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An Interview with Harvey Allen

An Oral History Conducted by Claytee D. White

The UNLV @ Fifty Oral History Project

Oral History Research Center
University Libraries
University Nevada, Las Vegas
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University of Nevada Las Vegas, 2007

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The following interview is part of a series of interviews conducted under the auspices of the UNLV @ Fifty Oral History Project. Additional transcripts may be found under that series title.

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Preface

Harvey Allen grew up poor in Philadelphia. After taking singing lessons at the Artie Singer Vocal School, he got jobs singing in night clubs up and down the east coast. He also took acting classes in New York and performed at the Copa Club. In the 1950s, he moved to Las Vegas and auditioned for Jack Entratter at the Sands Hotel and Casino where he performed with numerous entertainers including Lena Horne, Louis Armstrong, Tallulah Bankhead and Robert Merrill.

Allen's accomplishments include attending and obtaining a degree in telecommunications and film from San Diego State and a Master's degree from UNLV. He worked for the American Society of Composer, Authors and Publishers. Harvey recalls working on a segregated strip and the opening of the first integrated casino in Las Vegas, The Moulin Rouge. Twice he moved from Las Vegas but always returned. He implemented National Reading Week for the State Department of Education and was the emcee for Sunrise Hospital Cancer Survivors Week.

In addition to hosting a popular talk show on KDON radio, he hosted the "All-Nighters Club Convention", taught classes at UNLV for 31 years and wrote a column in *Maturity Today*. Now Harvey is at a different stage of his life. He and his wife are active in running their public relations agency, enjoying their garden, taking great photographs and spending time together in their fabulous home in Anthem.

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It is December 5th, 2006. And we're in his home in Anthem. How are you today?

[Interview of Mr. Harvey Allen conducted by Claytee D. White]

I'm fine. It's a beautiful day.

Yes, it is.

Beautiful day. How are you doing?

I am wonderful.

I just want you to start by telling me just about your early life -- where you grew up, some of your friends, your parents -- what they did for a living; those kinds of things.

Well, I was born and raised in Philadelphia in 1931. I was born in 1931. In fact, there's that old joke. We were so poor that my parents couldn't afford to have me. So the neighbors had me. And we were so poor -- I worked with Henny Youngman, too. He was my hero. We were so poor that we couldn't afford shoes. So they used to paint my feet black and lace up my toes. A little humor, right?

Yes. Right.

Anyway, so I was born and raised in Philadelphia. I went to school there. I came from a very -- we weren't poor poor, but I only had one pair of shoes at a time. Up until the time I was a teenager, I slept in one double bed with my two brothers. I had one drawer. That was my total possessions in that drawer. Okay. So, you know, we didn't know better. That's the way we were brought up. I had a happy childhood. Philly, I love Philly.

When I went to school, I skipped a grade. I always loved school. But when I got to be a teenager, school became less significant because I figured when you get of school you could go to work. Why prolong it? I had a girlfriend. I wanted to get possessions. Like kids today. They want material things. So I dropped out of school a couple of times and I kept going back. The principal would call my mother and I'd go back. Finally, I said, you know, I'm going to go to work. What do I need to do this? I was a high school dropout.

I've been on my own since 16. My brother and I took an apartment. My mother worked and she was a waitress. My mother and father obviously didn't get along. And I cannot remember a conversation with my father, ever. I had two brothers and an older sister -- a younger brother and an older brother and an older sister. That was life. That's what I grew up with. And then my

mother divorced my father and then married my stepfather. And they moved into a smaller apartment. Basically, there was no room for my brother and I. So we went out on our own. I was 16. My brother was 19.

At the time I didn't -- you know, I figured that's it. That's the way it was. But I look back and I say, you know, she pushed us out of the nest. My kids are 25. My two boys stayed at home till 25. My daughter is 25. I would never think of scaling down and saying get out. Right? But that's a different generation, a different life then, a different era.

Anyway, from there I took odd jobs. I did different things. I started -- I don't know or how -- gravitating to show business. My younger brother was taking lessons.

What kind of lessons?

Singing lessons with somebody there, which goes back to the Artie Singer thing. I want to tell you about Jimmy Darren. And one night at dinner at my sister's house, he said I've got a surprise. I'm taking singing lessons. He had a friend who was in show business. He was a good-looking kid, my brother. And they used to tell him, hey, why don't you take some lessons, because it was right around when Fabian and Frankie Avalon and those things were going to come out. So he took some lessons. And he was terrible. And I said to my brother, "Bobby, I can't sing and I'm better than you."

And I sang. And my sister said, "Why don't you take lessons?" And I did. I started to take lessons. And I was 18 or 19 maybe or so. It was kind of late. I remember I went to this Arite Singer vocal school. That's where I met James Darren. He was Johnny Ercolani. I became friendly with some of the people in Vegas. This guy Bobby Marquachi from south Philly was a songwriter who ended up managing Frankie Avalon. And I used to do demonstration records for him. He would take the records and go over to New York and try to sell his songs.

One day I wrote a song. And I said, "Bob, I want you to repay the favor. There's a song I wrote. I need an instrumentation, some background on it." So he said, "Oh, I'll get my friends with Rocco and the Saints." A 14-year-old kid. Frankie Avalon played the trumpet. I played the record Sunday night. My kids come over for dinner. He takes a trumpet solo in it. I play there -- that could be another story.

Anyway, so from there I started working around nightclubs around Philadelphia and New

Jersey. I worked a place called Jack Downey's Old Mill Inn. And every weekend -- Friday, Saturday and Sunday -- it was a comedian, emcee, me. And then they'd have a different girl singer and a different comedian. I was there for like four or five months. And then all of a sudden they decided to change the format. Rock and roll was coming in at the time. So the first band they hired was Bill Haley and the Comets. He's from Jack Downey's Old Mill Inn. And they made that record and they took off. So then I worked around. I worked nightclubs around Philly, New Jersey, Delaware and different places and worked the big band.

And then I came west. My sister moved to California with her husband. And I just wanted a change of scenery and I went out to visit them. Then my brother got married in Brooklyn, New York. And my sister and I went in for the wedding. And I went to Philadelphia to see family and friends. That's when I met my friend Al Nighberry. You heard the first story, right? And so my sister went back to L.A. Then we went back to L.A., my friend Al and me. He said I'll go with you and then we'll go to Las Vegas. It was the 50s. It was nothing. And so we went to L.A. We got our act together. And we took a train to Las Vegas. This was 1954.

The Sands Hotel had been open two years. And I met the guy who opened the Sands. His name was Jackie Freidman. He was one of the major owners. He built the Sands for five million dollars. And I remember having conversations with Jackie Freidman. He told me how to gamble. Take the money you're going to spend. And if you can go out to the pool and throw it in the pool and not miss it, then take that money, whether it's a dollar or a thousand, and go to the crap table and put it down one time. Win or lose, walk away. Well, how many people can do that? But this is what Jackie Freidman told me. Two years after the hotel was open, he died. And then other people owned it. Now it's the Venetian, right?

So I went up to Jack Entratter one day. I was at the pool. It was about five o'clock in the afternoon. You know, I'm giving away my book here. I shouldn't be telling you so much. This is going to be in my book. Anyway, Jack Entratter ended up hiring me and I started working the Sands.

What kind of audition?

I walked up to him. Somebody pointed him out. I said, "Who do you talk to about a job around here?" And somebody said, "Well, there's Jack Entratter." And I didn't know who Jack -- if I

would've known who he was, I would have been scared to death. So I went to Jack Entratter. I mean it's like a fairy tale. I said, "Mr. Entratter, I'd like to talk to you about a job." And he was about six-foot-four. And I'm about five-ten. And he towered over me. He said, "What do you do?" And I said, "I'm a singer." Without hesitation, he said, "Come on in. Let's hear you."

We went into the showroom, the Copa Room. They were setting up for the dinner show. And it just so happened there was a choreographer and a piano player there. They were running down some things. The piano was on stage. And he sat down another the table, Jack Entratter. And he said, "Go up there and let me hear you." So I go up there. No microphone. I was wearing -- you notice what I'm wearing today, too. In your honor, Claytee.

Great. It's a UNLV T-shirt.

Okay. No microphone. The sound guy wasn't there. The piano player didn't know my songs, but we faked a few things. I told him a number or two, what key. And I sang a song for Jack Entratter, no mike, nothing. I sang about five or six songs. He kept asking me to sing another song. I sang a fast song, an up-tempo song and a slow song. I had more guts than brains. So he called me down. We sat at the table. And he said, "How would you like to work here?" I said, "Well sure." And this guy I showed you the picture of, Chuck Nelson, had been there since this place opened and he had a great voice, like Gordan MacRae. I mean I couldn't compare to him. I was just starting out. I was really, really raw. And he said, "He's going to manage him. He's going on tour. He needs somebody in two, two and a half weeks to fill in." I was in the right place at the right time. And I was adequate enough I guess. And so I didn't have a lot of -- well, I had a lot of guts, but I didn't have a lot of confidence because if I would've known how limited I was, I wouldn't have been pushy like that.

