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An Interview with Myram Borders

An Oral History Conducted by Claytee D. White

The Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project

Oral History Research Center at UNLV
University Libraries
University of Nevada Las Vegas

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The transcript received minimal editing that includes the elimination of fragments, false starts, and repetitions in order to enhance the reader's understanding of the material. All measures have been taken to preserve the style and language of the narrator. In several cases photographic sources accompany the individual interviews.

The following interview is part of a series of interviews conducted under the auspices of the Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project. Additional transcripts may be found under that series title.

Claytee D. White, Project Director
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Illustrations

1957 University of Nevada Reno yearbook page

1994 Silver & Blue photo of Myram Borders on the job

1999 photo during News Bureau news conference, Taipei, Taiwan

Preface

Growing up in Las Vegas, Myram Borders remained in Nevada most of her life. After graduating from high school, she attended the University of Nevada Reno. An internship with United Press International wire service would place her on a career path that included working in Reno, Los Angeles, and then brought her back to Las Vegas in 1965.

Her journalism experience with UPI created a foundation for unique insights about living in Las Vegas and the effect gaming had on the world's perceptions of Las Vegas newsworthiness. After her long career with UPI, Myram also worked briefly for Gannett and then became commissioner of Consumer Affairs under Gov. Bob Miller, which she admits was not her favorite work. Her next step was to head up of the Las Vegas News Bureau.

As one might expect, Myram has stories about the stories she covered. She recalls how by sheer accident she came upon the scene of Lefty Rosenthal's car being blown up in a parking lot. She explains how a light system was put atop the El Cortez Hotel to signal whether workers were to show up for work at the test site. She covered the first woman dealer in Las Vegas and scooped other reporters to announce Elvis' wedding at the Aladdin.



Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project



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Name of Narrator: MYRAM BORDERS
Name of Interviewer: CLAYTEE D. WHITE

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Signature of Interviewer _____ Date _____

This is February 9th, 2009. And I'm with Myram Borders at her home in Las Vegas.

So how are you today?

I am fine. Thanks, Claytee.

Great. I just want to start by talking about your early life. Tell me where you came from, where you grew up, about your family, your mom and dad.

Okay. I was born in Kentucky. My parents moved here in 1940—so I was I think four years old at the time—because they both suffered from sinuses and the doctors didn't know what to do with a lot of things in those days. They said go to a dry climate. So my father decided he'd come to Las Vegas because I think he had an uncle that had preceded him here who had TB. And so everybody was coming to this area because of the dry climate.

When we first got here, I remember they were complaining they couldn't get their mail because all the mail [addressed] to Las Vegas, Nevada was really going to Las Vegas, New Mexico because nobody had ever heard of Las Vegas, Nevada.

My mother had been in a teacher in Kentucky. My father had been a professional baseball umpire in Kentucky, triple-A ball. And so when they got out here, my father—it was right before the war. I think my dad worked as a carpenter for a little while, but then he went to work at the Basic Magnesium Plant in Henderson where they were making the bombs. And after that he went to work at the Boulder Club in downtown Las Vegas and was a keno writer.

What did he do at BMI?

You know, I really don't know. I just know he worked there. I don't remember him saying what he did. They had a large workforce out there that was doing ammunition. And it was -- was it aluminum? No.

Magnesium.

It was magnesium that they were putting in bombs, right?

That's right.

As a kid that's about all I remember.

So where did the family live?

We lived on First on Stewart and 13th and then North Sixth Street.

How did he get back and forth to BMI?

For a long time he rode a bicycle; but he must have got a bus. There must have been a bus. He must have ridden the bicycle to a bus stop and then took a bus because we didn't have a car. I don't think we had a car until after the war.

So did your mom continue to teach?

Huh-uh. Mother decided she didn't like teaching too well. And so my mother primarily just did housework and she took in laundry for people and did curtains.

What do you mean did curtains?

You know, curtains that hang on windows and they have these big giant curtain stretchers. She had a set of curtain stretchers and she did curtains for people. And it turned out she was about the only one in town that had the stretchers and could do the curtains.

I remember my mom stretching those lace curtains.

Uh-huh. Yeah, that's sort of hard stuff because you kept pricking your fingers.

That's right. Those little tacks. Yes.

Oh, I remember trying it. It was terrible.

So tell me what inspired you to become a career woman?

Let's see. Well, I always wanted to either be a journalist or be a lawyer. I wasn't sure which. And then when I was in high school I was going with this guy. And then I thought, oh, I think I want to get married. But I worked part time in a drive-in in high school. And it was just in the summer one summer month. And it was such a crappy job I thought, oh, my god, I could get stuck with this the rest of my life. So I decided I think I better go to college. So when I graduated from Las Vegas High School, I got a Harold's Club Scholarship. And Harold's Club was in Reno. And Harold's Club was giving scholarships to every high school in the state of Nevada for a full four years to UNR because there was no UNLV.

How did you qualify?

Grades. But, oddly enough, in those days you didn't apply. I didn't apply for it. I didn't know I was going to get it. I think they just went through the students and they just decided who they were going to give a scholarship to because I know graduation night I was shocked that I got this scholarship because I had planned to go to Berkeley. And I was going to go to Berkeley and major in law. So after I got this full scholarship I couldn't exactly -- Daddy, I don't want to go to

UNR; I want to go to Berkeley. So I went to UNR.

