

**Oral History Interview of
Christine Martinez**

**Interviewed by: Zachary Hernandez
October 16, 2020
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:
*Hispanic Lubbock Interview Series***

© Southwest Collection/
Special Collections Library



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

**Southwest Collection/
Special Collections Library**

15th and Detroit | 806.742.3749 | <http://swco.ttu.edu>

Copyright and Usage Information:

An oral history release form was signed by Christine Martinez on September 18, 2020. This transfers all rights of this interview to the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University.

This oral history transcript is protected by U.S. copyright law. By viewing this document, the researcher agrees to abide by the fair use standards of U.S. Copyright Law (1976) and its amendments. This interview may be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes only. Any reproduction or transmission of this protected item beyond fair use requires the written and explicit permission of the Southwest Collection. Please contact Southwest Collection Reference staff for further information.

Preferred Citation for this Document:

Martinez, Christine Oral History Interview, October 16, 2020. Interview by Zachary Hernandez, Online Transcription, Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library. URL of PDF, date accessed.

The Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library houses over 6,300 oral history interviews dating back to the late 1940s. The historians who conduct these interviews seek to uncover the personal narratives of individuals living on the South Plains and beyond. These interviews should be considered a primary source document that does not implicate the final verified narrative of any event. These are recollections dependent upon an individual's memory and experiences. The views expressed in these interviews are those only of the people speaking and do not reflect the views of the Southwest Collection or Texas Tech University.

The transcribers and editors of this document strove to create an accurate and faithful transcription of this oral history interview as possible. However, this document may still contain mistakes. Spellings of proper nouns and places were researched thoroughly, but readers may still find inaccuracies, inaudible passages, homophones, and possible malapropisms. Any words followed by "[?]" notates our staff's best faith efforts. We encourage researchers to compare the transcript to the original recording if there are any questions. Please contact the SWC/SCL Reference department for access information. Any corrections or further clarifications may be sent to the A/V Unit Manager.

Technical Processing Information:

The Audio/Visual Department of the Southwest Collection curates the ever-growing oral history collection. Abbreviated abstracts of interviews can be found on our website, and we are continually transcribing and adding information for each interview. Audio recordings of these interviews can be listened to in the Reading Room of the Southwest Collection. Please contact our Reference Staff for policies and procedures. Family members may request digitized copies directly from Reference Staff. Consult the Southwest Collection website for more information.

<http://swco.ttu.edu/Reference/policies.php>

Recording Notes:

Original Format: Born Digital Audio

Digitization Details: N/A

Audio Metadata: 44.1kHz/ 16bit WAV file

Further Access Restrictions: N/A

Related Interviews: Martinez was interviewed by Hernandez five times in September and October 2020. This is the final interview in this series.

Transcription Notes:

Interviewer: Zachary Hernandez

Audio Editor: N/A

Transcription: Bill Corrigan

Editor(s): Kayci Rush

Final Editor: Zachary Hernandez

Interview Series Background:

The Hispanic Oral History Project documents the diverse perspectives of the Hispanic people of Lubbock and the South Plains. These interviews and accompanying manuscript materials cover a myriad of topics including; early Lubbock, discrimination, politics, education, music, art, cultural celebrations, the May 11th 1970 tornado, commerce, and sport.

Transcript Overview:

This interview features Christine Martinez as she discusses the organizations she is a part of and her community activism. In this interview, Martinez describes her political background and how she got involved with being a community activist. She then counts all the organizations she is a part of and what she does in those organizations. Martinez closes the interview by explaining her friendship with Linda DeLeon and all the things DeLeon has done for the Lubbock community.

Length of Interview: 01:22:21

Subject	Transcript Page	Time Stamp
Introduction and political background	05	00:00:00
Supporting other candidates; running for office	08	00:11:28
Organizations she is a part of	10	00:19:04
Kiwanis; Hispanic organizations	14	00:34:22
Willie Velasquez Institute; boards	18	00:47:16
Involvement with organizations	21	00:57:01
People that influenced her	22	01:03:12
Advocating for Linda DeLeon	25	01:13:08

Keywords

Politics, Activism, Lubbock

Christine Martinez (CM):

So—

Zachary Hernandez (ZH):

Hold on, let me—

CM:

Okay.

ZH:

Okay, I have to do—

CM:

Yes, I forgot that you—

ZH:

This is Zachary Hernandez with the Southwest Collection, today is October 16, 2020, I'm here with Christine Martinez in Lubbock, Texas. We're going to begin today by talking about her—

CM:

Political—

ZH:

Run for public office and that experience, what led up to that hopefully, but please, if you don't mind sharing.

CM:

So, and by the way it's also Christine Martinez-Garcia. But it's okay. So, I had—I've always been involved politically. I think I told you about my first—my parents were always active when it came to voting, so as soon as I got registered, as I mentioned previously, I went and voted. So, needless to say, I've always been active. I thought I was—I was still young and naïve, and I had a friend named Irma Guerrero, and she was the Democratic chair, and she talked me into running for an office. And I really had absolutely no experience other than maybe holding up a sign for—or let me go back a little bit. When I was in college and I was working at—I knew Delwin Jones, and through the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. And so I saw his work and everything, and he was hiring someone. Of course, Delwin was a Republican, and he was running for state representative, district eighty three, and he wanted somebody to put up signs and hand out stuff and everything. So that's what we did, or I did. I got involved with his campaign and whatnot. And so that kind of interested my political career. So one day, I had been asked by Irma to consider running for office. And at that time I really didn't have a political party that I worked

with because as a kid, the other thing is that my parents were always doing politics. They were always supporting people like Maggie Trejo, Lorenzo Sedeño Sr., even the guy that was the— what's his name, he was in charge of Texas Tech for a little bit. Is it awful that I've forgotten his name? He was the—

ZH:

Like—

CM:

The chancellor. Not Montford.

ZH:

Duncan?

CM:

Not Duncan. The other guy.

ZH:

All these names have been on my mind. We'll think about it later.

CM:

Anyways, so I remember as a little girl, one day we had gone door to door. And see, this is the kind of stuff my parents would expose us to, and they said it was important. So there we are, going door to door, and I'm handing out door knockers or flyers, and we get to this one house, and I remember seeing this lady, and she opened the door and I told her—was handing her the stuff. And in the corner I saw this little chihuahua, and that little sucker came running towards the door. I threw the flyer at her and I took off running. Well there was lip on her sidewalk, and I fell, and I remember all of those flyers all over the place. And it was that guy who was the chancellor of Texas Tech. What the heck is his name? Not—oh my god. Not Combest. Anyways, and I remember I was like, "I hate—" whatever his name is. And so, that was my early politics. But we were always doing that kind of stuff. Handing out stuff, my parents were big on voter registration and everything. So fast forward like I said, and I thought, Man, I can do this. I'll run. I didn't really see myself—I wasn't sure, because I voted for Democrats, I voted for Republicans, you know. So, and I was still very naïve, but I participated. And I remember doing the paperwork. She didn't explain anything to me, and a friend of mine named Michael Dimas Emers [?] [00:04:34] was in elementary, and he said, "I'll be your treasurer." So he was going to be the treasurer and whatnot. And it didn't turn out, I got like sixteen thousand something votes, but I didn't win. And I was running against this lady, I was running for county treasurer, which I didn't know anything about. So I really didn't care, I didn't apply myself like I could have. But I did it. So it was my first experience, and it was a partisan experience. So the next time, I ran

for—but I ran for school board. And I remember that experience, again, I didn't know anything, I didn't know about paperwork, I was learning as I was going. And I was learning because I would talk to somebody and they'd say, "Well you need to do this," after the fact. Anyways, it was very difficult, bottom line. And so, I remember standing at the polls, which we didn't know a bunch of stuff, you know. And it was just a crappy experience. [Doorbell rings] I'm so sorry.