So anyway, I went back to L.A. My sister was still back in Philadelphia visiting with family. So my brother-in-law was in L.A. And I told him about the audition and that they're going to hire me. And he was unhappy. He was doing advertising in L.A. So he said come on. And he packed up the apartment and put stuff in storage. We got in his car. He had a '46 Buick convertible. We drove across the desert -- my sister doesn't know what we're doing -- drove across the desert and we hit a windstorm. And the top blew up and bent the frame. And I had to hold it down all the way over while we're driving through the desert. I'll never forget that. Big

black convertible Buick with the top off.

We got to Vegas. I had a couple of weeks to kill. I got a job at Gallon Camps selling shoes downtown. We pulled all our money together. We rented an apartment by the week or the month on the Strip south of Tropicana. And we moved in there.

And my brother-in-law was the first one -- he started out with his TV guide for the supermarkets. He got into advertising.

And once I got to work at the Sands Hotel, I worked with Lena Horne. I've worked with Louis Armstrong and Robert Merrill. It was opera versus jazz. Tallulah Bankhead. I'll show you some pictures of me and Tallulah Bankhead and the kids. From there I had some great experiences.

Describe the show.

The show was the Ziegfeld Follies. It was kind of like a theme show. And I don't think they did it before or since. It was a show with three production numbers. They would open the show with a production number. And I'd be back stage making the announcements. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the Sands Hotel. Jack Entratter is proud to present the Ziegfeld Follies with this one, with that one, Joey Bishop, glorified by the beautiful Copa Girls and starring -- drum roll -- Ms. Lena Horne, or whoever the star was, right? And we'd open with a production number. And then I'd introduce Joey Bishop or the opening act, whoever it was. Hal Leroy from Broadway I remember, the dancer, was one. And Peggy Lee was there and then Joey Bishop opened for her. I forget who opened for Lena Horne. That could have been Joey Bishop.

Anyway, then the opening act would do his or her bit. Then they'd have another production number. And then I'd introduce the star of the show. Then after that they'd have a finale. And then the star would come out and be involved with the finale. It was a nice routine, a nice show. And they had like 18-piece orchestra. Antonio Morelli. He was this big Italian guy with this mustache like a wombat, waxed mustache, very eccentric. And he's a big guy with a big body. And he'd wear these Bermuda shorts. He looked really strange. But a good musician.

Anyway, so that was the show. Then I worked there for a while. Then they ended --

Did you sing at all in the show?

Oh, I sang three numbers. To give you a little bit of what I did -- here is the young kid from

Philly, not much experience. I remember this one time. The Dunes Hotel opened across the street. And it didn't do well and it was going under. And it was the first time that one hotel was going to buy another hotel. It was unheard of then. Now you have MGM, the Bellagio, this one, Starwoods and Caesars. They all have these mergers. So the headline in the paper was "The Sands marries the Dunes." And they brought in a contingent of Hollywood stars for the opening. It's for the commemoration.

I remember after the opening act, in particular the Louis Armstrong show, after the opening production number, the curtains would close. And I would come out in front of the curtain with a spotlight all by myself. And they would change to get ready for the second production number. And I'd sing this song I remember, "Inspiration." Inspiration, you are my inspiration. (Singing). I still remember that damn song, fifty years ago. Anyway, and I'm standing there. Nobody's listening to me. They don't want to hear this kid up there singing this stupid song. But I did it. It never bothered me. It was my job.

This one night I'm out there and I look down this table ringside. And I'm singing. You know, you're not supposed to look at the people, but I did especially in a nightclub. Well, in a theater, which I've done, you look at the fourth wall. So you look in the fifth or sixth row. You look out there in the void so you don't get contact with people. But in a show business situation, it's okay to look at somebody and smile, personality. So I look there and I see these people sitting at this table after they bought the Dunes, the Sands Hotel. I see Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, Dan Dailey, Betty Grable -- I see all these big stars. Tony Martin. And then halfway through my song, I see Frank Sinatra coming down the aisle. And they're sitting there. For some reason or another, it didn't faze me.

Isn't that wonderful?

But when the nightclub owner came to town that year and he heard I was working the Sands and he sent a note backstage that he was in the audience, I was scared to death. Now, go figure that out, Claytee.

But tell me when did your brother-in-law tell your sister what was going on?

Oh, yeah. That's right. I jumped ahead. Once we got settled in Vegas, my sister was ready to go back to L.A. My brother-in-law called her and said, "Don't go to L.A. We now live in Las

Vegas." And the story is my sister got off -- it had to be in the summertime. The story is she got off the plane. That heat hit her. She said she was going to get back on the plane and go back home. So they've been here as long as I have. That's a story in itself because she's been involved in television productions. And my sister was food editor of The Sun and did some stuff. Of course, her daughter Robin Greenspun married Danny Greenspun. So Danny and Robin are my niece and nephew by marriage. Well, Robin by --

Right, your sister's daughter.

So anyway, that's how they came to live here. They've had their ups and downs. We had our ups and downs. The town was growing. It used to be a scarce city of apartments and buildings. Then all of a sudden everybody started building. So I've been here in the ebb and flow. Right now we're going through we're overbuilt. It's going to level off. And then people are going to -- I mean 4, 5, 6,000 people come here every month. They've got to live somewhere. But people were a little overzealous and it was boom time. Well, boom time is over. The place still has room to grow. But I've been here with the ebb and flow. When I first came here, I lived on Dio Drive between Desert Inn and -- there used to be a little street there, Dio Drive.

Spell that.

D-i-o, Dio Drive. And there was a complex of six apartment units. And I had a one-bedroom apartment furnished for \$125.00 bucks a month. For a short time I didn't have a car. But there were only about five hotels on the Strip. You could walk anywhere on the Strip from there. And then I got a car. Then it worked out. So that's how we got to Vegas. So then I was here. And then before I had come here, even though I was a high school dropout, I went into singing. Then I went into acting. And I went to New York to study acting at John Casavetti's workshop, which is a story in itself; the people that I met there and the connections I made and knew. I'm not going to give everything away.

That's fine.

The people wouldn't care, either. But the point is I worked in the Pocono Mountains as an entertainment person a couple of summers and I met a couple of guys that had the cafe underneath the rec hall where we did our shows. And he ended up being a manager of Greyhound Rent-a-Car in the east side of New York. They used to have a rent-a-car company. So he offered me a job

because I was going to school. I was a struggling actor, an entertainer, a young kid, no responsibility, just my own thing. And I did "Summer Stock." I did "Hat Full of Rain" in New Jersey that year. John Casavetti opened a workshop for understudies, for fledgling actors and professional actors. So I started going to the actors' workshop there.

It's interesting, real quick. The guy who did the coaching and directing for John when he was out of town making movies was named Burton Lane. And Burton Lane had married this girl, this model, and they went through a nasty divorce. It was in the paper. There was all kinds of stuff. And they just had this vendetta. They had a two-year-old daughter at the time. And she went on to become Diane Lane, the actress.

While I was there -- oh, somebody had seen me at the Sands Hotel. Doug Coutie. Wow, how do I remember these names? They're all so old. And Doug Coutie was a choreographer at the Copa Cabana in New York. He came backstage. He'd seen the show. He said, "If you ever get to New York, look me up." So I went in for my brother's wedding. And before I left I went into the Copa to say hi to Doug Coutie. And he's sitting in a booth with these strange-looking people. He said, "Why don't you get up and sing a song in the lounge?" So I said okay and I get up there. And, again, I don't -- and I'm singing. He calls me over to the table and said, "How would you like to work at the Copa?" I said do you mean it? I had to send to Vegas for my tuxedo because I just came in for the wedding, send for clothes. And I sang in the lounge for a few months.

And the guy who was in the booth was Juley Padell -- no. That's the producer. It was Jules something. He was with the mob. Jack Entratter was a bouncer for the Copa at one time. I found this out years later. I didn't know what was going on. I was this, you know, naive kid. So I worked there. And while I was in the show, they had the show in the basement, the Copa Girls and all that stuff. They took that theme and took to it the Sands. It was Entratter. And the kids in the show would come up and we'd hang out in the lounge. And I'd sing and the people would get up. I sang a half-hour on, a half-hour off for six hours. That's where I learned how to sing. It was like a training ground I remember because I had to pace myself.

We were talking and kids were sitting I remember one time in a booth. And all of sudden, we were talking. What do you want to be? What do you want to do? Oh, and this one girl with

this thick accent from Texas -- I think it was Texas -- I want to go to Hollywood. I want to be a big movie star. Ha, ha, ha, ha. Yeah, with that accent and everything. It was Diane Ladd. And her daughter is Laura Dern. She went to Hollywood.

And another one of the kids who danced in the show who I worked with -- I remember it was Christmas Eve at a girls' reformatory in Delaware. This agent booked me in there. I sang. And this young kid from Philly danced. And he was in the show at that time. And soon after that, I hung around New York and I used to run into this guy. His name is Mickey, Mickey Callan. He became Mike Callan. He had the lead in "West Side Story." And I remember he used to talk me. He auditioned six, eight times. He was discouraged. I think he was the leader of the Jets. He didn't make the movie, but he was in that Broadway show, a big hit. And then he went to Hollywood and he made his first movie with Gary Cooper, "They Came to Cordura." And when I was in L.A. years later and Hollywood, I would run into him. I remember he had a black T-Bird, '57. He had to take it in to get it fixed and I went with him. We spent some time together. We palled around a little bit. But I was in on the peripheral. So now I'm back in Vegas --

So why did you leave New York?