UNR had two schools that had a good reputation. One was geology and mining and one was journalism. And so I was always interested in geology. So I remember taking a geology course at UNR at 8:00 in the morning in my freshman year. And we were out on a field trip one day and there was a funny smell in the air. And I said what's that funny smell? I think it was sage. I don't know. And the professor said, "It's fresh air, Ms. Borders." So I decided I think I'll get out of this class. I was the only woman there anyway. And I don't think he wanted any at all.

So I left geology and went to journalism. And the professor was Professor Higgenbotham, who was very interested in keeping the high rating of his school. And the way they kept the ratings high was how many graduates worked in the field. And in his mind women wouldn't work in the field. They would probably get married and get pregnant and not be journalists. And he gave his female students a rough go. He usually told them, "You're not going to get through this course because you won't be working in the field." Ruthe Deskin got through it. I got through it. Some other people got through it. But Higgie didn't really -- he didn't like women going to his class.

Tell me about the high school. Who were some of your high school classmates?

Well, one was Richard Bryan. I think Sig Rogich was probably in there somewhere. Charles Thompson, not the judge, but the lawyer here in town. Manny Cortez, who wound up head of the Convention Authority. I remember a guy named Rodney Barfield. I don't know what happened to him. He was going to be a scientist I think. A guy named John Petrosini, who I think became a doctor. I don't know. I got the whole list in the yearbook.

Any other career women?

Well, there must have been. But there weren't any journalists that I recall. They were mostly teachers and things like that.

What was it like growing up here?

Oh, it was great fun. It was a little town. I think when I first got here it was like 7,000 people. And then the Strip was just sort of beginning. And if you were in school with somebody who had a daddy working on the Strip, you could usually go swimming in the hotel swimming pools and stuff with no problem. The town seemed to be safe. I don't remember bad things happening to

people. And maybe it was because the mob was taking care of that problem. But it was small really. There wasn't a lot of people here.

So tell me about your career once you finished UNR.

Well, after I got out of UNR I went to work for United Press International. And the reason that happened was because the Scripps family, which is the Scripps Howard Newspapers -- Ted Scripps went to the University of Nevada Reno. And the Scripps family also owned United Press. So they were somewhat friendly to UNR graduates as far as taking applications and probably giving them jobs. You interned the last year in college somewhere in the media, either a newspaper, radio or TV. So I chose the wire service. And I interned at UPI for a year and then I went to work for them full-time. So I worked for UPI in Reno for a while. And then I transferred to San Diego. And I transferred to Los Angeles. And then I transferred to Las Vegas as Bureau Manager.

Now, tell me how a wire service works.

Well, the way a wire service works. United Press (UP) and International News Service (INS) merged I think in 1958. And that's when UP became UPI. AP had existed probably a little bit longer than United Press. Originally they started because newspapers needed national and world news. A newspaper in Los Angeles didn't know what was happening elsewhere in the United States. So they formed a wire service or wire services so that they could have offices, in effect, all over the country and ultimately the world wire services funnel news to all of their, quote, clients who paid for the service. And the same news also went to radio stations and television stations but written in a different style. So there were offices throughout the world funneling news to whoever wanted to buy it. And they usually signed up for a three-year or five-year contract. It wasn't just like a daytime thing. World clients had deadlines 24 hours a day. And you worked for the wire service and you survived on the fact you had clients all over the country and the world.

So what did your work entail?

Well, my work in Las Vegas -- I moved to Las Vegas with UPI in '65. And it was a one-person operation. So my work entailed everything. You covered everything from entertainment to nuclear tests to organized crime to murder to airplane crashes, whatever. And you would file the story on the wire, which means you'd go back to the office and punch your story on a Teletype

machine, turn it on and transmit your story all over the country. First it would be going to all Nevada clients, which would be Nevada newspapers. And you would rewrite it a little bit and it would go to radio and television. Then it would go to a desk probably in San Francisco or Los Angeles. They would massage it or just push it on the way it was further into the west or into the country or out of the country depending on the story.

If it was Frank Sinatra getting married, it would be an international story. If it was Elvis getting married, it would be an international story. In Las Vegas if it was a hooker misbehaving on the Strip, it would be an international story. If that had happened in New York, it would not be. It was because of the name Las Vegas, because we had gambling. It was the only state in the country that had gambling. So we were tainted to begin with. So the editors that lived in New York and San Francisco loved Las Vegas stories because we were an evil city.

Now, why did you decide to go to San Diego and Los Angeles?

Well, I started work in Reno. And then an opening came in San Diego and I thought it would be neat to live in San Diego. So I went down there and worked for a while. And then I got married there. And then my husband wanted to transfer to Los Angeles in his business. So I transferred to L.A. And then ultimately an opening came in Las Vegas -- no. They decided to open a Las Vegas bureau. And I thought I want to go to Las Vegas. Well, they wouldn't send me to Las Vegas because, quote, a woman couldn't handle that. So they sent somebody else. So I continued to work in Los Angeles for United Press for a couple more years. And then the guy who was working in Las Vegas was leaving. And I told them again I wanted to go to Las Vegas. At which point very reluctantly they agreed that I could come to Las Vegas. And then right before I was to come apparently some guy that worked for UPI in Asia or something who was an alcoholic needed a job and they were going to give it to him in Las Vegas. At which point I said screw it; I'm out of here. At which point they said, okay, you can go to Vegas. So that's how I got back to Vegas.

