

In fact, Myrna Verner tried to help him out. I'm aware of that. But I don't know if he told me this, or if it's hidden in one of those books—one of the first things he did was put on his boots

and get his pick, and he tried to walk over every acre of this campus, which was at the time, two hundred and—I'm going to say maybe forty—two hundred and forty—I'm sorry, twelve hundred. What is it now, twelve hundred?

AW:

You know, I don't remember the latest set of numbers.

SM:

Well, it's a huge—it's one of the biggest ones. Anyway, he wanted to walk all over this campus and get a feel for the boundaries, the vegetation, the playas—who—what president would do that?

AW:

Right.

SM:

Put on boots and walk—he said, “I wanted to walk over every acre.” I want to say it may have been two thousand acres. I know it's been reduced some. But anyway, that's in the history that that's one of the first things he did. He said, “I want to know the lay of the land.” I think that's why, when they tried to put Indiana through, you know, he fought that because he said, “I am the president, I'm responsible for not only the education, but the property.” And he just did not want to give up that property. And of course, a lot of the board members, all the board members turned against him, and all of them voted him down. And he's the one who said, “Well, you just can say that Grover Murray goes on record, that says that we will herefore preserve the airspace above Indiana.” And of course, in California, they can build over. And he said, “There will come a time when this university will need the airspace to build some of those buildings.” But I'm sure that was a contentious time with the board. And then Mrs. Bessler told me, I was telling her about that one time—she another one that ought to be interviewed, Ms. Bessler, because she knows all about that med school stuff, and she said, “I'll tell you one thing about your husband—he finally was glad that Indiana came through there when that medical complex grew.” And I said, “Yeah, I bet he was.”

AW:

Yeah, well, that was a big argument at one point for having it open, was to be able to get there.

SM:

But he didn't want to give up the acreage. Isn't that funny? I can't remember that woman's name and I can't remember the number of acres.

AW:

It's all right, we can look up the acres—in fact, we can look both of them up, that's not a problem.

SM:

But anyway, of all those stories I've heard about Grover, she's involved in a lot of them. But you can see why. No, Grover's last little card said, "Grover Murray, President Emeritus, Texas Tech"—University, the Health Sciences Center," and I think down here, I think he says, "Editor, Writer, and Geologist." And I looked at that and thought, isn't that interesting. He'd love being an editor. And he was an editor for many of the publications that he subscribed to. The paleontology group, the sedimentology group, the oil-finding group, he was editor. Boy, he knew—he knew grammar so well. And he loved to write, not really stories, but he liked to write biographical stuff about people and—I don't know, he just seemed to love to write. I told you what he'd always say when people said, "You must write about your experiences at Tech," and he always said, "There are too many people still alive." Because Grover would have written the truth, as he saw it. But isn't that funny that on his last card, that he put all of that?

AW:

It is interesting.

SM:

Okay. I want you to do another CD for me, and then I'll listen to it, and then I'll look at my list. I left it home, and see what I didn't put in it.

AW:

And then we'll get together next time.

SM:

Well, there's not that much, but it seems like there were some other little specific things. But I wanted you to know about his family.

AW:

No, that's good.

SM:

So you know about his family. He was definitely a product of that family. He was a product of North Carolina.

AW:

Oh, yeah, I think that willingness and interest in keeping in touch with people, not just relatives, but all of those people he met around the world were—that's part of that culture.

SM:

And then, as a little boy coming home from school and playing in the pond and kids would catch little turtles and things and he would pick up pretty rocks, put them in his pocket and then try to find some way to find out what they were. So he really liked geology all along, but I think he let his brother kind of steer him toward engineering, but geology was his core. He absolutely loved geology. He liked oil-finding, but then he also liked the academic side of it. The last things he did, oh my Lord, I sent dozens of maps to the man he was working with at Penn State. He kept looking at things and trying to see why are these lineations—and he even thought that the playas kind of showed some of those lineations, which meant the playas may be formed when groundwater kind of followed these patterns, so he had a curious mind, very curious, and a scientist's mind.

AW:

Cool. That's exactly right. All right, we'll put a stop to it today, and we'll head back over and I'll get that copy for you, and then I'll get this—I won't be able to get this done this morning, but I'll get you a CD here pretty quickly.

SM:

Oh, no, I mean, it can be a week or two.

AW:

Okay, well I'll just let you—I can get it done sometime today, but—all right, thanks.

End of interview.