Oh, I started to tell you. New York. So when I was working this counter for the Greyhound Rent-a-Car, this kid used to come in and work the counter all the time. He used to come in a little late. I said, "How come you're always late?" Because I was kind of managing the counter there. He said, "Well, I'm going to the school to study for my GED." I said, "What's a GED?" General ed diploma, Board of Regents from New York. He said, "You get a high school diploma. I said, "You know, I dropped out of high school and never did get my high school diploma. What do you do?" Well, he was going to school and learning how to take the test. He told me the place.

I called up and went down there. I think it was ten dollars or five, dollars, two days, a Friday and a Saturday, six hours. It's a whole four years of high school. I walked in cold and got my diploma. That was in New York. See, here it might be a little different. But it was two days. I remember going back. It was like four to six hours each day. It studied four years of math, four years of that, four years of that, English and whatever. And just for my own satisfaction I got my degree -- my diploma, rather.

And then years later in between the time I came to Vegas, I went back to Philly in the late

50s, early 60s. I got a job working for ASCAP, American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers. And I also am a songwriter. I have a song, "What Good is the Night," for BMI, Broadcast Music, which is like ASCAP. So I worked for ASCAP for about three years. I went around places and licensed them for the use of music. I collected money so they could give them to songwriters and the publishers. And I did that, but I was bored. You know, it was time to do -- I was in my twenties, 25, 26.

My brother-in-law told me about the show that was going, "South Pacific." They were auditioning in New York.

This is the brother-in-law in Las Vegas?

My brother-in-law from Las Vegas. And he was vice president of Caesars when they opened. He was involved in advertising, television and radio. He was in a lot of stuff. He was a very, very astute kind of businessman, entrepreneur-type. So he called me and he said, "Why don't you go to New York?" I told him I'm not too happy what I'm doing. I was kind of in a rut.

While I was in Philly, though, working for this company, I went to Temple University. I figured I'm going to go in the business world. I took some classes -- economics and some business management. So I did about six or nine credits, 12 credits, just for my own edification. So I went to New York. Jules Padell -- Juley -- they were both named Jules. One was Jules Padell. One was Jules -- I think Jules Padell was the guy from the Copa. Jules something else was producing Broadway shows. So I went there and auditioned. They were looking for the Seabees and they were looking for parts?

Seabees?

The Seabees in the South Pacific. Have you seen the show?

Yes.

So "I'm going to wash that man -- (singing). I was one of the Seabees washing the hair, right? And I have pictures of me on stage. I understudied four parts. I did Stewpot. I did Commander Harbison. I was one of the Seabees. It was a fun show. It was a good show. There were a lot of talented people. So they hired me.

(End Tape 1, Side A.)

It was at the end of '63 {1963} I guess, the beginning of '64 because I remember I went to a place

in Philadelphia. I bought this 1963, either end-of-year or something, Pontiac LeMans convertible, out the door \$2800. It was a white car with a black top and red vinyl interior. I kept that car for eight or ten years. And I ran that into the ground. I took care of it. But anyway, all of my worldly possessions were in that car. And I drove out. And I was going to work "South Pacific" for a year. And then I bought a steamer trunk and I was going to go to Europe and live for a while. I never made it. But I went to South Pacific. We studied at the old convention center with the rotunda.

Now, where is that located? Oh, the one that they remodeled?

Yeah. They tore it down. And it seated about 61, 6200 people. And we rehearsed in there for a few weeks. And that was a lot of fun. And then we opened up at the Thunderbird, which became the El Rancho. And then they imploded it. Now, of course, they imploded the Sands. I had worked there. Now they were going to implode the El Rancho, which they did. And I worked there.

And then I decided I wanted to get into -- show business was so insecure. And I went to L.A. and I went to radio school, Bill Ogden School of Radio Engineering, and got my first-class license.

And before that, in between, I worked the Riviera, Ken Murray's "Blackouts" -- Marie Wilson. I worked the Frontier, the old Frontier, with Spike Jonze -- "Signs of the Zodiac." I worked the Flamingo, the old Flamingo, with Peggy -- what's her name? "Wheel of Fortune." What was that singer's name? She was a big star. She's still there. She's still working, surprisingly. So I worked six hotels total. And I had my own little group, the Harvey Allen Trio. And I worked club dates. I worked the officer's club.

One night I'm up at the officers' club and I'm playing my electric base. And I had a girl singer and I had a trumpet player and a drummer -- about four or five of us. And I'm up there playing the music. I'm looking out and nobody's paying attention. They're just talking, you know. And it became very -- all of a sudden. I went home. I packed up my instrument. And I never played again. Time told me.

That's how I got out of teaching. I figured it's time, 31 years of teaching. It wasn't enjoyable anymore. The kids didn't want to study. They didn't want to read. They didn't have to

have a negative attitude. The whole generation thing. I didn't enjoy it. It's time to get out. That's what I did. And even though I'm in my 70s -- but I had no intention of really retiring because it's not denying the labor of teaching. It's a lot of mental challenges. But I loved teaching. I really did. But the student body -- talk to a lot of professors and you'll hear.

Oh, I understand.

Generation X and Y. I figured, you know, you don't have to be hit over the head with hammer. And I always think of all these sports guys and actors and Sinatra, especially. I used to play his records. He was my idol. Old blue eyes is back. I was working at the radio station, program director doing the morning show. And when they released his album, I put it on the air without checking it out. And my heart sank. He wasn't old Sinatra. He was just writing all this reputation. And it's hard to hear that once you get to that level.

When you were here the first time, 1954, do you remember the opening of the Moulin Rouge in '55, the following year?

Do I? Are you ready for a story?

Yes.

At that time the Moulin Rouge had just opened. I think it was open for six months. And it was a beautiful hotel. Now, when I lived -- at that time in Vegas up until the 60s, this was a Jim Crow town, very segregated. The African-Americans could not come to Strip hotels. They couldn't eat there. They couldn't gamble there. Sometimes they could entertain there. But they'd have to go to the west side to stay and to play. We used to go to some parties over there, some of the kids who were in the shows. And we'd get invited to some of these parties. And the west side was a very exciting place to be at one time.

So this one night Tallulah Bankhead was headlining the Ziegfeld Follies show. She was in for four weeks. And she was a fascinating woman, very interesting. And one night they said come on. And she took a liking to a few of us in the show, me and a couple of other kids, a couple of boy dancers -- well, mostly boy dancers and some of the girl dancers. And this one night we're going to go over to the Moulin Rouge. We're going to see the show. So after the second show, the midnight show -- this was about 1:30 {or 2:00} -- we got into a big limousine -- a couple of limousines and proceeded to drive over on the west side to the Moulin Rouge. We walked in.

And, of course, everybody catered to -- oh, it was Harry Belafonte. He was working the Riviera at the time I believe. It was his wife, his conductor, Ted something. I remember his first name, Ted. It's about eight or ten of us. And it was Tallulah Bankhead's conductor, Harry Belafonte's conductor, his wife and the kids in the show. And we drove over to the Moulin Rouge. We walked in and they had a ringside table. I mean we were right off the stage. And I remember these young kids in their early 20s, buckets of champagne on stands by our table. Took a sip and they filled it right up. I never forgot that. Couldn't put it down. It was to the top all the time.

And I don't know if it was Sarah Vaughn, Dinah Washington -- it was a big star at the time. But I do remember there was an opening act on the show. Hines, Hines and Dad. And they came out and these two kids, six and eight years, ten years old, nine. And they danced and they sang. And Tallulah Bankhead, she wanted us to call her Ms. B. We called her Ms. B. So we went backstage. She was taken with the kids. And she wanted to buy them something. So she said to Maurice, the oldest one, who still works in New York on Broadway, "What do you want?" He said, "I want a baton." An eight-dollar baton. She said, "That's it?" an eight-dollar baton. She bought him the baton. "And what do you want, Gregory?" Gregory Hines. "I want a set of drums." Six hundred dollars in 1954. That's like {2,000} or, \$3,000 now or more maybe. She bought him a set of drums. And he used those drums from that time on.

A very talented kid. He sang. He acted. He danced. You know his career. So he used that. And then the father left and became a maître d' I think at the Tropicana. So then it was the Hines kids. And they had a career for a few years and then they split up. Maurice stayed in New York and Gregory went out to Hollywood and made a number of movies. Right? He's a good actor.

And, incidentally -- I think I mentioned to you on the phone -- when I was doing the all-night talk show with my wife -- oh, by the way, I've got to show you my -- I'll show you this.

Oh, this is a great notebook that he's about to show me.

Okay. I was doing the all-night talk show where we had Robert Goulet and --

Now, what year was the all-night talk show?

The all-night talk show -- let's see. I started working at the community college in '71, '72. {1971} I worked there two and a half years part-time. I'm digressing a little bit. I'm going to check back.

We're going to go back to the Moulin Rouge.

We'll go back to the Moulin Rouge. Then I'll catch up. All right. Hold that thought, okay? So then the Moulin Rouge, we go backstage. And she buys him the drums. Then after that, you know the rest is history. Tallulah Bankhead finished her show there.

This may not be of any consequence to you. But one of the kids in the show was a kid by the name of Ted Hook, a good dancer, funny, obviously gay. I was the only straight one in the whole show. We all were friends. Everybody knew his place. And he became friendly with Tallulah Bankhead. And when she went back to New York, he went back there and she opened a nightclub for him -- I used to read about this stuff in the newspaper -- called Backstage, Ted Hook's Backstage nightclub. I used to read them all the time. All the celebrities used to go there. He was a very flamboyant and outgoing guy, funny, funny. Just fun to be around these kids. So that happened with them.