So now, did you ever work for a local entity like a local newspaper?

Huh-uh.

Always UPI.

Always UPI. The only other time -- I did work for Gannett. UPI went into financial difficulties in

the mid-1980s. And they were reducing salaries. They were going into bankruptcy. And I was offered a job with Gannett, which is the Reno newspaper, USA Today, et cetera. And I told them that I didn't really want to leave Las Vegas. And they said fine, we'll open an office in Las Vegas. So I opened an office in Vegas for them. And I worked for them for a couple of years.

And then UPI is pounding the door and saying you have to come back and work for us. And I was missing the pace of a wire service as compared to the slow pace of a newspaper. And so I went back to UPI. And this time they said, well, we'll make you the manager of Nevada and Montana and I don't know what else. But the company was sort of falling apart, really. So I worked for them for about two or three more years before they totally fell apart. And then Governor [Bob] Miller appointed me commissioner of Consumer Affairs for the state.

I wanted to know more about the pace. When you say the fast pace of the wire service versus the slow pace of a newspaper -- but wouldn't you be reporting the same kind of stories, though?

But many, many more of them.

Because you were doing everything.

Right. For example, if you're on a newspaper you're probably assigned to the education beat or you're assigned to the gaming beat or you're on the police beat. And in the wire service you got them all and you're really working 24 hours a day.

So tell me what a day was like in Las Vegas.

In Las Vegas, okay. You get up. You go to work. You really don't know what the news is that day. So every day is a new day, which is neat. And in this town it could be anything from Lefty Rosenthal blowing up in a car to, you know, a mob trial to a nuclear test or whatever. And you would write the stories. You'd get them either by talking to people on phone or going out and reporting. The object was to get them out as fast as you could because your competition was Associated Press. And a beat of one minute was a major beat -- I mean not a day, but five, ten minutes -- because your clients on the other end of the line were always looking at who had it first. And the first could be five minutes apart. So you're on a constant treadmill of getting things out quick and fast and hopefully accurate. And then after you've done the newspaper version of it, then you rewrite it for broadcast, which is a different writing style and the story would go to the

radio-TV clients in the state. And you do this all day long. And at the end of the day if the news is still going on you're still doing it. And then when you go home at night you get calls at night if something's going on that you need to respond. If you're lazy you don't respond and eventually you don't work at it. When I was in Las Vegas there were 32 different AP managers here.

Oh. They just could not last here.

They couldn't or didn't want to or they wanted to work nine-to-five I guess.

Did you find that Las Vegas was more fast-paced than San Diego or Los Angeles?

Oh, yeah.

Than Los Angeles?

Much more so than San Diego for sure. It was a faster pace than Los Angeles because in Las Vegas it's a one-person operation. In L.A. they had enough staff to be staffed 24 hours a day with three shifts with quite a few people on each shift. So as far as an individual goes it was a crazy pace in Las Vegas, really.

But you loved it?

I did. It was good. And then when I left UPI and went to work for Gannett -- now I'm working for, in effect, a newspaper -- that was pretty slow. I mean I could be turning out five or six stories a day and most reporters are turning out one or two. And I still felt like I wasn't doing my job whereas with UPI you might be writing 25 or 30 stories a day.

So give me some examples of some of the exciting stories in Las Vegas that we should all know about.

Well, strange things happen in Vegas. I remember I was driving home one night down Sahara. And as I was passing Marie Callender's there were a big boom. And I looked over there and it looked like a car had blown up. So I turned around and I pulled in the parking lot and it was Lefty Rosenthal. You know, when you saw the movie "Casino" and the car blowing up --

You were on the scene?

I was on the scene totally by accident because I was driving home late. And so I pulled into the parking lot and there is this -- I certainly knew Lefty Rosenthal. And he had jumped out of the car and he was patting his smoking clothes and his hair was standing straight up. But I knew that he had had a hair transplant. So I didn't know whether his hair was standing up because of the

explosion or because of the transplant. And I remember saying what's going on here? And he's saying they're trying to kill me. And I said who's trying to kill you? And then he shut up. That was the end of that. He didn't talk anymore. And that was just on the way home one night, right?

One day I went out to the Stardust Hotel to drop a package off at the front desk for somebody. And while I'm in the hotel I was smelling smoke. And so I had parked my car out in front of the hotel just to run in for a minute. Now the place is full of smoke. Now there's obviously a fire. Well, I can't necessarily go back to my car. I have to figure out what the fire is. So there was a major fire and there were some people that were killed and one of the towers was on fire.