[Pause in recording]

ZH:

Okay.

CM:

It was difficult because I had no training, nobody helped me. I was on my own. And then I realized this kind of stuff requires some training. So I started to get involved with like the Willie Velasquez Institute, and just learning more about it. I didn't win, but I did good. It's just, I didn't win. I didn't have enough votes, or like I didn't have the knowledge. Plus, I remember one of the persons that ran against me was Steve Massengale, who's now a city councilman. He's very, very political, very, very Republican, very, very white. And I don't care if you put that, because that's how he is. He's just conservative. And I remember him, he just had the upper hand all the time in the sense he had experience, he had support, he had—even though it was non-partisan, he just had this ego, and he was always trying to make me look bad because I didn't have all the experience and knowledge that he did. Anyways, so I remember he was first on the ballot, and I can't remember if I was second or third, but I remember one of the—I did a couple of public forums, and I got a lot of support from the people that were there, but the questions had already been given to him I remember, because he was involved with the chambers, so one of those public forums he had already been given the questions. But I remember the thing that stands out to me the most is email was starting to rev up at the time, or internet, and I remember somebody posting a comment about—because they didn't have comprehensive sex education, and I felt like that was needed in the school because at the time we were dealing with a lot of teen pregnancies. And somebody made a comment about my daughter, and it pissed me off. And then—because she was a little girl, and I remember one of those forums, it was at the Cactus Theater, and she and all her friends, they were little girls, they all came to support me. And they were all backgrounds—white, black, Asian, Indian, and all these little girls came to support me. And so that was probably the best part of it. But I was still very young and naïve, and lacked the knowledge. And I didn't win. What I realized, again, was that you have to have training. So, at the moment I'm working with a group from Texas, where I just did a training with another group, NALEO, National Association of Latino Elected Officials, and they did a training for us. And that was great insight, but the next one that I'm doing will be with another couple of—it's a group that they were doing training in Austin. And you literally had to go to the capitol to do all these things, but with Covid and whatnot, we're going to do it—we're taking advantage of

virtual. And so we'll do it like all day long, and it's going to tell you—this is the kind of forms you need to do, this is what you need to do, this is that. They're going to walk you through it. I mean since then I've learned, but I was a young, young woman, and I've learned a lot. And just the other day I had—I got an email, and it was kind of cool to see that, but they were like, “You know when I asked you about if you were interested in being mayor?” and I just laughed, I did an “LOL” emoji. And she goes, “We were going to write you in, but don't be surprised if your name gets written in, because there's a lot of support for you.” And I'm like, “Why are you supporting me?” And she says, “Would you ever consider running?” And I said, “Not now, but I'm preparing.” I want to make sure that—like I think I mentioned to you, I strive to build a little bit of wealth. So I'm debt free now. I want it when I run for office, I don't want to have to work. I want to be able to do what I'm doing and not have to work, so that I can totally commit myself to that position. Plus, you know you have to have that financial security, and so I want to build my wealth a little bit more, so that I'm ready. And I'm doing everything in steps, so that by the time I run for office, that's going to be my focus. And so, I told her that, not yet, but and plus, when you build your wealth and you also have to think about your health. And even though I'm still young, gained some weight, but I decided I've got to also make sure that my health is up to par so that when it's time, I will be completely, completely ready. So it is something that I aspire to do, and that I will be training and preparing, because honestly there's politics are so—especially nowadays it's so divisive and so—you know. And I think that mentally and physically and financially you have to have everything in place. And so, plus like I said, that learning that nobody—I didn't have. People just do things, or like, “Yeah, yeah, run for office.” But you learn so much, and you learn how the type of support that you're going to get. Since then like I said I've also supported other candidates that are running for office, and helped them in one regard or the other. But what concerns me is how often these parties are—Latinos are their political piñata. And that really makes me mad, is we don't see them until the next term. So a few months before the next term. And that concerns me, because—and I think we're becoming more sophisticated in our voting. Obviously we're not just Democrats, I see more Republican Hispanics. And then there's people like me, that I just don't like party systems, and so—now I think I'm an independent. And I'm going to vote for people based on their qualifications. If one is a Democrat and one is a Republican, and I'm impressed with what they're doing and what they believe in and if they're close to my own values, then I think it's important for me to decide like that, and so even if run again, and if I do partisan, it will be as an independent. So, it might not be popular with some groups, but I just—like I said, I was listening to Gilbert Flores in an interview—well he didn't do an interview but he was in a public forum, and he was talking about how like county the commissioners, there's five county commissioners I believe is what he said. Four of them—or there's six. Five of them are Republican, and he's the only Democrat, or something like that, it was either four, five, five, you know, he's the single Democrat. So he said how can really—he goes, “I'm not the one that's raising your taxes, they are. I'm one vote, and I guarantee you I'm not the person doing it, so when you say ‘they,’ or—”and I thought, Man, that's a really good point. But in my future, I do see, I'm either going to run for city council, or for county