And then I went back. '64, m{1964} I went back to Philly. No. I stayed on the West Coast. That's right. I stayed on the West Coast. I finished and then I went to get my radio license. I went to Bill Ogden School of Radio Engineering in Burbank. How I got that I don't know because it's so difficult with this digital, the computer. It drives me nuts. But I did it. It took me six weeks. They taught us how to take the FCC third-, second- and first-class license. At that time in radio you cannot work a show be as talent unless there was an engineer on duty with a first-class license. So they came up with these schools. And people like me would go there to get the license. So it was like a meal ticket. If you went to a station and if somebody was really talented and didn't have the license and you were just okay but you had a license, you got the job and they didn't because you were taking the place of two people. And they've since done away with that a few years ago. So I wanted to be a director. I wanted to direct.

Direct a radio show?

No. I want to direct television, you know, motion pictures. But I wanted to direct. I liked the idea of directing. So I went up to San Francisco -- I love San Francisco -- after I graduated. And I couldn't even get an audition at a TV or radio station. I had no experience. So I ended up back in Burbank because they had a place. You know, people would call in. I need an engineer. I need a director. I need talent. And as I walked in the owner was on the phone. And she knew what my

aspirations were. And she said, "Harvey, I have a job for you." And it was a TV station in Yuma, Arizona.

Yuma. Now, I had heard of Yuma, but I didn't know what it was like. So my car was still hot from the trip. The motor was still warm. I talked to the person. "I'll be there tonight." I got in my car. Drove straight through to Yuma. Stayed in a motel. And the next day I got up. They hired me. I had my first-class license, red hot. And they hired me. And what I did for the next six months or so is direct a bingo show at 12 noon. I opened up the station five o'clock. Six o'clock in the morning, I turned the transmitter on. I ran reruns of "I Love Lucy." I was ready to leave Yuma.

Then somebody who I had worked with told me about an opening at a radio station, KYUM. And I had never done radio. And he said why don't you go? I don't know. Eh, whatever. I needed a job. So I went in there and I auditioned. And he hired me. I think I did a morning show or afternoon {show}. I'm not sure. And I stayed there for about a year or so.

And while I was there just to keep my sanity, I also had the trio at the place called the Chilton Inn. Art Linkletter was an investor. He's still around, Art Linkletter. I remember I had to go interview him because he was coming in for the opening of the Chilton Inn. And I remember walking up the stairway to the plane. And I interviewed him at the top. I was scared to death. This was the great Art Linkletter, the consummate interviewer. "Kids Say the Funniest Thing" and "People are Funny."

Yes. I remember those shows.

And he's looking at me and staring me down because he knew that I didn't know what I was doing. But I got by. So then I became friendly with the manager of the Chilton Inn. And they're ready to open up. And he said, "Do you know musicians in town? I need a trio tonight." I said yeah. So I called a guy that played the organ, Ernie Menyost. His brother played the trumpet. And we had a drummer. And then I said we need one more piece. So I was going to fill in a conga drum and shake the maracas.

So I went in there and we opened up. We had a nice little trio. I stayed there a year or two years on weekends. I had my name up on the marquee. I had my picture in the paper. So now I'm doing a radio show. I'm working weekends. The rodeo came into town. I sang the "Star Spangled

Banner." The mayor had a party. I entertained. They opened up the greyhound racetrack there by one of the Funks, who now lives in Vegas, who is pretty, mucky-muck here. I see his name in the paper. But he was the son. And the father -- I became "Here comes the buddy." I was the announcer for the greyhound races, right?

So I was a big deal in a small town. I owned two houses. I remember I bought one house for \$9500, a three-bedroom block house. Then I bought the house across the street for ten-five. And I figured, gee, I'm getting stuck here.

Oh, they opened up -- this is very important. They opened up Arizona Western Junior College in Yuma, a beautiful campus. It was like a miniature of a major campus. I mean it was really beautiful. I started taking some classes. I took some classes. I thought wow -- I had a couple of professors. That's what I want to do. I want to teach in high school or college. I went there and took classes for about a year. I accumulated about 30 credits, which is a full year. And I figured got to get another year. So I went to Modesto Junior College.

So how did you get out of Yuma?

I got out of Yuma -- I drove out. No. I sold everything. That's a little humor. These are the jokes that got me into show business. I sold everything I had. I sold my houses. I had some money. I had my car. It was paid off. I still had the '63 convertible. You know, I just quit my job and I just drove. I went to Modesto and applied and got accepted. I went there for a year and I graduated Modesto Junior College, a good school, not a community college. In fact, I think at the time it was like 50 years old. It was the oldest community junior college in the country, one of the first. So I went there. And it was a great school.

I remember I did a show there. We had to do a final project. I was taking television production stuff. And I did a show called "Black Patch." And we had a bunch of kids in there and they taped it and that was my show. And I was Pete, the pirate with the peg leg and everything. The department chairman asked me -- I was going to go to San Francisco State. And he said, "Where are you going when you graduate?" I said, "Well, I was thinking of going to San Francisco." He said, "Did you ever think about going to San Diego State?" I said, "No, I don't know much about it."

So he knew somebody who worked with the public broadcasting, TV and radio they had

there. And he got me a job. I went down there to San Diego State. Got my degree in telecommunications and film with a minor in journalism.

Oh, then I went to Denver, {Colorado} for a year. And I did weather on television. I still have the tape. I was terrible. I don't know how I -- I know how I survived; because there were three meteorologists at KOA. And I was the weekend, {meteorologists} Saturday and Sunday. And then when they went on vacation, I would fill in two weeks here, two weeks there. And I was struggling. I wasn't a meteorologist. I didn't know what the heck I was doing. And you have to read these maps. They didn't have satellite then. But they had the western region, the local region, the state, the city and the county and the east coast. And we studied 3 to 4 hours to memorize a two-, three-minute weathercast. It's all memorized. They don't read that stuff. See, you look at it and then you're ready to go on. And they'll say you've got a three and a half minute weathercast and you've got to cut a minute down. Or you have to add a minute. And you have to improvise. And you do it.

And so I did that. I also did radio. I had like three or four part-time jobs. And I went to Metropolitan State College. Everywhere I lived I used to go to college and take classes, just self-improvement, just to keep the mental juices flowing. Then I decided to come to Vegas -- back to Vegas. My brother-in-law was involved in TV and my sister did a cooking show.

So this is the third time in Las Vegas?

This is the third and last time. We're getting to the finale.

Now, which year is this that you come back?

1970. So I came back the third and last time. While I was here I got a job working at KLAV radio as a program director, as a music director. I did sports. I did everything. I did the morning show, six to nine.

When did you meet your wife?

I'm going to get to that. I met her in '74.

Oh, good. You haven't gotten there yet. Go ahead.

A couple years later. So I worked at the radio station. I did some charity stuff for Muscular Dystrophy. Met Carnie. Met a lot of people. And I started singing. Then they opened the community college. Okay. So that's 35 years ago this year. And I went down there. And they

hired me to teach public speaking part-time. So I worked one semester, two -- well, one class, two classes. And the last semester I did four classes, \$450 a class. You ready for that? It was full-time. But anyway, I was getting experience. And then they came to me and they said -- and I had my B.A. degree. Oh, and I had a teaching credential. I went to UNLV. I got my teaching credential, thirty credits. I taught 1 day. I substituted at Valley High School. And, I said if I had to teach in high school, I wouldn't be a teacher. It just destroyed my aspirations.

So they came to me and they said, "We want to put you on full-time, but you have to have at least a master's." So I went to UNLV. They had Grant Hall. We didn't get to that. I took some classes then. But I went back to UNLV. And because I had my 30 credits teaching, some of the credits applied to my master's. So that summer I think I took 18, 20 credits, something. I killed myself. And they hired me on full-time. That was in 1975.

And in May of 2006 -- at the end of June I had put in 31 years. In fact, you see this thing here?

Yes.

Harvey Allen Godara, 25 years. And that bowl up there, 30 years. And I got a plaque from 5 years, 10 years, 15, 20. And that's all they gave me? Thirty years? Why not a watch?

But it's crystal.

Anyway, so I started teaching there full-time in '75. I put together the broadcasting, the radio, the internship program. I had those approved by the academic council. I did the thing for the State Department of Education.

Now, what kind of thing did you do for the State Department of Education?

I did the Reading Week thing. I did the TV. One year I did it with the Senator Cannon and Governor List.

So tell me about reading week. What is that all about?

Okay. Reading week, it's a national thing every year. It's in February, first or second week of February I think. And they designate it Reading Week. In fact, I have a plaque somewhere. I went to a couple of schools. I used to go to my daughter's class. They encourage people to go to schools and to read and read to your children. Get them interested in books. And it's an effort by the government to emphasize the importance of reading for our kids.

So I was involved with that. I did the TV things. I did the benefit for Muscular Dystrophy and Boys and Girls Club. I mean if I showed you my resume and what I've done and some of the other things --

So even though you're a full-time professor, you also kept your hand in show business?

Well, yeah. I used to sing on weekends, but mainly radio. And here's what happened. Here's what got us to this house. I'll tell you how we got here.