So now somehow I'm in the back of the hotel around the pool. And there's Hank Greenspun. He appeared on the scene of stories lots of times by mystery. And Hank is saying where are my reporters? And I'm saying, Hank, I don't know. Did you call them? Well, no. Why he was there I don't know. And I finally got back to the front of the hotel and they were getting ready to break the window of my car because it was locked up. But I managed to save that. That was another afternoon in typical Las Vegas.

So what was happening at the Stardust that day?

I don't know what was happening other than they had a major fire. I just had to drop that package off. I don't remember why.

And then many times -- we were right in the middle of major underground nuclear testing in Las Vegas up until '62. So many times your morning could start with a phone call from the Atomic Energy Commission giving you these funny little reports that -- let's see -- an underground nuclear test was detonated today at the Nevada Test Site. So then you have to go through the usual routine. How big was it? Where was it exactly? How deep was it? And so then I would usually call the Exchange Club in Beatty and see if they felt it. I'd call a whorehouse in Esmeralda to see if they felt it and get some reaction and send a story out about an atomic bomb was blown up under the Nevada desert today. That sort of thing. And then if you're lucky you find out if radiation escaped because sometimes they didn't tell you.

Did you ever do any stories on the down-winders?

Some because of the court involvement. And when I was growing up in Las Vegas they were

setting off the atmospheric tests. And I remember going out to the bottom of Sunrise Mountain and watching them blow up. They were very psychedelic. All different colors that mushroom cloud was. It was very psychedelic. It was green and orange and blue. It wasn't just a big puff of white.

And there was a deal going on in downtown Las Vegas. The casinos didn't really want those test site guys to go to work if there wasn't going to be a test for some reason. You know, sometimes the test would get delayed. And there was a light on top of -- I think it was the El Cortez. And if the light was red that meant there was no test that morning. If the light was green it meant the guys better get to work and go out to the test site. Sometimes they delayed the tests because of the way the wind was blowing. You mentioned down-winders. And if there wasn't anything dangerous with the nuclear test, which, of course, they said there was not, why did they even bother with the direction the wind was blowing? They knew. But we didn't know. And the down-winders didn't know. But they knew. Otherwise, why would they care which direction it blew?

That's right. And some of these workers had to wear these badges that tested radiation.

Right. Yeah. I went to the test site numerous, numerous times. And you had this badge. And, supposedly, it was always the same badge. And it was collective as to how much radiation over the period of time that you returned to the site that it would total. If I ever got to the top, they never told me.

So for a visitor they give you the same badge?

At least a journalist, yeah. And I don't know if there were many visitors there other than journalists. But, supposedly, it was always the same badge so they could keep an accumulative total of the radiation exposure.

Oh, that's scary.

Tell me more about the mob and what the city was like during those days and whether or not you believe -- and I'm not supposed to ask three-part questions -- and whether or not you believe that the mob actually ran the city.

Okay. The El Rancho Vegas was the first hotel out there. And I was too little to even know if there was any mob involved in that or not. I don't know. And when I was growing up here I didn't

think too much about it either. But when I came back in 1965, a lot of the names that I had heard when I was growing up or when I was visiting a hotel swimming pool, I heard pages for Mr. So-and-so. Suddenly the names came back to me and now I'm writing someone being indicted for skimming or someone winding up in court or whatever.

I do believe that if it hadn't been for organized crime, there would not have been a Las Vegas. I mean they built it. And their money built it. When Caesars Palace opened, Jimmy Hoffa was on stage taking accolades because it was Teamster pension fund money that built Caesars. And banks and insurance companies weren't about to loan any money to build hotels in Las Vegas because it involved gambling and that was bad and it wasn't accepted anywhere else in the country. And so if it hadn't been for organized crime and the questionable money coming in from the Teamster's pension fund and the Culinary pension fund, I don't think that Las Vegas would have been built.

And did they run the city? Money runs everything in Las Vegas. And it still does. So they were the money. Therefore, they could decide who would get elected and who wouldn't as far as money donations went, as it is today. I'm not saying it's the mob doing it today, but it's the same principle. So in the sense that they contributed and made friends with people running for office, I suppose you could say they ran the city. But I don't think it's any different than it is today.

Did you see a difference when Howard Hughes came?

Howard Hughes was credited with bailing us out of the mob business. Maybe somebody knows something I don't know. But I didn't get the idea he came to town to do that. I think his intent in coming to town was trying to figure out how to put quite a few million dollars he had gotten in a TWA settlement into active income so he wouldn't have to pay so many taxes. And when he came to Vegas and moved into the Desert Inn he, as I understand it, bought it because they wanted him to move out. So I don't think his intent was to buy up all this town when he first arrived.

Bob Maheu, who was his right-hand man, certainly was a former FBI guy. It might have made law enforcement feel a little more comfortable that maybe they were getting somebody in here who was not mob so to speak. And, of course, Hughes had helped the CIA with that -- what was the name of it? -- the GLOMAR Explorer. He had a big, giant ship built that was out in

Hawaii trying to pull up a Russian sub under the guise of Lockheed. They said they were looking for mercury nodules on the bottom of the ocean. So he had obviously worked with the government before. So they probably felt more comfortable.