commissioner. Because they get paid. And I think that I have a lot of the skill set that would be very useful. Plus, I believe that I've built the trust with the community, because of my advocacy work and whatnot. I think that's very significant. And I take a lot of pride in that, because like I told you, I think you as an individual, you've got to have that stability and everything. And because then I don't need anything from anybody. I don't need to know that by being on city council or county commissioner that I'm going to have a financial benefit from it, like some people that have served. I want the public to know that when that's time, I did it because I'm committed to their quality of life, and the future. Right now, it's this—Lubbock continues to become a very conservative community. You've seen some of the topics. And I don't think that you should force politics like that. But then right now it's so divided, and I hate that too. I think I'm going to try to—if I ever become an elected official, I want to be that objective voice for the community. And through the newspaper, being a journalist, I believe that I have had some great training on how to be objective. Because there's oftentimes that I want to include in my publication stuff, but I don't. What I do though is I make it a point to showcase organizations and what they're doing. Unidos US, which used to be National Council of La Raza, NALEO, LULCA, the US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, CHCI, all these different organizations, I could go on and on. But I just want to make sure that they're being heard, because ultimately that's why we have the publication. So, what we've done also through the publication is I make it a point to put election dates, important dates, save the dates, all that type of information. We don't endorse candidates, and I've been told, "Well that's wrong that you don't—" why should we do that? I'm not going to give them a free endorsement. They want their votes for free, they want everything for free, but they don't invest by reaching out to our public. You've got advertising dollars, reach out to our community. The ones that do, I think that says, I value you. The ones that don't, I don't give a crap about you. I want your vote, but I don't care what you care about. And so that I think is very important also, and—but like I said, we're not for sale. Hispanics are not for sale, and too often I told you what Jody Arrington said, the congressman, when I was at that Kiwanis meeting and asked him, "Why don't you connect with the Hispanic community?" And his response, "Y'all don't vote—Hispanics don't vote." And I was like, "Yeah, I won't be voting for you." And it really concerns me that that's the mentality, when right now in this presidential election Hispanics will be the swing vote. And even though we see the diversity, and I hope that they realize, both parties, because only under Bush have you seen such a commitment from Hispanics for a candidate. And right now it's so divided. So that's been my political life, and like I said it's been very interesting I think. And I know a friend of mine who ran for a judge position, I supported him and he—I remember him putting my name on there, but then I never heard from him. Or, you know what I'm saying? When you see, even when Hispanics don't make the effort, you don't value—I have a hundred thousand readers. Not only does my publication, it's everywhere. But we now have our digital presence that's just as significant. And right now I have Joe Biden—we started doing online advertising. I got Joe Biden to buy ads from our digital presence. And I think that speaks volumes. I did have to go in there and put "advertisement," because I had somebody say, "So are you endorsing—" no, we

don't do endorsements. But I think it's just important to share that, because I do aspire to be in public office. But I think that you have to be—you have to have life experiences, you have to be financially fit, and health-wise, everything. Because when you take it on, I worked at city hall. I know what the politics are. I know the stress that is involved. I know the public attacks. But I can handle that now. Then, I was naïve and young, and very—I had a very thin skin, and that's not the case anymore. So anyways, that's my politics.

ZH:

I think there's a lot, and I'm glad you said that running for office, and thinking about Lubbock, requires life experience, but other sort of community movement. Can we talk about your experience—and you brought up this several times, and I've always been meaning to ask you. The Kiwanis Club. Like what institutions, clubs, social gatherings you've been a part of? I know you've talked about being at least trying out Rotary, the Hispanic Chamber of—

CM:

The Lion's Club.

ZH:

Lion's Club—

CM:

Oh my god.

ZH:

Can you talk about each one of these institutions and drew you to them, what pulled out of them—

CM:

Yes.

ZH:

Because I think those different organizations have a lot of influence, let's just put it like that.

CM:

On who I am and what I believe in, definitely.

ZH:

And then also within the city, right? So can you flesh that out a little bit for us?

CM:

Sure. I've been involved in a lot of organizations, but one of the very first was LULAC, League of United Latin American Citizens. And I was a member for a very long time. I mean since I was seventeen years old, with LULAC. And I was introduced about—LULAC, from—I worked for Ernest Barton. Ernest F. Barton, who was the publisher of the West Texas Hispanic News. And I remember Robert Lugo, who—they were some of the early members. And then Jaime Garcia, he was also—he's a local accountant, and a big influence. But they taught me, or introduced me, to LULAC. And I loved what it stood for. It was civil rights, it's a civil rights organization now that has so many additional accolades. Voting, jobs, they have the sir [?] [00:21:02] jobs. Obviously education, they do scholarships, they're just involved in so many areas. So, there was no doubt I was going to be involved in LULAC. And through that I also started the young adults, the youth council, which was Council 007. And I think I told you we had about a hundred members. And what was so great about it is the kids—and I think you've got to start young, high school and college. Anyways, so LULAC played such a significant role, but as I was growing and learning, I knew that I had to get involved in other stuff. So I was involved with the Hispanic Association of Women, and it was started by Tavita Dorow, Esperanza Solis, and I can't think of the other. They were sitting at a table and they were talking about Hispanic Association of Women. Or getting it—they needed a group for women. And so it kind of became that thing for the women. And through that, Maria Luisa Mercado, she did their bylaws. Well she also did the bylaws for Fiestas del Llano, Inc. Penny Morin was one of the presidents, and so I got involved with Fiestas del Llano Incorporated, because I also became Miss Fiestas del Llano. So I was involved with that. But then, I started my family, and this is the thing is timing is everything, and a lot of times I was telling young people, "Be sure that you have time to be involved, because if you don't then unfortunately you're not going to be able to really give of yourself." And I started college—I mean I was in college, and then after that I had gotten—Frank and I got together, and of course Amaris. So life changed, and my priorities changed along with that. [Phone rings]

[Pause in recording]

CM:

But timing is definitely everything. It just—life changes, so then you change with it. Your interests change. I started taking Amaris—while I was going to college—I started taking Amaris to the YWCA. And so I supported what they believe in, because—plus they were helping me. I mean I worked my college classes around Mother's day out. So I was very much a non-traditional student. But during my earlier college years I had gotten involved with the Hispanic Student Society, with all these different organizations. I was going to be part of Kappa Delta Chi, but then I realized it wasn't for me. But I still supported that they existed. So, I got involved with student groups and whatnot, but like I said, eventually I came back and—well the YWCA, because now I was a mother. And so I started, I was on the policy council for the YWCA, I was the representative. They had started a head start program, and I eventually went into that. And

then fast forward just a little bit, Amaris got involved with Girl Scouts. So then my life became connected with Girl Scouts, even though I had been a Girl Scout myself. I was a brownie and a junior Girl Scout member. So Girl Scouts was always something important for me. But like I said, I needed something that was a connection to Amaris. So everything she did, I would support. Then we got involved in PTA. And I am a big supporter of PTA. PTA is like everything, because what I found is that as she got older, there were fewer parents. But I also discovered, because everything seems to be systematic in how it works, but I saw all the white parents involved with the YW—I mean with the head—I'm sorry, with Girl Scouts. I mean, I'm sorry.

ZH:
PTA?

CM:

PTA. And there was a reason. They were involved because children whose parents are involved do perform better. But they also have access to counselors, to teachers, they're in the know. And I saw them working like that and I thought, Well geez, I better do this, because my daughter—you know. But I had also joined, when I worked at city hall I got more involved with Susan G. Komen. Eventually I got asked to be on their board because of Debra Forte. She was our assistant city manager, and she just always treated me really good. She was a breast cancer survivor, so she got me involved and she said—she knew that they needed diversity. So she got me involved, and I served on the board again. Nobody ever teaches you how to be on boards or anything like that. But I did it, and then stepped off of that. Later on I was in the YWCA board. I was getting involved in so many different things. I mean there's tons of them that I'm not even mentioning. But one of the patterns that I saw with all of them is the lack of diversity, the lack of cultural competency, the lack of—I mean they just didn't know what the Hispanic community was about, and they didn't have any people on there. So that was another lesson for me was I needed to learn how to serve on boards. So I remember attending some workshops where I started learning, okay, about Roberts's Rule, about agendas and minutes and all the necessities of serving on a board. And that was very, very critical. And it's something that today, like I mean just the other day I'm a member of the board of directors of the National Association of Hispanic Publications. This is on a national level. And I find myself now teaching them about articles of—right now we've been reviewing articles of incorporations and bylaws, and I told them I'd like to be on the ethics committee, because now my skills are needed. And it's constant learning, but it's something that I feel especially Hispanics, they need all that, so that when they get on boards, or they're running for office, they've had that training, and so that's something that I'm working on. But let me go back just a little bit to—and I had already served on a bunch of different boards. Fiestas del Llano, [inaudible] [00:28:08], LULAC, on and on. The Hispanic Chamber and everything, but now I started thinking, Well I need to connect business-wise. I need to connect with the white businesses. I need to serve on more of those boards. And so definitely one of them was the Rotary. I was very naïve to all of that. Rotary, it turns out that it's all white men. It was

all white men. But there was a lady named Alice, Dr. Alice White. Good friend. Do you know her?