I want to know because I want to get here.

Did I tell you how I had the little condo first?

No. Good. I have a little condo now.

That's a story. You can do it. You can do it. So in the summertime, KDON radio opened '71, '72. {1971} It's a 50,000-watt station all over the West Coast, KDON. You have my cards, right?

Yes.

I went over there. I was doing part-time radio on the weekends or something. And the all-night guy, Barry something or another, was doing the all-night talk show during the week. And they needed a summer replacement for a few weeks. So I did it. And he asked me if I would like to do it full-time all night after the summer. And I said, gee, I'd have to get permission.

And Judith Eden was the president of the community college then. She was the first and only woman president they had, Judith Eden. So I went to her. You had to get permission to do stuff. Well, I taught broadcasting. I taught communications. I wrote a letter and I said is it okay? They offered me this job to do it during the week. I ran across the letter not that long ago. She approved it. She said, yeah, that's your field. Why not?

So now, get this, Claytee, I changed my schedule to teach night classes at the community college. I did my night classes. I taught from {6:00} to 10:40 or 10:20. I would go home. Take a nap for an hour or two. Get up at midnight. Go to the radio station. Do one to six, five hours on the air. Come home. Sleep till two o'clock {or} three o'clock. Go to school. Do my office hours. Do my grading. And then teach. I did that for three years. Not only that -- wait. I'm working on my doctorate doing the same thing. It might be a year or two. But at one time I was working on my doctorate, teaching at the college, doing the all-night talk show. I literally ate, slept and worked. But it got us on our feet.

So then one day they offered me -- I figured after the summer that was it. And they said how would you like to do it all the time? And when I got the permission, I said, well, I don't want to do it if it's not going to be worth my while. I'm going to kill myself. I think I was getting eight or ten dollars an hour at the time. And all night it's not commensurate with, you know, whatever. So they said, okay, there's nobody out there.

So my wife decided we're going to sell it. And so we started to sell the show. People would buy time on the show. I remember we had a restaurant, "The Panic Restaurant". They'd come on. I'd do the commercial. I'd write it. I'd play it. We charged them so much. The station would charge us and then we charged them. And then we had about four or five clients. And then to one of the clients I said you don't need to put an ad in the paper. I said we'll do it. I'll write it. Somebody said I need a TV commercial. I'll write it and direct it. All of the sudden we had four or five clients from the radio station that we were doing other stuff, agency stuff.

My wife's a heck of a salesperson. And she does the billing. I like the creative stuff. And she does all the billing. I said to my wife, you know, we better get a license. I think we have an ad agency. That's how we got started.

So then we did our show, Paul Anka's Jubilation. His father ran it, Andy Anka. We did a remote. In fact, I'll show you some of the stuff here. And there's some connection to UNLV in here, too. We did it out of the Continental, which is now Terrible Herbst. We did it in the lounge. We did all kinds of stuff. We had a convention of our listeners from all over the West Coast. You'll see what we did. So I was always into something else because, as you know, teachers don't make a lot of money. And I wanted more for my wife and my family. So I was very ambitious. But wife was ambitious, willing to work hard. Somebody once asked a successful person what's the secret of your success? And he said --

(End Tape 1, Side B.)

So we started the agency. My wife did 95 percent of the agency. And on Fridays when I was off from teaching we'd make appointments. We'd go. We'd pick up a client or two. But she ran the business. I did the voiceover. I did the voiceovers. I did the directing. I did the writing, scripts. So I enjoyed that. It didn't take up a lot of my time. My wife did most of the work.

So let's see. Where were we? Oh, how did I meet my wife? We're getting there. At that

time I was single. I just started teaching. I was doing radio. I met my wife -- there used to be a place -- I don't know if it's still around -- there used to be a club called "Who's Who International". Now, "Who's Who International" was started by Robert Cummings, the actor, and Conrad Hilton from Beverly Hills. These were people of substance -- divorced, widows, and widowers, whatever. And they wanted to meet the opposite sex, like singles. They didn't want to go to bars and nightclubs. So they formed this club called Who's Who International. And it was an international club. And they were all over the world at the time, eventually. But they started one in Beverly Hills. You paid \$50 dues a year. Then if you wanted to go to Switzerland for a weekend for skiing or to New York for a weekend -- I mean you had to have the time and the money, which I didn't have much of either -- a little bit of time, but no money. And they started a chapter in Las Vegas at the Jockey Club. We would meet at the Jockey Club. And it was mostly women. So they needed an influx of male gender. And I used to emcee, you know, with my show business. So I hosted some of these parties.

This one night we went to the Regency Towers. They had a wine tasting. And I went up there after teaching a class. It was late. And I walk in and I see people mingling. And I see this very attractive lady, man-tailored suit, like really nice New York, sophisticated kind of thing. She's with a guy. Well, you see. You see her hair. And I was just instantly attracted to her. But *c'est la vie*.

As it happened two or three weeks later, they're having a party on Maryland Parkway at a place called King Arthur's. It's since burned down. It was a restaurant, lounge, bar, whatever. And I was teaching at Rancho High School. I was teaching a speech class for a group of firemen. I wasn't going to go there that night. I figured, yeah, out of curiosity I'll stop by for a few minutes. So I stopped in. And the woman who was kind of the president of the company, Ruth Tanner -- I'll never forget her name. So I walk in and said I'm here, Ruth. I'm happy to see you. Whatever. And then I'm there a few minutes and some people are coming in. And I turn around and there's Gail coming in.

Now, her brother was a doctor. Her husband had died and she had a young child. So he was practicing here in Vegas. So he said come on out here. So she stayed with him. So he used to go to the club, the Who's Who International, and she went with him, obviously. And so this one

night she was by herself. And Tanner said, oh, there's some people. Why don't you go and seat them or whatever; show them around? So, of course, I went right over to Gail. I took her to a booth in the back. And I sat down and started talking to her. I said where are you from? She said New York. And what I liked about Gail mainly is I didn't have to carry the conversation. She was very eloquent -- not eloquent, but very loquacious. She talked. She told me about her life, about New York. It was refreshing, somebody from back east I could communicate with.

And I said tell you what. I have to teach this class. Why don't we make arrangements to be -- and I figured no. Why don't you come with me? You'll sit in my class. After class we'll go out and have dinner. Okay. So we get in my old car, which she kids me about today, called the "Green Hornet." The green Dodge car, she didn't like it. It wasn't bad. It wasn't that bad. It's all I could afford at the time.

Well, what happened to the convertible?

Oh, I sold that. I sold it in Denver and I bought this little Chrysler. I don't know if I want to get into it. There was a marriage in between that. I had a girl in Yuma. I don't want to go into that. I don't think it adds anything to the story.

So I went to Vegas. I came here with that old jalopy. And I bought another car, a Dodge Dart. And it was nice. It was better than the car I had. And that's all I could afford. Well, she kids me to this day about it. And I have pictures of it and I'll show it to you sometime.

We went away for a weekend with our oldest son at the time. We went to Disneyland. And my wife is sitting on the front of the car with Mickey Mouse ears. We had a good time. We got along great. We went together almost a year. So we went to the Port Tack. Do you know where the Port Tack is?

No.

I think it's on Atlantic near Sahara. I think it's still there. They had the Starboard Tack and the Port Tack. The Starboard Tack is that one. And then they opened one up on Sahara. The Port Tack, I don't know if that's still there. So we went to Starboard Tack and we sat down. And I really was smitten with Gail. I was very attracted to her. Then we hit it off. She must have seen the potential in me. I didn't have a pot. I'll tell you. Neither one of us, really. So we sat there and we had a drink. And we talked and talked and talked. And we never did have dinner. And we

went together for, as I say, almost a year.

How we got married -- at the Tropicana -- we used to get invited to all the openings because of the radio, right? And the Tropicana used to close -- this town used to be a deserted town in December. There was no business. Now with this rodeo, it's a different story. So they used to shut down a lot of the shows, give the kids a couple of weeks off, and then rehearse the new show to open up Christmas night. So the Tropicana opened a new Follies that night. And I knew the publicist there, the entertainment -- what the hell was her name? Jenny McAlfie. So we went to the show. I was dressed up. Gail was dressed, of course, all dressed up.

And we had talked about getting engaged. And I had been married before. She had been married before. She was a widow. We ran into some friends of ours. We had mentioned that we were thinking about getting engaged. This is the show. I said, you know, I don't want my sister to hear it secondhand. Let's go tell her what we intend to do. So we went over there that night. It was about {10:00 or } 10:30. And we said we're thinking of getting engaged. Well, she knew we both had been married. I don't know what her motivation was, but it made sense. Why get engaged? See, I was thinking about having a six-, seven-year engagement. Right? See, I wasn't anxious to get married. But I figured that's the proper thing; for a year, get to know each other, whatever. So my sister said, you've both been married. Why get engaged? When you decide -- she didn't say go get married. But when you decide, you know, why don't you just get married?

So we went back to my wife's apartment. She was my girlfriend. We never lived together until we got married. She had a little boy. So we were very straight with that. So we went back there. And Gail turned to me and said, "You know" -- facetiously -- "Your sister is right. Why don't we just get married? Well, you're wearing your blue suit."

And she was dressed up.