But I don't think he came here with the intent of getting rid of the mob. It might have happened that way a little bit. He bought them out. But there was a difference in the tempo of the city because of his management. There was an advent of corporate gaming, but it wasn't Hughes that started corporate gaming. It was I think Hilton. But it was corporate gaming that really changed Las Vegas. That really changed everything. But the tempo of the city changed when Hughes arrived because corporate gaming was just about here. And the idea that you could walk into a casino and meet the owner -- the owner wasn't there anymore. Even if the owner was Hughes, he wasn't there. And previously you could always walk in and say, you know, hi, Moe, or hi somebody. And they were the owners. And that whole complexion changed everything about Las Vegas when the owners weren't on premise anymore.

How did that feel when they were there?

It felt homier. Everybody knew everybody and they knew who the boss was and there wasn't any question about it.

What was it like for a woman to go into a casino at that time?

Well, to go into a casino I never felt any different. Maybe it was the business I was in. But it certainly wasn't easy for women to get jobs. I remember writing a story, the first woman dealer they had in Las Vegas. And I think my lead was: "the hand that rocks the cradle wants to deal the cards." And it was the first woman dealer. So that was after '65 at some point because I got here in '65. Whereas in Reno they had women dealers from the get-go. And that was because Raymond I. Smith, owner of Harolds' Club, felt that women should have an equal go at it because I think his mom had a tough time. And he was a carnie man. But Vegas wasn't that way. They had all these suspicions. They had suspicions about women, suspicions about blacks. They said that it was bad luck and whatever excuse they could come up with.

When your parents talked about the mob, what was that like for that generation?

My parents didn't talk about the mob. The only thing I ever heard my father say was that he was talking -- he was working at the Boulder Club. And apparently they had an upstairs room in the



Myram Borders
Editor



Elaine Zeitmann
Index Editor and Assistant Editor

artemisia

Negatives fly, pictures are cropped, typewriters buzz, and work lasts late as deadlines close in on the yearbook once again. Strange sounds issue from the upstairs office in the ASUN building, staff members are driven crazy, the index editor pulls her hair and work continues. Eventually the '57 Artemisia is put to press and the staff can "live" again.

Dick Bryan
Sports Editor



Nora Kellogg
Organization Editor



Carol Titus
Student Government Editor





Silver & Blue (UNR publication) May/June 1994.



Myram Borders conducts a news conference in Taipei, Taiwan, in 1999. She was there promoting Las Vegas as a travel destination in her role as head of the News Bureau for the Las Vegas convention & Visitors Authority.

Boulder Club. And every once in a while he'd talk about the boys that went upstairs. And I'd say what are you talking about? And he'd say, I don't know, I guess they went up to count money. That's the only thing he ever said about them. And I don't know for sure he was talking about them. But I think he was.

Yes. Tell me about race relations in Las Vegas because you came here early on.

When I got here I went to Fifth Street Grammar School. I think there might have been a couple of Mexican kids and maybe two or three black kids and that was it. And in high school -- and there was only one high school in those days -- there were a few more Mexicans and a few more blacks, but not very many. But if they were here they all lived in West Las Vegas.

But they had to go to high school.

And they went to Las Vegas High School I guess.

So did they drop out before they got there?

Probably. I remember one time I had this family class in high school. And there was a black guy in the class. And the two of us were assigned to work on a family budget. Well, we didn't get our work done in school. So I said why don't you come over to the house and we'll finish it at my house? Okay. So we're sitting there in the living room, this guy and I, and my father walks in. And he sort of like what the hell is going on? He didn't say a word. I said we're working on a project in school. Okay. Then my mother walked in. Neither one of them ever said anything about it. But the expressions on their faces was just like what is going on here?

But we had some black athletes and not really a lot of black students in high school and hardly any Mexicans. And if they were Mexican -- there was Manny Cortez. I remember there was a guy named Frank Galindo. And then there was a group of guys that slicked their hair back and we called them "pachucos."

Well, what about John Mendoza? He was probably older.

I got out of high school in '54.

I think he was older.

So he got out earlier.

I think so.

Okay. But then after in '65, I found myself covering these welfare marches on the Strip that Ruby

Duncan was leading and all that. I remember Ruby; what a character. When that thing first started with Ruby, when she first emerged there was all this talk about Ruby and driving her Cadillacs and all this stuff, right? So I went over to find Ruby driving her Cadillacs. So I found her in this office. And I was demanding all this information and everything. She goes, why, honey, that's okay; you just take all these books and you just look at all these books. And I thought, oh, my god, I can't look at all those books. That was the end of that expose.

And then later on Ruby and I think Jane Fonda and -- there was a big, giant welfare rightist march down the Strip. And the cops just didn't know what to do. They were somewhat beside themselves. They didn't know whether they were supposed to be nice or mean or what they were supposed to do. And they didn't really know where the welfare rightists were going to stop and where they were going to demonstrate and all this stuff. And I remember they had the media on a flatbed truck. First there was the cops. Then there was the media on the flatbed truck. Then there was the marchers. I mean it was a parade more than a demonstration. And I remember I usually knew a little bit ahead of time where they were going to stop. And I had these spitballs. And I'd throw a spitball at the cop and he would get the spitball and open it up and it would say Caesars Palace. So then they knew the first stop was Caesars Palace.

So you were an informant.