ZH:

No, I do not.

CM:

Well Alice, she's like, "You need to join Rotary." And again, very naively, I participated. This is very expensive. And financially, I wasn't in the best place. I had just started my newspaper, and there was just so many little hoops. I didn't know it, they didn't give me orientation, and that's the other thing I think is necessary when you serve on a board. Request an orientation. So you can get to know the organization and the way that it functions. But also like I said, do all that self-learning on how to serve effectively on a board. Well I had also done—the volunteer center had done a training for Hispanics so we could serve on more boards. Well that phased out, obviously. But Eric Strong, he was very significant. Sharon Bass, who is now the executive director, at the time, Louise Cummings was the executive director. But that was so helpful, but it still wasn't enough training, because you needed to actually get on boards and whatnot.

Anyways, so back to Rotary. What I discovered about it is that it was a white man's world. And every day, every Wednesday we would meet and we would have lunch, and then a speaker, and be behind the scenes they were also having boards and committees. I was just a token, man. I didn't really know, I was just there. I brought the age average down, I brought the male to female ratio—you know I improved a lot of things that they needed to be improving on. But it was also such a great learning experience, but like I said, when we'd go on Wednesdays, I remember this one man telling me, he'd always say, "Oh—" because all these things that I was doing, like projects and stuff. "What pot are you stirring today? What this are you doing that? What that?" He always had a negative comment. And one day, man I said, "You know what?" I let him have it. And I remember after that he was cool. I had to kind of slap him around, and just make comments, or respond. I think I was starting already to get frustrated with that. But I think that I gained the respect of a lot of them, but the problem was financially, you know, you had to pay for your membership and your meals, and I was not in a position to do that. I had to save my money. And again, being naïve, I didn't know that you could also write off your memberships. So, it was definitely a life lesson in that regard. Anyways, I think I told you about how my cousin was part of Lion's Club, and how they had done a survey. Did I tell you about that? Well so the Lion's Club had done a survey with Texas Tech. And I remember being called, and they asked me questions and then I remember telling them, "I've never been asked to be a member." My cousin, he's the vice president.

ZH:

I remember, yeah.

CM:

Yeah. And so when they found out—then my cousin was like, “Oh, I feel like an idiot.” Anyway, so I joined, and once again. This was more of a conservative white men’s organization, Lion’s Club. And it was a turnoff for me, because you would volunteer to do stuff and it was like you weren’t even talking or you didn’t exist. And I don’t know if it was gender related or racial related or whatever. But it was very—they had a very strong group of white men, and like I said, my cousin was an officer, but he acts white. So, it was just this weird environment, and it just wasn’t for me. I stopped going to the meetings, and then he said, “Well why—” you know. And I said, “Yeah, I just didn’t connect with it. It just wasn’t for me.” Well I’m taking a little break, and decided I needed to get involved again. So I had a gentleman, Rufus Martinez, that worked for me. And one day, I had started working Los Hermanos Familia, and developing that concept. And then I wrote the 501c3 for Los Hermanos Familia. I did the articles of incorporation, I did the bylaws. So, you learn. You get to see all of what you’re doing. And so I started like that. And then, of course we became a 501c3. And we’re doing great things, and we’re holding our meetings, and we were growing in involvement, and financially, so I knew that I also had to grow the organization to become a 501c3 so we could benefit from grants and everything, and do things properly. Because that was the other thing that I learnt from being involved with those other groups. So I joined Kiwanis after I had spoken, or I had spoken and they gave us a check. I was doing better financially with Latino Lubbock, and I thought it was—I work so much, and I wasn’t getting out and being around people enough. And I decided, You know what? I’ll get involved, go every Thursday, have lunch, see people, and then come back to work. And it worked out really good at the time.

ZH:

Can you—because I think everybody sort of knows—or a lot of people know what Rotary and Kiwanis Club—I don’t personally know what Kiwanis is. I’ve never heard of that, so—

CM:

Kiwanis is—oh yeah.

ZH:

Can you maybe give a little def—

CM:

Kiwanis is just like Rotary, it’s a civic group.

ZH:

Okay.

CM:

Originally when they started I think they had—it was the chest, the Lubbock Treasure Chest or something like that. But a lot of the Anglo good old boy white men were involved in it. And it's a nonpartisan, nonsectarian organization on the—you know—for the general image. And I think polio was they were trying to eradicate. They raise money to eradicate polio. But they focus on children's programs. And so I started getting involved with them, and the average age before me was probably like seventy, seventy-two, so all white men. But I joined, and in the group was also a young woman named Diana Ausencio [?] [00:35:29] who was my intern, incidentally, when she was in college. And Diana had joined through TxDOT. So, we hit it off of course, I mean we already knew each other. So we hung out and everything. And then there was—we started recruiting women. I recruited like for example the lady that's in charge of Lubbock Impact, I recruited her. I just started recruiting people. One, I wanted to see more diversity, of not just gender, but racially. So I started recruiting. And everybody didn't want to pay, because you have to pay so much for your lunch and your membership, and that's the thing that I see with a lot of groups like that, is that they tend to—it's still driven by the men, white men, for the most part. And financially—and I see that they're trying to make a civic impact, or imprint, and so money is necessary. But I think a lot of Latinos, especially I get calls all the time, "Oh, we want to get involved, we want to get involved," and I always tell them, "Get involved with Los Hermanos Familia." But they don't know enough about us, and so they want to join the Hispanic Chamber or the—I've tried to encourage them to be part of the Lubbock Chamber, but the Lubbock Chamber, I've had a bad experience, which remind me to tell you about that. But for me it wasn't—what I found is that you give, you give, you give. You don't get anything in return. And now as an adult I've served on the Literacy Lubbock board, I've served on different boards. But I got to a point in my life a couple years ago where I decided, I'm going to be selective. I am not just going to join everything just to put my name on it. Because there's groups that don't give a crap, and honestly they don't give a shit about Hispanics. They need tokens. And I hate to say that, that even in this time, 2020, that's still an issue. But they love to apply for the grants and everything that it's going to benefit their organizations, and try to show that they're so concerned about diversity and whatnot. But I just don't see it. To me it's just not prevalent, it's not happening like it should be happening. But nonetheless I've become so selective about what I want to be involved with. And Los Hermanos Familia for me has been great, because we're growing it, we try to get people involved but what I find is the young people that are growing their families and their careers, they don't have time for it. The older folks that have already been in their jobs, they have very limited time, but they'll do something. And then the older ones, they want to get involved, but it's a little bit slower for them as far as—you know. And then now they want to rest. So there's never quite the right time. But you got to get involved and give what you get. Or give so that you can get more for the community that you're serving, or that you're getting more for yourself I guess, because trying to build up. But we've had a lot of young people, and I've tried to mentor a lot of them, and teach them. You've got to have Robert's Rule, you've got to have an agenda, you've got to have this, you've got to have that. I've worked with