And she was dressed up. And it was so cute. It was tongue and cheek. And I said Christmas night -- I figured they're closed Christmas. If they're open, we'll get married. She called my bluff. They said it's one of the busiest nights of year. But they said don't come down between 3:00 and 4:00 because that's when they go to lunch. So we called my mother-in-law and father-in-law to be in New York. I had met them before when they visited. And her brother, the doctor, we called him to be best man. And he said, well, call me when you're ready to go down. He went back to

sleep. And we went down to the county courthouse and got our license. I called my brother and he came down. He stood up for us. We got married. We called her parents. They were very thrilled. Why not. I kid my wife. So we got married. That was 1975. Then in two weeks we're going to celebrate our 31st wedding anniversary.

And I adopted her boy, who is now 38. Yeah, because he was born in '69. What would that make him? Yeah, 37. He's 37. Then we got married. We were living at University. We had an 850-square-foot condo I had just bought before we got married. So we're moving in.

Now, where is this? University and?

University off Harmon and Maryland Parkway. And I paid \$26,000 for it. And I moved my boy. I adopted him two weeks after we got married. He took one bedroom, which was my office. We stayed there a year or two, a couple of years, until we got on my feet. But my wife needed more space. You know, nesters, women are nesters, right? Which is right; the timing. But we looked everywhere in this town. And everything that was adequate that I liked, that was okay, acceptable, was in the 60 to 65,000-dollar range. And we could only afford in the low 40s. Well, what's 20,000 now? But then it's half as much more. And us living on just teaching then and working part-time and Gail eventually got a job working in a photo shop part-time...But we weren't living high on the hog. So we found a house for \$41,000. So we sold that house.

Now, where was the 41,000-dollar house?

It was the three-bedroom house on Haught Street where they're putting up that big complex. It's called The Airport Center. In fact, every time we go by there, Eastern and Russell, I point out and say that's where our house was. Why don't they make that a national shrine? And they never did put a plaque. So we lived there. And we had a boy. We had Jordan.

Anyway, we sold that house for 30{30,000}. So we made 4,000. Put that in the house. Bought the house for 41 {4,000}. We stayed there two and a half years. We sold it for 80{80,000}. We took the \$38,000 equity after everything was paid off. We found a house for 90,000. And we lived there for a few years. I don't know how many, three, four years, whatever. We sold it for 150{150,000}. Then we had another child and we needed more space. We bought a house in a walled community. We went from 850 square feet to 1500 square feet to 2100 square feet to 3100 square feet. Then we converted the garage, made it an office, built the garage in the

back and had about 3600 square feet. Circle Drive. It was beautiful. And we almost had it paid off. I owed 67,000 on that house.

And I don't know what the circumstances were. We were ready to move. We had another child. We looked for other tract homes. Nothing satisfied us. So we took a loan on the house. I don't know how I did what we did. I took a loan on the house. I refinanced it, pulled some money out. Bought a lot in Legacy, half-acre. And sold the other house -- well, I put a lease option for five years. I was pulling money out of it, which was helping me pay for the other thing. And we built the house. How we built that house I don't know. It was 6400 square feet. We were there five, five and a half years. It wasn't for sale. Somebody came along and made us an offer we couldn't refuse, over seven figures. We took that money. We bought a lot up in Anthem. We built that. It took us two and a half years to build it. As we were building it, we were paying it off. And that's how we got to have a house like this with no mortgage.

Wonderful. Well, I didn't realize --

And I retired, perfect timing. So that's an old story I like to tell. But you can do the same -- anybody can do what we did. A little luck, a little tenacity, a little common sense. We didn't do it for business reasons. We did it out of necessity. And it turned out -- they say kids bring luck. Boy, our kids certainly did. Just four super kids.

So I got my master's. Then I continued working on my doctorate. I figured if I didn't get my doctorate I'd be too old. I was in my 40's already. And it just seemed the right thing to do. I didn't need the doctorate. But for my own satisfaction...Not only that, but I went back after my doctorate because I teach English and I was going to get a degree in English. So I got the 30 credits for English. And I figured what do I need this for? Take my {comps} and take my qualifying {exams}. And I just never finished. But I do have enough credits for a degree in English. I had been teaching English for 20 years or 15, 10 to 15, whatever. But it would have been my fifth degree. I didn't need it. Enough's enough, right?

So then I taught. Had the children. We sold that house. Built this one. My wife is president of -- she had breast cancer 15 years ago. I had colon cancer ten years ago. Five years after she had breast cancer I got colon cancer. And thank God, both of us have survived. We're still here.

That's wonderful. That's fantastic.

That's why that story I showed you, the magazine -- it's called "I'd Rather Have Most of You Than None of You." And so that prompted me to write that story. And that's a true story. Then she did a radio show on cancer for ten years on KDON, ten years every Sunday, 10 to 11. And she'd have all these doctors and all these people, oncologists and the survivors. And we used to emcee at Sunrise Hospital. For about three years we used to emcee. They have Cancer Survivors Week. So they'd bring in people, Marcia from the Newhart Show. They would have celebrities, survivors who are touched by cancers, all these survivors, young kids to older people. You know, we would celebrate our existence once a year.

Wonderful. So what did you do with your diet after that? Did you diet change after this?

No. Not at all. My diet? Nothing at all. What happened was I had -- I try to take care of myself -- well, at least to an extent. But I went for a physical. I started having some bleeding. And I went to a doctor, a proctologist. And he said it was internal hemorrhoids. I had no symptoms other than that. I had no pain, nothing. Then eight months later I went for my physical. And the doctor said, you know, you have bleeding there. Now, here I'm in my 60s, never had a baseline colonoscopy, which somebody should have told me to get. I knew nothing about it. And he went in there and he said get a colonoscopy. And they found a polyp. They found cancer. They said it's good it was high up. If it were lower, there would have been a problem. So they took about three or four inches of my intestine. It was a successful operation. For the first year, two years, three years -- every year I'd go for a colonoscopy. Now I go every two or three years. Ever since then I got lazy. I got tired. I got older. But I have to lose -- I know if I lost some weight I'd look even younger.

And you look great now.

Well, thank you. But anyway, my wife was fantastic with her -- in fact, if you want I'll give you one of the magazines. Did I give you one?

No, not yet.

I'll give you one. You can read the story. But this is some of the stuff we did. This was Mayor Bill Briare.

He's now opening a scrapbook that we're going to look through.

This is Bill Briare. He was a former mayor of Las Vegas I think two terms. "All-nighters meet at Imperial Palace. Gail and Harvey Allen welcome Bill Briare, Las Vegas Mayor, to the first ever convention at the All-Nighters Club. Hundreds of fans." They had 600 people at the cocktail party at the Imperial Palace.

So where did they come from?

All over the West Coast. We had a couple that came in from Seattle and got married here. It was really, really nice. "Popular talk show was heard on KDON Radio one to five a.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

What was the talk show like?

It was kind of a friendly thing. We had guests. We talked about -- not too much politics. We talked about things, about family, about people. I had my son, Jordan -- here is Jordan a few years ago. When he was about three or four years old, I said, "Okay now, say here's my dad, Harvey Allen." And I still have the tapes. I played them Sunday night. "Here's my dad, Harvey Allen." He couldn't say Harvey Allen. And so just for a kick I played my theme music, my introduction, and I press it -- "And now here's my dad, Harvey Allen." And they just loved it. So a year or two later -- I used to play it almost every night -- I had him record a new one where he was speaking a little more fluently. And people called up and said we don't want that introduction. We want the old introduction. I have all that stuff. But here's when we did a show -- oh, and I had the Harvey Allen Orchestra New Year's Eve.

And this is the Hotel Continental.

This is the Hotel Continental where the Terrible Herbst is now. Okay. We had our show in the lounge. Let's see. Here is Gail at the radio station doing the show with me.

And you guys look like you are very relaxed.

Yeah. It was a potpourri of things; whatever was topical. People wanted to talk about religion or things like that, not too controversial. We didn't get into heavy stuff. What else? Oh, look, here is George Burns. He was a guest on our show.

Now, this is the radio show we're talking about?

The radio show, yeah. Now, that was at Paul Anka's father's Jubilation restaurant.

Now, where was Jubilation restaurant?

It's over -- I don't know if it's still there -- on Harmon near the Strip. There used to be this Jubilation, a beautiful restaurant and lounge. They might have torn it down.

Right. Because I think Harley-Davidson or something like that is there now.

Yeah, it could be there. But this is "the happiest couple in radio Monday through Friday." That was in the "Vegas Visitor." That was a tourist paper.

And a beautiful photograph of the two of you.

There's mayor. There's the trip. This is the stuff I showed you. And that's the "Eye on Las Vegas." That was my sister. She gave a --

Okay. This is your sister's column in the newspaper.

In The Sun, right. Then let's see. Oh, let me show you. We went on a cruise with our listeners to Ensenada. He's Forest Duke. He's the "Norm" of years ago. And here's a guy who came on our show -- Tobacco Institute sent a guy out all over the country, a former news guy. And after he was on our show -- this guy was really sharp -- you would think smoking was good for you. And he writes this letter to me. It says: "It was a real pleasure to do your show last week and I very much look forward to talking with you again whenever my plans call for me to be in Las Vegas. You are the two nicest talk show hosts I've ever worked with." That's pretty heavy. "Keep up the good work, Walker Merriman."