I was an informant. But Caesars was great. I remember Caesars just opened the doors and they just walked through it and there was nothing they could do. I mean so what? The Sands was different. They got to the Sands. They had the doors locked. They had a SWAT team or something inside that hotel behind the glass with their helmets and their guns. And I'm up against this glass door, which is locked, and this crowd is pushing. And beside me is Al Freeman, who was the PR man at the Sands. And he says that's all right, honey; don't worry; I've got a gun. And I thought that's all I need is somebody with a gun right next to me, right? But there was no major incident. But all of it was pretty tense. And I'm still not sure what was going on. I don't know why Caesars had it one way and the Sands dealt another way.

And Caesars dealt with it in such a --

And the Stardust -- was it Herb Tobman.

Herb.

Herb was involved in the Stardust. And they had an eat-in or something in the Stardust.

That's right.

So they just -- everybody ate. No problem.

I think Ruby and her cohorts, though, were arrested that day.

Well, there were a lot of arrests. But then they just let them out. But there were a lot of arrests everywhere. The cops didn't know what to do. They didn't know whether they were supposed to arrest them or give them flowers. They didn't have any idea what they were supposed to do. And I guess nobody told them. I guess Ralph Lamb didn't tell them or maybe the hotels didn't tell them. Somebody didn't tell them.

Right. Now, tell me about your appointment by the governor to the --

Oh, Consumer Affairs.

-- Consumer Affairs Commission.

By this time UPI was going into the dump or it was going into bankruptcy.

So what about what year?

It would have been '90. And I called some guy working for the governor. I don't know who it was. And I said, you know, I'm going to be out of a job pretty soon because I can't hold out much longer, so keep me in mind. So I got a call. I thought it would be something like a press officer or something. But no. Commissioner of Consumer Affairs. I had no idea what that was.

And so now I'm commissioner of Consumer Affairs. I'm responsible for all of the good business practices of everybody in the county -- the whole state, in Tonopah, in Las Vegas. And I'd be driving down the street and you'd see all these businesses and you'd think I can't do that. And then on top of that you had all these telemarketers that were hitting everybody up in Nevada. They had passed a telemarketing law in Nevada. And they were really ripping people off like crazy around here. And I'm in charge of that. And I was supposed to license these telemarketers. The legislature had passed a law to license telemarketers. And the only thing familiar about telemarketers to me was they looked very familiar. They looked just like the guys that -- the weird -- they looked like some of the guys I had been writing about as a news reporter. And the law was written so poorly there was nothing you could do to telemarketers. There was nothing you could do to help their victims.

So I started having luncheons every week with the boys. And we just sort of exchanged a bunch of threats. And they probably didn't know whether I could do things or not. I couldn't do anything. The law didn't -- it was a stupid law. But they were somewhat cooperative. So that's how I dealt with telemarketers other than raiding a few places and some went to jail. But it was -- finally they changed the law and made it a little different. Most of the telemarketers left finally. They're probably in Canada and Mexico now calling in across the borders so you can't get to them. But it really is an insidious business.

And doesn't it make a difference what industry they're in or who they're working for?

Well, the telemarketers I'm talking about are the ones that were selling you vitamins and selling you this and selling you that and selling you free vacations to Hawaii. And they'd get some old guy in a rest home, then get his number and give him a Hawaiian vacation. And he'd give them a credit card number and they'd clean him out. And it was just awful what was happening.

One of the telemarketers was Evel Knievel's son, Kelly. And I don't know. Maybe Kelly -- in fact, Steve Sisolak was a telemarketer, now a county commissioner. But he sold different kind of stuff. Anyway, Kelly had this woman -- I know her name was Hope -- somewhere in the east that had been ripped off. And I finally told all my investigators every time you see Kelly Knievel your final words are to say remember Hope. And they said why? I said just say it. And so finally Kelly comes storming into my office one day. He says what is all this remember Hope stuff? I'm not giving her money back. I said fine, Kelly, don't give her money back. I'm not giving her her money. Okay, Kelly. And they kept saying remember Hope. And so finally about a month later he came in and said, okay, I'll give her her money back to stop this.

You know, but the way you had to deal was not good because the law was bad. You had no right.

So how many people did you have working with you?

It was an agency of probably not more than 25 people for the whole state. That's not just businesses. That's telemarketers, too. That's everything.

So a legitimate case regarding a legitimate business would be -- give me an example of what --

A complaint?

Yes.

Okay. A consumer would come in and say they went to a car dealer and they think they got screwed on their car. Maybe they did and maybe they didn't. But they would complain. So then you'd get the car dealer in. And then that person would be there. And then you'd try to get a compromise. But, again, the law is so weak that you hope for a compromise because you couldn't really make them do anything. And I think probably the agency is still a lot of window dressing. It makes the legislators feel like they care about the folks. If they really did the law would be different.

And that law as far as you know hasn't even changed.

Not much of it. The only way to find out is to go down and file a complaint against someone and see if anything happens. Usually you get a letter and it says, well, you'll have to go to court.

So once that ended, what did you do after the commission?

Well, I didn't like that job. I didn't like it. I didn't like that job at all because I felt so completely helpless in it.