so many student organizations, especially the Hispanic student organizations, to help them so that they realize—follow this protocol, because it is the way of the world. It is what everybody's doing, and it will benefit you in the future. And you know right now we started a Lubbock chapter of TAMACC, Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce. We used to have in Lubbock the Lubbock Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, which I have a lot of their paperwork. But unfortunately that ended, they phased it out and they joined the Lubbock Chamber, and they created a Hispanic division. Well, unfortunately, that didn't work out, and so now they claim that they care about Hispanics, but I just don't see it. There's no programs, they still lack diversity. They're trying, I give them that credit, but I just don't feel like they're aggressively connecting with the Hispanic community, business community at that. But I've served on so many different groups. So many. And it all comes down to what I told you—you've got to go in, you've got to learn the culture, you've got to learn the process, you've got to know how meetings function. And I think that's such an important lesson. And that's another program that I'm working with with another group. But I've started chapters like different groups and whatnot. And now I'm getting involved, I'm still a member of a lot of like national organizations. National Association of Hispanic Publications, National Association of Hispanic Journalists, the US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Unidos, all these different things, because it's kind of like part of my trade. So they're trade associations. The other day I spoke with the Lubbock chapter—or the Lubbock Businesswomen's Network, Lubbock chapter, and I ended up becoming a member. And the reason is like I told you about Kiwanis—I loved it, but they just did not see the value of my contributions. I served on their board, I did a lot. I got them a website, I designed it, built it, did everything for it. They had no content at all, and I tried to help them with things that I knew. But no matter what, to me I think they just saw me as another Hispanic member. And if you can't value my contributions and everything, I realize I don't want to be a part of this. Plus, they were so political. For being a nonpartisan, nonsectarian organization in 2020, they were still so political. They would bring in candidates for office, that's how the Jody Arrington, and all these people, and I thought, Oh my god, why are we just pushing this conservative movement? How does this have anything to do with what we're doing as far as serving the community? Anyways, I decided I didn't want to be a part of it, and like they still have me as a member, but I told them I was going to take a sabbatical. Meanwhile, I rejoined LULAC, where I was actually going to the meetings and stuff, but I decided that wasn't for me. The problem with that organization, is now it's a gender—I mean a generation gap. Most of the members are old or older, and they don't want to do things, or they do, it's very limited, or it's very slow. And I decided, Eh. And they don't follow protocol, they don't follow—and I didn't want to revert back to being a part of an organization that doesn't have bylaws and—or they have them, they just don't always follow them. So, got out of that, and then I rejoined—or my membership with the Hispanic Association of Women. So I'm currently involved in that, and it's been good, but sometimes women are—depends on who's the leader. We have an excellent president named Elma Moreno right now, that she's fair with people, and she will fuse out like you know how women tend to talk about a person, or like they'll—if they're intimidated by them

they want to leave them out. But I joined that organization, and it's been pretty good. Part of it is because one of my mentors, Rosa Llanas, is a member. She's also one of my best friends. And even though she's older, I think her wisdom has been good for me in that sense. And she also is the kind of person that if she hears rumors or gossip, she's going to shut them down. And I think that's important for women to do so they can be taken seriously. So, but like I said, I joined the Texas Businesswomen's Network, and that's been great so far. Because it's more like building my business and not building up an organization only. But it's more social. But nonetheless, I've got to take those opportunities, because during through the Covid process I've realized that we've got to build ourselves up, develop our skills, and so I've been really, really utilizing the time to do all of that. As I mentioned, I've done webinars on various topics, I've joined these groups and attended conferences virtually, which I love. That's been like one of the best things I could ever hope for. And it's just been a very good experience, but getting involved is something that I take a lot of pride in. I also joined Raiders Rojos, which it's an interesting group. They have—and this is the other part of nonprofits. When you get stuck on certain members, and even with my board I told them, "I think we're going to have to change things up. You've got to have diversity." I think even Hispanic organizations need diversity, but they also need to have skills and they also need to not have the same president for fifty years. You know what I mean? They phase out the—and I think it's healthy, but it's very difficult with Hispanic organizations, because the mentality is once you get somebody in there, they're the—what is that? Rule the roost or something? And it's that way or the highway. And so I just don't like that. And like I said, I'm more selective. But I joined, renewed memberships with these Hispanic organizations just because I felt like there was a need to do that, and have been going in and helping build websites. But they don't really value your skills, or I don't know, they don't make you feel like you're playing a significant role in the organization. So, I'm just going to keep doing my best and serving as many groups, but I have done—the group that I mentioned, you know it was called leadership connection with the volunteer center, that we did, by the way. And then the guy that I was telling you was Kent Hance!

ZH:

Oh my goodness.

CM:

So you know he was the chancellor for Texas Tech, but he had also ran for office, and at the time I think he was a Democrat. But my dad tended to go from—he was a Republican and a Democrat, so I think he was independent. And my mother has been a diehard Democrat, period. But at the time Kent Hance was a Democrat, and that's why we supported him, and that's why we went out and did stuff for him, and Froy Salinas and different people, because of the fact that they were involved with certain parties or something.

ZH:

One of the other things I was going to ask you about the Willie Velasquez Institute?

CM:

Um-hm.

ZH:

Do you mind talking as—

CM:

No, I do a write up. Now they have Willie Velasquez day that they hold annually. But Willie Velasquez started the Southwest Voter Registration. He was an attorney also I believe. But he mobilized the Latino community nationwide to vote, and he started that catchphrase, "*Su voto es su voz*," "Your vote is your voice," that came from the Willie Velasquez Institute. The Southwest Voter Registration is what they were originally, and then now they're the Willie Velasquez Institute slash Southwest Voter Registration. But they're so active in getting people involved in voting, and I want to say that it probably was focused in Texas first and then it kind of channeled across. And one day I went to a conference in D.C.—I mean I'm sorry, in Dallas. It was a LULAC convention. And Willie Velasquez was there, Raul Yzaguirre was there, who ended up becoming my boss years later—isn't that crazy? But he was there. Jaime Escalante from the movie *Stand and Deliver*, and I told you he gave me his pin and everything.

ZH:

Oh yeah.