Okay. Now, this guy here, Andy Nixon. Here's the UNLV connection. Andy Nixon used to be the academic adviser to the UNLV football and basketball team. Then he started to write. I went to his house one time. I'll never forget it. It was on three levels. And it was such a nice layout. And the house we had before I copied that layout. It talks about Harvey Allen. It says: "If you believe Ben Franklin -- Harvey Allen, he is a stentorian voice that announces half-time activities." I did the marching band for UNLV for 28 years, 29. I'm the only announcer they've ever had. In fact, last night -- we have a banquet every year. Last night was the banquet at Yolie's.

Oh, that's wonderful.

It says: "The night shift -- formed the All-Nighters Club. This week all-nighters from around the West Coast are meeting each other at the Imperial Palace. Activities include two weddings of couples who have found each other through the club, shows and cocktail parties."

So how has UNLV's band changed over the years?

Smaller. It's a question of finances. You know, it's -- the football team is not doing all that well. They're not drawing all that well. I remember the band had 125, 130. Now it's under 80. It's hard to recruit. A lot of factors. A lot of factors.

In your newspaper recently, the chancellor is getting ready to investigate --

I know.

-- sports bettors. How do you feel about that?

Well, this is a sports town. But this is a town that also supports winners. We're spoiled in the 90s. You saw my memorabilia. And I remember Harvey Hyde had teams. What's his name? Tony Knapp. They had competitive teams. They were exciting teams. We had 30,000 people out -- 32,000, Wisconsin and some other games. When you put on a team that's exciting -- I mean this is not Chicago where with the Cubs no matter whether they're up or down people went out to see them. They supported them.

This is a town that likes winners. And we've fallen on some rough times. Self-imposed, we've done -- politically, if you look at the history of administrations and all kinds of problems. And we could have had a dynasty in both football and basketball -- I know in basketball. But there were some personality problems. When Tark left that was the end of the era.

But we could have had -- I mean there are people playing in the pros now that were slated -- Lamar Odom was supposed to come here. He's a big star for the Lakers. And we had Capona I think his name was. So many of these great stars went to other schools because we were not going to go that route. They wanted to emphasize the academics. I think you can have both. Notre Dam has both, UCLA, SC. But there has to be support from above. There has to be a total support from the community, from administration. They have to make a commitment for that (indiscernible).

So this thing that Rogers -- the chancellor is calling for -- I think they want to do an investigation. I think it's more or less to send a message because I don't think they'll get rid of sports. But one of the things they brought up, maybe we should -- the first game of this year we clobbered I think it was northern Idaho, 53 to something. But they're a Division II school. So one of the things that were brought up, maybe they should go down to another level when we'd be a

powerhouse then.

But I think they need to get the right people. They need to get the right players. They need to attract them at the school. UNLV is a great school. It has great, great professors. There are great schools out there -- school of Hotel Administration, Engineering, Culinary Arts, the Theater School and School of Music. I mean they have some world-class people out there. The law school is just booming. And it's exploding and growing. They have to raise the quality. See, the community college and the university have been going for numbers and for more people. Step back. Go for quality. Raise the qualifications. They get arguments, more factors, right? But you need to raise -- it should be a school that's not like anybody can go there. They have to raise their standards.

And that has to be done.

Yes. It takes time to do that. But when they wanted to go from I think -- a couple of years ago they wanted to go from a B average instead of a C-plus average or something, they caught a lot of heat with that. So they're going to have to make compromises. But when they hear the name Las Vegas, UNLV, University of Nevada Las Vegas, oh, that's with the girly shows, the topless, the gaming, you know the stigma. So they have to overcome that.

When I'm someplace other than Las Vegas and I tell them where I work, they say, oh, the Runnin' --

(End Tape 2, Side A.)

In the broad scheme of things, you know, we don't have the history of a Notre Dam or of a Michigan. But there's so many schools like Southern Cal, like UCLA that they do have tradition of excellence in education and excellence of competitive sporting teams. There has to be a commitment. You know, we're not making total -- not everybody's on the same page. But we've known that when we field -- you couldn't get a ticket to a basketball for years in this town in the late {1980's} 80s, early 90s. But you go now, I think they have -- what? -- 1200 people one night or 1400 people. And at the last game of the year they had 2500 or 5,000, if that. The town likes to support a winner.

They have to make a decision whether they're going to go full bore and make that commitment. And some people say put the money in the buildings. Put the money in the

programs. Well, why can't you have both? You shouldn't have one suffer at the benefit of the other. So it's not an easy thing and it doesn't happen overnight.

But, see, this is Adam. This is Jordan.

We're still looking at the scrapbook.

Here we went to KNUZ for a while. We took over two hours of the Larry King Show. People hated us. Larry King was on 11 to 5. He was on six hours a night.

11 p.m. to 5 a.m.?

Right. Syndicated or whatever. They gave us 11:00 to 1:00. So he was on from 1:00 to 4:00 I think it was. And people hated us because we took Larry King off for two hours. That was Andy Nixon and Forest Duke.

What else? We had a Christmas party. I'll tell you what. The Gold Spike for years they were sponsors in our show. So one night they said let's have a party for you. Let's see who's listening to you. So we had this party. It was on a Friday or a Saturday night. Jammed. They went through 20 cases of champagne. They had free food. We jammed the place. So then about a year later they did some thinking. You know, we had the party on a Saturday. It's usually busy anyway. Our slow night is Sunday. Let's have a party on -- we promoted it. Jammed.

Oh, that's wonderful. So when you would do something like a party -- I understand people came from everywhere. But for parties did they come from everywhere?

Well, no. The parties were just local people.

And with the way we work in Las Vegas, it makes sense that people are listening all night. Well see, that's it. The owner of KDON said there's nobody out there. But people are up at night. We have boxes of fan mail. I mean that's how we started the All-Nighters Club. People would call in. We had hundreds and hundreds of people with those cards we would send out. And Christmas, Valentine's Day -- people would send us boxes of goodies for our kids. We talked about our kids. We talked about family things. Every month we'd talk about religion. We'd get into all kinds of arguments. So I had a different religion every month just to enlighten people, to educate them. I had Father Bozier from Bishop Gorman, a Catholic. I had a rabbi from a temple. I had Mormon people on. I had Presbyterian, the Baha'i Faith. So people could understand everybody's --

That's the only way. And we need that again.

That's the only way. Yeah.

We need it now.

Boy, do we.

Here's when I wrote for the Valley Times. See, this was the superintendent of schools. This is the Harvey Allen Show. This was at Jubilation. This is our table we had there. Wonderful.

And this is just -- Jackie Leonard, he was on our show. Cal McKinley was a big talk show host here in town. And Jackie Brett, she's a publicist itself here in town.

So were you at The Landmark at one time?

At The Landmark. Well, this was a party we attended. All kinds of stuff.

So tell me more about the -- you've just retired.

Yes.

And now you're going to work with your wife. How does she feel about that?

How does she feel?

You're going to work more closely, I should say.

I'm working harder -- I keep telling her, hey, I'm retired. What am I doing here? She has me doing scripts. We direct and produce. Here's the one where I wrote the story about my wife. So you can read about it.

I'd like to read that.

People say -- I have a friend back East who is a retired IRS guy. He worked for the federal government for 23 years. Then he went to work for the state for ten years. So he's a double -- triple dipper. And he's been retired for about six, eight years. I talked to him. What do you do to keep busy? I said there aren't enough hours in the day.

That's right.

And that contributes to people looking young, feeling young. You've got to keep busy, keep the mind going.

We just talked about the future of UNLV and what you kind of see that it should be. We're going to continue to grow, but we should do all of it. What do you see as the future of Las

Vegas?

Well, when I was here in '54 or '55 there were under 60,000 people in the whole valley. And when Howard Hughes came in the 60s, we were kind of stagnating. And he came in and gave it a little bit of legitimacy. And we went from there. Then we had some recessions. I remember walking through a hotel when we had a big recession. I don't know whether it was in the 70s or the 60s. And I used to turn to my wife and say, don't these people know there's a recession going on. It used to be recession-proof. I don't know if that would happen.

What I fear the most is terrorism. We take it for granted. We're very complacent. But if I would get in the mind-set of a terrorist -- they don't like our lifestyle, the western lifestyle. It's very, very decadent to them. It's everything they're against -- the nudity, the girls, the exploitation they feel. All they have to do -- what they did to Oklahoma City with a truck bomb took off the whole building. And what they did in New York at 9/11. What would be that difficult to take a couple of car bombs and take down the Bellagio, the Venetian, one of those hotels? That would really put us in a very big economic downturn. I don't know how long it would take to recover. We did recover fairly well from 9/11. But there was nothing that followed up. I think we are very vulnerable. We are an attractive target.

Now, if that doesn't come to pass -- and I hope it doesn't; that's just my fear -- I think the town -- they're building another -- what is it? -- Ivanpah Airport near Primm.

That's the discussion.

I think they are going to have that. It's only 28 miles down the road. Once they do that, you're going to start filling in between the airport and here. It's happening now, the sprawl. I think what they have to do is they have to really think of a master plan. I mean they talk about it, but then politics gets in the way. They need to have a better planned growth for this Southern Nevada, even old Nevada, especially down here because if not, if they don't have some planned controlled growth considering the water, considering the resources -- they need some more homes that are affordable.

And they need something for the homeless. I mean that's a sticky problem. You're damned if you do; you're damned if you don't. We need some great leadership. I mean we have some good people. We've had some good people.