So then I saw an ad in the paper that the Las Vegas News Bureau was looking for a head of the Las Vegas News Bureau. At that time the News Bureau when it started was part of the Chamber of Commerce. But then the Convention Authority took it over. And when the Convention Authority took it over they were looking for the head of the News Bureau. So I applied for the job. So I got the job. And Manny Cortez was head of the Convention Authority at the time. I'm back with high school buddies, right?

And in that job my job primarily was as a major propagandist for Las Vegas with other journalists. Journalists come into town wanting to write stories about Vegas. So you get them free hotel rooms and you get them free meals and you squire them around. And they write these wonderful stories about Vegas. And they see shows, you know. And then I did a lot of traveling to Europe and to Asia to conduct news conferences with foreign journalists. Again, it was a major propaganda job. But it was fun.

Oh, it had to be.

And it was not particularly stressful because it wasn't a matter of good or bad. You know, it's no longer the good against the bad and all this stuff that journalists feel. It was just, you know, Las

Vegas is a good place.

So do we still have the News Bureau today?

The News Bureau still exists at the LVCVA. But its complexion has changed a lot.

So if we wanted to find -- what happened to all of the information from UPI? Do you have that information?

I have a lot of it because when UPI closed -- I was in the Sun building -- I took it all with me, all my files, because they were not sending anyone in to replace me. That was going to be the end of the office. And I've been lugging those damn files around now for, I don't know, quite a few years. So I have a lot of boxes. I have about -- I don't know -- maybe ten, 15 boxes of files.

So have you talked to anyone at the university yet about maybe helping you?

No. At one time I talked to -- is it Ren?

Yes.

At one time I talked to them, but nothing really materialized there.

Well, they have -- I don't know if they would have storage for anything like that.

Right.

But I think Special Collections in the library would probably be the place where you want to start.

Right. My only problem with the UPI files is it's been a long time since I've looked at them. I'm not sure what's in them. And I don't know if I've got stuff in there that I've stuck in those files that was off the record. And at this point I don't even know if it would matter. And I don't want to spend my life going through those files again to find out what's in them. You know what I mean?

Yes, I do.

That's my only problem with those files.

So would you want someone to contact you from the library or do you just want --

From Special Collections you mean?

Yes.

Yeah. Maybe we could figure something out. They're still here. They're in my storage locker here in this building now.

Good. So I will tell Su Kim Chung about this.

I think I mentioned it once to Guy Rocha up north and I think he might have mentioned her name.

He probably did. Good. So I'll mention it again.

But I never followed up what he suggested. I never did contact her.

So is it okay if I have her call you?

Oh, absolutely.

Great. That's what I will do.

Well, Myram, I think that this has been -- I just wanted a good overview of your career and what you have done here in Las Vegas. And this is amazing. But do you have any other stories that you'd like to add?

Well, let's see what comes to mind. Elvis Presley comes to mind.

Oh, good. Tell me about that.

Well, because it was a one-person UPI operation I had my office telephone also ring at my home. So in the middle of the night I get this call from this anonymous caller saying he had this great story; how much would I pay? And I said we don't buy stories. And he said oh. So that was the end of that. So he called about a half-hour later. And he said, well, I really do have this good story. I said, well, what it is? He said, well, unless you pay I can't tell you. So I gave him the names of a bunch of newspapers in the east that I knew would be closed. So he called those and got no answer. So he called me back. And finally he said, well, Elvis Presley is getting married. And I said, well, I don't know, maybe we could pay you a little bit. And I said what's your name? And he said, oh, I can't give you my name. I said how can I pay you if I can't get your name? Well, I can't give you my name. Okay. Where are they getting married? At the Aladdin.

So I went out to the Aladdin Hotel. It's now about 3:00 in the morning. And I'm wandering around this hotel. And the security guards now figure I'm a hooker trying to find a make or something out there. And they were giving me a bad time. But anyway, I'm looking for weddings cakes or satin sheets or any indication of a wedding. And between me and the hotel cops running around for about an hour and a half finally I saw one of the Nevada Supreme Court justices walk in the hotel. So I knew that everything was going to happen. And it did. So I called my story into UPI and I beat AP [Associated Press].

Wow.

And many years later -- I'm now at the Las Vegas News Bureau at the Convention Authority -- and the Aladdin has redone itself and is putting out news releases and all this. And this Elvis Presley thing was included in one of their little press releases. I got a letter from some guy saying that call was from my dad. This kid lived in California -- or man lived in California. He said his dad wanted people to know what was happening, but he was afraid to say who it was because he would get fired. But he said it was my dad. And I said come over to Vegas; I'll buy you dinner or something. But I never heard from the kid again. But that was like how many years after the wedding?

Oh, wow.

And one other UPI story. It's about the test site. Again, it's in the middle of the night. I get this call. This guy says a radioactive satellite is going to hit the Earth. And I thought the guy is drunk. He's out there. And I said, yeah, where? He said I don't know. I said okay, what can I do about it? He said I don't know. So then a half-hour later he calls again. He said this radioactive satellite is going to hit in the western hemisphere. Okay. And about four calls later he says it's going to hit in North America. And I said how can I possibly verify any of this? And he said, well, if you go out to McCarran Airport you'll see a big C-140 loaded and it's ready to go and it's going to go wherever that satellite hits.