CM:

He was there. And it was just—I've been so blessed through these organizations to meet some significant figures, role models or examples to our community that have been advocating. So I think over the years I've adopted a little bit here, a little bit there, and created my style, and my—what my issues that I take personally and things that I believe in. And I think bottom line it still comes down to first, the public, serving them, but with Los Hermanos Familia our objective is strengthening families, building community. But if you look at our mission statement, which unfortunately I don't have it memorized because it's kind of long, but we deal with issues of the family. I think I told you we're like a habitus for families. We create experiences and whatnot. But we're also using these events to educate them about like for example the fishing event isn't just a fishing event. We're also teaching about environment and environmental stewardship. So we created a campaign to teach them, like every time you throw debris into the lake, it takes this many years, and it affects the ecosystem of that. And through Willie Velasquez Institute I traveled to Cuba. And there was a gentleman that passed away, I can't think of his name, it happened last year. But he was very big into the environment, and so he connected the Willie

Velasquez Institute into that. But I've been a member of League of Women Voters, because it's non-partisan. I've been a member of WTOS, the West Texas Organizing Strategy. Church projects, or certain church programs. I've done so many things, even as we were preparing for this, I had just been named the women's retreat director for the next retreat for ACTS, which is another very significant—because it's part of my faith. But I've done so many different things, and like when I send people my bio, and then you also see my resume in the list of things, and that's just a small part. But I think that that's personal development and professional development, and it's necessary if you really are committed to serving your community, and not just for the sake of saying, I'm involved in. But I'm committed, and I advocate for, and as a result this is what I'm doing for you. But right now Los Hermanos Familia to me is the most significant. And I think I told you that one of my best friends was Linda DeLeon. She was the first Hispanic woman school board member. Prior to her was Jose Ramirez. And then she went on also to serve on city council for district one. So, Linda played a really significant role in also helping me to learn the city government aspect, even though I had worked for it, for the policy making side I was working with Linda. And so I learned a lot from her. But I think one time I asked Victor Hernandez, who I also admire from a distance, but I like Victor. I love his style. He just had that oomph that we needed as sometimes a Hispanic community. But one day I asked him, "Victor, are you preparing the next person to serve in office when you leave?" And he wasn't. And I felt like he needed to be teaching young people. But I think that's what a lot of our elected officials, our Hispanic elected officials, they fail. A lot of these people do, but especially our Hispanic elected officials. They fail and they don't mentor or prepare or teach. And I think if you want to find good leadership, or create and develop leaders, you've got to be doing all these things. And I see that absence with those folks, and I also see it with folks serving on boards and commissions. And so because of that, and especially during this time, we're going to be holding with Los Hermanos Familia, Latino Lubbock Magazine and the Las Comadres, which I'm a member of also. It's a national women's network. It's kind of like a sisterhood, but we connect with each other, it's a great group. But Dr. Nora Comstock from Austin, who's a founder of Las Comadres, is facilitating our training for running for office. And then with another group we're creating—it's still in development, but we're going to do workshops to teach Hispanics how to run for office, and then the obligations. Because I think one time the city boards and commissions is a poor reflection of our community. They don't diversify. That's what I mean. They don't reflect the demographics of the city. And I had served on parks and rec. I was on that board, and I went from just being a member to becoming the chair. And I remember a comment that was made by Becky Garza, who's a city secretary, and she said, "Well, Hispanics join to serve on boards and commissions, then they don't even attend the meetings." And I thought, Well shit, it's just the Hispanics? It wasn't just Hispanics, it was everybody, but unfortunately she felt like that was such an issue that she shared that with me, but I thought, Well that's crappy, that's your fault too, because I've served on some of these committees where you feel like you don't belong, or that they don't value your input, or they ignore you. And so it's hard to want to go back to that crap, you know what I mean? But nevertheless, those words made an impression

on me, so I made it a point to have a very—I think I only had one absence in my term on the parks and rec board, or I think I had already served two terms. And then—or one term. But when I ran to serve as the chair, the decide—it was a tie, okay. And the deciding factor was the fact that I had only missed one meeting the entire time, versus the other person that had missed like eight meetings. You know what I mean? So I realized at that point, this is part of your obligation of serving on boards, commissions, committees, nonprofits, getting involved. And so that's the type of environment that I've tried to create with my board of directors, trying to teach them Roberts' rule. We're staying on agendas. I love my board of directors, I have a few that don't value it, because like one, for example, is so busy with work that it's so difficult. And right now during coronavirus, her role is especially busy with work. But we try to be fair and we try to follow the protocol. But it's not always easy. If you're working with people don't have the experience, so we decided as a board that we would make sure that we're going to start developing our folks, and the good thing I instilled in my daughter—learn Robert's Rules. And my daughter, I think every parent wants to help to build up their kid, and I can honestly say my daughter was blessed in having—she's lived through my—and I don't live—what is it called? When you live through you children. What's that?

ZH:

Oh. Vir—[Laughter]

CM:

You know what I'm talking about.

ZH:

Yeah I do. I'm sorry.

CM:

Vicariously.

ZH:

Vicariously, there you go.

CM:

I don't live through my child. My daughter was following me in everything that I did. But she was learning. And then as she started developing her skills and her leadership and everything, I was doing things very strategic, so that she wouldn't go through the same shit that I went.

ZH:

Right.

CM:

Because I didn't have anybody to teach me all that. But I was not going to allow my daughter to experience that. So, learn Robert's Rules, learn how to do this, learn how to do that. And through my experiences of like being part of a—I had written a grant for the city of Lubbock called Project Impact, and it was for a FEMA grant. We were the second city in the state of Texas to be selected. And it was something proud, but I worked for—with a gentleman named Ken Olson, who at the time was in charge of emergency management. And Ken was fair. I really appreciated him. But one time we had a meeting, and I remember Judge Tom had—like he—I sat from the main individual to the right, all the men ended up sitting to the left. So my back was—his back was—the person facilitating the meeting, his back was to me, so I felt like the outsider. That was the first lesson. So I started learning one, arrive thirty minutes early. My daughter will tell you, she learned that lesson as a child. Always be thirty minutes early, never three minutes late. But I developed a lot of my leadership skills through bad experiences or being left out or—you know. And then whatever direction the person facilitating the meeting or the key person, whatever direction his legs were turned, that's the direction you better be at. So I taught this to my daughter and then she connected me with Hispanic student groups, especially her sorority, the Lambda Theta—it's the ladies—Lambda Theta Phi I think is what it is. But she was one of the president at one time for the sorority, and it was a Latina. It was the first Latina sorority in the nation. It had—it's one of the oldest, but it was the first one, and she had brought a chapter to Lubbock. And I think my daughter has excelled because of everything that I instilled. But she's just driven. She's always been confident, because she didn't have all those negative—I mean like I was on student council for my elementary school, but nobody really taught me how to do things a certain way. Just things like that. But with my daughter, I instilled at a very young age—this is how you do this, this is how you do that. Because I wanted to make sure that not only was I developing a happy, secure child, but I knew that one day my daughter would be a leader or she would be significant in what she did for her future. And of course she just got her MBA and she's excelling in her company, so I'm very proud of that. And everything she's done—I mean she was the youngest board member of Los Hermanos Familia. And at one time the youngest member, because I've always gotten her involved with the Cesar Chavez Committee, and everything, everything I've done, my daughter has been a part of it. But one time I received—this was when I was involved with the Hispanic Association of Women prior to, I got a nasty letter from—and I know who it is now, and I don't know if I should mention it, but she wrote a nasty letter about how I was taking my daughter to meetings and whatnot, and she didn't feel like that was—she didn't need to be in these places. And it was a turnoff to me, because this is supposed to be a women's organization where you're supporting other women, but I worked and I have to pick up my child, and then if I was going to participate in meetings I had to bring my child with me. I didn't have—Frank was working also, and he worked in retail, and he had a very—his schedule started at noon until ten pm. And so I didn't have that flexibility, and again, financially, I didn't have the money to get a sitter for—that wasn't something we grew up with. They either left the kid alone in my house, or you went with your parents, that's why we were