And the same thing with the university. The university seems to be going along. They need better parking. Now with this new plan they're talking about that -- who is it owns a lot of the land there? -- they're thinking of making like a university city area. That's a great idea, like UCLA, like Berkeley. And if they could do that and make a kind of university theme -- but they put a building here and they put a building there.

I remember when they built the original library. It was a beautiful library. Then they built another library next to it and then they connected the two. Why don't they just tear one down and build -- I don't know. Maybe I'm not astute enough to know why they did that.

Well, they needed all the space.

Oh, they needed the space. But the new library is gorgeous. I mean it's great.

Isn't it wonderful? But the old library now is the law school. Isn't that wonderful?

Yeah. That's great. Now, it shows what the university can do. That law school, in a few short years, got accredited. They got recognition. They attract some of the best professors. And they're one of the most respected in the country. They've lost a little bit of that edge recently I've heard. But at one time it was one of the top --

And it's going to come back.

It'll come back. But I think you just can't have growth for growth. You have to have planned growth. And sometimes I get a feeling that the university system is more concerned with quantity than quality. And I know a lot of the times they get lip service. They talk about it. But they have to make some hard decisions. And that doesn't mean it should be at the benefit or at the defense or whatever for the athletic activities.

I mean we have some people -- I mean look at the golf program. Look how many pros they've turned out. And football, we have people in the pros. Basketball, not as much as we used to. Swimming. We have a decent -- now the women's basketball team is coming around. And volleyball. I mean we would come out to those events if they had a nice facility.

When I was working on my doctorate, we had to take 12 hours in UNR and their doctoral candidates had to come down here for 12 hours. It was a great experience. And when I went to spend a summer up at UNR, we used to go to the concerts. We used to go to the watermelon festivals and the art film festivals. There was stuff to do there. They had a quad. It was a campus

atmosphere. We don't have that here. And it looks like they're thinking of going in that direction. What's the guy's name? He's a real estate guy. He owns a lot of the property.

Right. And I just read the articles the other day, as well. But now, we do have all kinds of activities on campus, all kinds.

Yeah, but where do you park? It's not conducive to bringing people out. And even the students can't park there it's so hard. They need more parking. They had money to build a parking garage for years and they didn't do it.

But you know that we have a five-story --

Now you do. Yeah. But by the time that was finished, it was probably obsolete.

We really need another one. Yes.

They need to have farsighted planning. Just like with the roads, sometimes they build these new highways and roads. By the time they finish -- it takes so long -- it's obsolete. They need more roads.

And I think there is a master plan. But we probably don't know the details yet.

Yeah. I'm just talking from my observations.

But I want to get back to the city just for a minute. When you were working on the Strip, especially the first time you came in 1954, was when the city was run by the mob or the families.

Yeah. Nobody would like to agree to that, but we know that's what it was. Bugsy Siegel started the Flamingo. That started it on the way. And the story of the Stardust and the Tropicana and some of the notoriety they've got...But that for the most part has -- who knows what's behind the scene? But for the most part I think it's become corporate. I mean these people like the Hiltons, the Adelsons, the Steve Wynns, they wouldn't be putting in these hundreds of millions, billions of dollars to build these edifices and these beautiful hotels if they didn't have faith in the future of this town.

That's wonderful. That's right. But those people who ran it -- Entratter and the other people -- what --

They didn't run it. But they were an integral part of the growth. I mean they weren't the builders, the developers. They were operators. They operated within the hotels.

What was Entratter like? What was that era like here in the city? Elegance? What word would you use to describe that era?

Well, I can give you a good example. When Tallulah Bankhead was working the hotel, I remember she came out on stage and she saw some people sitting ringside with T-shirts. And she was livid. She told them all how dare you come to a hotel dressed like -- so it's gravitated toward the casual come-as-you-are because they don't care -- they didn't care then. They wanted bodies. I remember going to the Flamingo hotel. They didn't have buffets. They had chuck wagons. And at the Flamingo they had the best one at 11:30 at night. They didn't have them all day -- at lunch, breakfast, dinner. And it was really a Conestoga wagon filled with ice and with platters of food -- lobster, crab, all kinds of hot tables, all kinds of stuff, shrimp. Buck and a half. Buck and a half. And you usually got comped to that, right?

Comps were easy to come by when the mob ran the town, the boys. The town was good in a way and not so good because when they threw somebody out, they literally threw somebody out physically. And, you know, you'd find the obligatory bodies, skeletons. You still do. I mean it happens. And there were a lot of things going on. The enforcement community, they'd look the other way. There were all kinds of hanky-panky, all kinds of arrangements. It was really what they called a juice town. If you knew somebody, you could get in anywhere, get any favor done. It's still that to a degree, but not so much.

I remember one time -- I used to interview. I'd pick up a phone, Harvey Allen, from wherever I was writing for. No problem. Get comped for two. If I had friends from out of town, I'd get comped for four. No problem. A few years ago I called to cover a show. One comp. That was unheard of. I don't know how that works now. But that was not good.

When the bean counters came in, you know, they're looking at the bottom line. At one time they didn't care if -- I remember going to see Frank Sinatra at the Sands. It was the middle of winter. It was a slow night, a Tuesday or a Wednesday. And they used to go out into the casino if they didn't have the tables filled and bring people in to see a free show. They wanted the seats filled. I remember sitting in the back of the booth. I wasn't drinking. I had a cup of coffee. I had a date. I had two cups of coffee, maybe four cups. I think it cost me four dollars, five dollars with a tip, or something like that, some outrageous thing because they didn't care to make money from

the showroom or from the restaurants. They wanted to bring them in. Of course, once you were in, chances are you're going to gamble. That was the mind-set.

And it's still working to a degree today. They have all these programs and these slot cards. It used to be that they would bring people in on junkets so that they would gamble. If they gambled, they did. If they didn't gamble -- now when you come in, they check your line of credit. They know how much you gambled, how long. Everything's computerized. It's down to a science.

And you're almost guaranteed to lose because anybody in his right mind -- we don't gamble. Okay? If you have a gambling problem, this is not the town for you. If I would take \$20 and go to a slot machine or go to the crap table, if I would double it or lose it, I'd walk away. How many people can do that?

Not very many.

So this town grew on human nature and greed and all these other attractions because how many times you talk to somebody and they're down 2 or \$300? I just want to get my money back. And they're chasing their money. Now, if you want to go for entertainment, you have a couple thousand, a couple hundred and you want to play for an hour or two hours and have some fun, maybe get comped or have some inexpensive meals and see a show or something, that's fine.

But years ago if you knew anybody, you could go anywhere, get food, get drinks, get cigars, cigarettes, anything you wanted if you gambled. They didn't check you out. They didn't have digital records, no digital computers. But now they want every section to be accountable. If you're going to get comped -- and I know people over the years -- I have a cousin that used to come in from Virginia that used to throw these big hams around. What do you call them? Smoked hams. He'd bring them in and give them to the pit bosses. He couldn't pay for anything. And I also knew some people who would come into town and they'd get comped here or comped there and then lose thousands and thousands.

There's a lot of psychology at work in this town. They know what makes people gamble. They do studies. They hire professional people. What attracts them? What makes them? But at one time -- and you can read about it. There are lots of books written about history. They've done the research. They're more knowledgeable than I am. I just told you what I've experienced, what

I've observed.

But at one time there was a place. It was a house of ill repute. I think it was on Boulder Highway. I think it was called Brownies if I'm not mistaken.

Foxie's?

Brownies I think. It may not be correct. But there was hanky-panky going on. Everybody looked the other way. This was a frontier town at one time. It was segregated. This town has grown. It's come of age to a degree. It's overcome a lot of adversity and a lot of negative -- I mean with the segregation, with the bomb -- and now it's got respectability. We have restaurants that are five-star, world-class restaurants. We're the entertainment capital of the world. And we have these shows.

But the thing is -- I remember going to Caesars Palace for \$9.95 and having a steak dinner and seeing Andy Williams or seeing Paul Anka. And then going to the night show for a drink, maybe five dollars, ten dollars, \$15 minimum, two or three drinks. Those days are gone. Now you have to buy a ticket. And I just wrote in my column in Maturity Today about tickets are 250, \$300 to go see Celine Dion and Barry Manilow.

You know, I'm spoiled. I used to be in show business. I've worked with these people. I've seen all the shows. And also in radio I get invited and get comped to all these shows. And I refuse to do that now. There's nobody that I really have to see. I've never seen O. I've never seen Danny Gans. Now, I could pick up a phone and say I'm with Maturity Today and I want to review. I'd probably get -- but I'm really -- different stage. I'm not jaded. But I'm at different stage of my life.

I spend the time in my lovely home. Me and my wife we're going to a cruise in two weeks. We're going to the Mediterranean in May. And next year we're going to the western Mediterranean. That's what we want to do. And we're busy with the agency -- my wife is. And my life is so full, more full than I guess I would like. You see I have an orchard out there, tangerines. I have my garden. I'm into gardening and photography. I mean life is so full. I don't have enough hours in the day.

Yes. Isn't it wonderful?

No. I just wish I could goof off sometimes. It is. It really is.

Well, I really appreciate this so much. And I will make a copy of this for you.

Oh, if you would, I would love that.

Good.

Let me give you a couple of tapes. Okay?

Okay, good.

(End Tape 2, Side B.)