exposed to all those meetings and block walking and everything that we were doing was through exposure. So, it was really disappointing, and that's when I got out of that organization. And I struggled a lot, because that group, it was always like my nemesis, that we were always having different issues happening, where it was very negative. But I think that's—we've tried to create an environment now, like I know we have a board member, and he'd say, "Well, I can't go because I have to take care of my daughter." I'm like, "Bring her. Bring her, we will have an activity for her, but we want to make sure—" I mean we're about family. So we need to make sure that we're supportive of our leadership and members, because the family is what we're all about. So, like I said, that has definitely been a learning experience in serving on boards and developing my leadership skills and how we are where we are with Los Hermanos Familia and everything else that I do. But it's kind of exciting when I look back I'm like, Dang, I've done a lot. And I'm only fifty-two years old. So I think for my age, I have done a lot. But now I'm more selective, and right now I feel like it's got to be things that are going to be beneficial to my business. And also, my involvement with my organization.

ZH:

Do you want to talk about—I know last meeting we talked about a bunch of different—well we didn't really talk—you sort of listed different people. And you've already started talking a little bit about a couple of them. And we said we would talk about more. And I brought just a few, and I know you've already started talking about Linda DeLeon again. Do you want to spend some time talking about some of those people on your list?

CM:

Let's talk about Linda.

ZH:

Okay, let's start with Linda.

CM:

Because I think Linda is significant. In the eighties, when I was graduating, my junior, senior years, Linda was serving on the school board. And Linda, she sued Lubbock ISD. They were vicious to Linda. They were vicious, because she had a mind of her own, and she did her homework. Besides working for Southwestern Bell, I think she was a pole—she climbed poles, she was one of those folks. She was part of the union and all that stuff. But she learned a lot, and she had gone through the Lubbock ISD system, graduate of Estacado, went on to college. I don't think she graduated, but nevertheless she decided she wanted to serve, and she did, because there was a lot of inequities happening in Lubbock ISD. Every time any monies were going to South Lubbock and West Lubbock, but they weren't going to North and East Lubbock. And so she became the advocate of those children and those families. But they ended up—they had no air conditioning in a lot of this—the schools in North and East Lubbock. And so she fought for that,

and when I say “fight,” like literally Linda had to fight. She had to sue LISD like I mentioned. And you need to look that up, because that’s—

ZH:

As a school board member?

CM:

As a school board member.

ZH:

Geez, okay.

CM:

Well then their building—they built—and I want to say Ed Irons, but there was a need for a school to be built. Because of the—the Hispanic schools were busting at the seams, but there was nothing happening for them. Anyways, so she fought and she had people like I want to say Olga Guero [?] [01:05:35]. There was different women that she got, and they ended up suing the school. Kevin Glasheen was their attorney, he was a young attorney and he came in. Of course now you see Kevin is a multi-millionaire, one of the top attorneys in Lubbock. But that was his first experience. And I’ll find names of who was part of that, but I know there was a few women. Anyway, so they ended up suing LISD and they ended up achieving—they got the funds designated, or the budget designated to build Cavazos Middle School. And the other day I was going through Lubbock ISD and I noticed they don’t even have—you look up Linda’s name, she doesn’t even come up. She had such a very difficult time navigating through serving on the school board. A lot of racist things, they would have meetings without her, which is against the law. And they would do all sorts of stuff. They thought she was just this dumb woman that—but she ended up being everything but. And so but I was looking, and they don’t even have her listed, as the first Hispanic female to serve on the school board. And then maybe last year I was talking, when they decided to build the North Lubbock Elementary, that’s all they’re calling it right now. I have written some papers where I talked about the Barrio Guadalupe or Guadalupe Elementary. I did a paper on that, or a history on it, which I need to get that published, but I haven’t done it. And so they—one of the things is that that neighborhood in North Lubbock was called chihuahatown—they had every nickname. Anyways, they happened—one day I had visited LISD central office, and I saw that they had that little history, and I thought, What the hell, I can’t believe they put that in there, but that’s all they really know. And but I thought, Man, they need to name the school after Linda DeLeon. Because not only did she serve and she made all these things happen, but she also was on city council. So I started checking, and then she said—and another thing that I had written is that there was a woman that used to write for me. Her name is Anita Carmona Harrison. Awesome lady. But anyways, she serves—she went through LISD as well, she served, or went to college at Tech and then she came back to be a

teacher. And sometimes as the white community does, they will select somebody like that. Because it's a safe person for them. So when I went to the groundbreaking for that North Lubbock School I saw Anita there, and I put two and two together, because one of the ladies that works in the public information office, Erin Greg, had said to me that they were thinking about naming the school after Anita, and I said, "Wait a minute. You had told me that the only way that you would name a school after somebody was posthumously." And she said, "Well," and I was like, "Uh-huh." And so I pointed out, well if that's the case, which Lubbock ISD is notorious for naming schools after people that aren't dead. There was a lot of examples. But the rules always change when it's people of color. Anyways, and I said, "Well let me also point out Linda DeLeon. I mean if you don't know the history—" which she didn't, she was young, naïve, just coming to work for LISD. And I said, "That'll be wrong." She said, "Well get me something." Well, I thought, Well that's your job. You should be getting it. Do your own history. But nevertheless, Linda had also gone. I pointed out Linda had also gone through the school district, and went to college, and came back as the school board member, the first Hispanic woman, again. And all of her children had gone through LISD and all of them are very successful women. She had three daughters. One worked in Washington—I think two worked in Washington DC at the time. But all her kids graduated from college, they were all very active through LISD. So how dare them, say something like—overlook Linda. So right now that's my big thing is to make sure that Linda's acknowledged, because if you can name a community center, and I have a deep respect and admiration for Maggie Trejo, but they named a center after her when she didn't even complete her serving her time on the city council. And then she's still alive, and they named that facility after her. That should have been posthumously. But then I thought, Well maybe Lala, who serves on the board right now, prior to Lala was Mario Ybarra. Lala beat him by like I think eight points, or eight votes. And the issue is that Lala, I felt like maybe she was saving it to name after herself. But then again I thought, No, she knows better than that. But Lala and I are actually meeting next week, and I called another friend of Alice, and I've called different groups and invited them to come and let's meet with Lala Chavez to kind of get the school named after Linda. And only time will tell, but at one point the thing when Linda was on city council, she had a concrete company, and all these people that just didn't like Linda, and I mean there's a list with a gentleman, he passed away. His name was Hermando. Linda was serving on city council, and they were having issues with the building that Hermando's son was a proprietor in that building. And they chose to tear down that building. Well you know, they held Linda accountable. And so they recalled her and they were just—they were jerks to her. She'd committed so much time, her life, and then instead of showing her—their appreciation to a lot of really positive things that she did, they turned on her. And Lala, I want to say even signed that petition. But it was just—eventually Linda ended up closing her concrete company. Right now there's a concrete company that has a wall that—build the wall. They're Trump supporters. And I'm like, man, you were not—I mean why aren't you fighting that? That's the thing sometimes with our Hispanic community—*la envidia* [the envy]. And we end up hurting each other, just because we're jealous of another person's achievements. It's a very disappointing

character about us, a trait that we have. But it's so prevalent. I think if you've read *The Crab Rule*? It's a book by Louis Tafoya. Have you ever read it?

ZH:

I know of it.

CM:

Well in the back I'm the one that did the book review.

ZH:

Oh wow.

CM:

Yeah. So read it.

ZH:

Okay.

CM:

Because it's really good. And sometimes people—we've been compared to being like crabs. Instead of pushing each other out, we pull each other back in. And so nevertheless, it was just real disappointing to see that happen to Linda, and I think a lot of people pulled away because they didn't want to be attacked. I mean, she's one of my best friends in the world, somebody that I admire, that we've stayed connected, we've traveled together, and we've gone to go see each other. Whenever she—she ended up moving to Washington DC afterwards with her daughter. And I remember she started living life. She put her life to the side. You know when you're in public service for that many years—she had never had a vacation. She hadn't had a personal vacation since she had been on the school board. And with all those years of service, that was just sad. So, I remember telling her, "Linda, I know God's timing is everything. Trust him." Because—and Linda's very active in the church, and she was involved with so many different things. Neighborhood associations, just everything that you could possibly imagine. But I told her, "Go live your life, man. Just go live your life and enjoy and embrace." Because she dedicated so many days and nights and years and activities missed so she could go to meetings. And she was just always dedicated. So, she went to move to DC with her daughter, and started living life. Going to concerts, going—everywhere you could imagine. She was in DC. Every rally, ever this, every that, living life, her best life. Anyways, her and her husband ended up moving to Houston, and with another daughter. And so, to help her with her child and whatnot. And now she has grandchildren from all her kids, and she's active with all of them, and we even traveled, we went on a group trip to Mexico. And it was just—I'm really proud of her, because she's living life now. And she's more outspoken, and she even paid for a billboard. She

sponsored a billboard against Trump. And if you see it it's on Avenue Q and it says, "Trump lied, millions died." And so, regardless of whether you agree with her—I realized I probably was a lot like her. You either like her or you don't. And that's probably how it is with me. You either like me or you don't. And what I found is whenever she spoke, she's very smart. I mean she would prepare. She never went into a city council meeting unprepared. They would give her a book, she would go through everything, she would read everything. And that's why she was so effective. But unfortunately like I said all that happened to her, and it was just a real disappointment. But nevertheless, Linda, she continues to be active. Right now, during Covid, she started making masks. I have several masks. One day she sent me all these masks, and then over the summer I had an intern, and she'd—I don't know, Linda sent me a mask for West Texas A&M, and I thought, "Well why would you send me that, man, I'm a Tech fan." My intern—I'm not kidding you.

ZH:

Went to WTA?

CM:

Yeah, so I gave her the mask. But isn't that crazy how things work out? But she started making quilts that they would—prayer quilts. So they'd pray over them and then she gave them to people that needed prayer at the time, that were sick or just going through struggles in her life because of what she went through. And she knew that just that little bit of support or that little bit of appreciation to the next person would make and inspire them, make a difference and inspire them. But I'm really proud of her, because she's living life, and right now, like I said, with her grandson she's gotten to do so much, and she still gets involved with schools and I mean she's smart. She's a smart woman. Even when she was in DC she started going to a church where they had a lot of immigrants from like South America and everything. And she became an advocate for them. She did projects with them, she taught them how to do things properly. How to be activists. And so she possesses a lot of amazing skills and talents and experience, and for that reason I believe that Linda deserves a school named after her. She paid the price and she did it for the greater good of this community. But unfortunately like I said all it takes is that small group of people hurt you. And I think I believe in the paradoxical commandments of leadership. I keep it—it fell back through the other day when I was cleaning the desk, but I'm going to get it real quick, let me see. Because I want to read it to you, I think it's significant. Let me see, it's—

ZH:

Do you need help?

CM:

I think I got it. So, this is the paradoxical commandments of leadership. And I'm going to read them out loud, because I think this is also—this is something else I told my daughter. You got to

live by the Ten Commandments, right? And these are your paradoxical commandments of leadership. And this is what they say. People have credited Mother Teresa, but it was actually Dr. Kent M. Keith that wrote them for a youth group. But it's called the paradoxical commandments of leadership. People are illogical, unreasonable and self-centered. Love them anyway. If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. That's how I always connect it for Linda. Do good anyway. And it's actually when he wrote it, he has a book that's called *Anyway*. But—the good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway. Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable. Be honest and frank anyway. The biggest men and women with the highest—the biggest ideas that is, can be shot down by the smallest men and women with the smallest minds. Think big anyway. People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs. Fight for a few underdogs anyway. What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight. Build anyway. People really need help but may attack you if you do help them. Help people anyway. Give the world the best you have, and you'll get kicked in the teeth. Give the world the best you have anyway. And so like I told my daughter, we live by the Ten Commandments, and we—this is how we live our leadership life, through the paradoxical commandments. And I think when I got ahold of this, I was still young, but you know, it's when you read the book it makes more sense even. And then I remember seeing it on the—Mother Theresa had it in Calcutta. She had this, the paradoxical commandments, but I don't think she had the name for them, but she had them taped on the wall in the orphanage that she served in. And I thought, Wow, this made it all the way there. But it was Dr. Kent M. Keith. And I thought, What a message. If she can live by that, I can live by this. And I think that the combination of my faith, something like this, and the experiences that I have are what have helped me, and the other part is I've been blessed to have so many significant individuals that I've gotten to see their leadership style. And I think that's why I believe that I'm more effective in my leadership style and in my professional way of handling things. Because when you're a newspaper publisher and you have to be objective, it is not an easy thing to do. You have to be disciplined. And I think that has helped me. [phone rings] If you go on my Facebook, it's rare—

[Pause in recording]

CM:

But I make it a point to keep the politics off—yeah, I may laugh at something or like something, but I'm not really pushing. And even though like right now I'm so sick of the politics. I'm ready for leadership change. But I've kept that to myself for the most part, until now. Now you know. But anyways, so.

ZH:

Richard Lopez. Last time you said—

CM:

It's 11:52.

ZH:

Oh is it?

CM:

Um-hm.

ZH:

Oh, sorry.

[End of recording]



© Southwest Collection/
Special Collections Library