Anyway, I went out there. Now, it's in the middle of the night. And I do see this big C-140 out there, no lights, no activity. But okay. Now I go to the office. Instead of my home I go to the office. And the guy calls again. And he said did you see the plane? I said, yeah, I saw the plane, but what can I do about this? I can't write a story like this unless I can have some legitimate quote or something from somebody.

In the meantime I had called this woman I knew who worked for Environmental Protection Agency. I knew her husband was in NEST, which is an organization that's always ready to respond to a nuclear disaster. And I called her and said where's Doug? And I knew she couldn't tell me. She says he's home. I said is he going on a trip? And she said maybe. And I said is he going to wear warm clothes or hot clothes? She said he's got both packed. And I said really? So he didn't know he was going either. But it did confirm to me that this was really happening.

So now I message UPI in Washington, D.C., you know, Washington, out in Las Vegas,

right, crazy Las Vegas. I'm telling Washington, I understand that a radioactive satellite is going to hit somewhere in North America. Well, they didn't answer me, of course. UPI-Washington just thought I had gone nuts. So then about six hours later the government called a news conference in D.C. and said that a radioactive Russian satellite had broken up in space and it was going to hit somewhere in North America. It ultimately did hit in Canada in a very deserted area and it was called operation Starlight or Starbright or something. And the C-140 took off and went to Canada and they cleaned it all up.

So do you know who called you?

That one I don't know. I think it was a scientist that probably knew about it and was concerned they weren't telling anybody about this threat and he thought it should get out some way. So it did get out finally. But that was one of those wild goose chases in the middle of the night.

Oh, yes. Now, getting up like that in the middle of the night, you're a woman, you're married, what did your husband think about all this?

Well, obviously the marriage didn't last.

Oh, okay. That would make sense to me.

But he probably thought I was more concerned about my job than I was him. And that was true. The job was much more fun than he was.

This has been so interesting. What is the connection between -- okay. Because it's really like a -- okay. I was about to say the connection between the News Bureau and the Convention Authority. But it makes sense.

It's all one now. And at one time when I was at the LVCA News Bureau I was trying to get their entire collection to UNLV. And it didn't work because the lawyers of both entities got involved and they couldn't figure it out and it didn't happen. But they've got more than a million negatives over there of all of Las Vegas' history. I hope they're doing something to preserve it because it needed to be put on disk because it's black-and-white film. It's black-and-white negatives. And it starts from the get-go.

And they still have it?

Oh, yeah. They use it once in a while. You see these photos coming out if something happened in 1945 or '50 and whatever. Yeah, they have it. And in my mind if somebody doesn't get it pretty

soon I am concerned that they will do something with those archives like sell them for advertising or something. That's what I'm worried about.

That's interesting.

And that's what I was worried about then as well.

So I'm going to end this. And I will get in touch with Su Kim and have her --

Give me her name again.

It's Su Kim, S-U. Second part is K-I-M. And then her last name is Chung, C-H-U-N-G. So

I will have her contact you.

And I appreciate this so much. This was great chatting with you.

Oh, well, you do a good job. You do it right.

Well, thank you.

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JUST THE FACTS

She has seen the shocking and the ugly. She has covered politics and watched Las Vegas become a theme resort. She has also seen real results from her reporting.

By Patrick Gaffey

If we heard as much about Bosnia as we've heard about Bobbitt, we might have a different viewpoint," says the veteran reporter, brandishing a swarthy cigarette. With our view obstructed by lurid marital violence, ice rink jealousy and the peculiarly pale Michael Jackson, she asks, "What's happening in Bosnia? Do we have another holocaust going on?"

Myram Borders covered Nevada for 25 years as manager of United Press International's Las Vegas office. She gets the kind of respect reporters don't often earn even from politicians she once covered, like two-term Nevada Governor Mike O'Callaghan: "The whole time I was governor, she never misquoted me once."

Accurate, he says of Borders, "a professional." And this: "When I started out, I was a little guy. I had never won an election. But right from the beginning she treated the little guys like me the same way she treated the big guys."

Now the professional worries about her profession and the future of free speech. "As a journalist you run around waving the freedom of the press flag and you think everyone—everyone—has freedom of the press and first amendment rights," she says. "By law, they do. In reality they do not. I know of no job, anywhere in the whole country, with the exception of a journalist, who can say what they think, write what they think and have no repercussions."

Business people who speak their minds lose business—or go out of business altogether. Employees who speak badly of their bosses get fired—whether they spoke the truth or not. And despite all kinds of laws to protect "whistle blowers," government employees who report waste and crime in the workplace, whether military or civilian, still find themselves out on the street. So reporters must look for the defense of their press freedom to peo-

"Las Vegas can't be beat," says veteran reporter Myram Borders. "At one time or another, through our portals pass everybody—from presidents to the world's best-known entertainers, to classical musicians to foreign diplomats."

ple who don't have freedom of expression themselves.

Borders also sees a public angry that the First Amendment protects pornographers. And now she sees the media concentrating less on information that is useful or essential to the public and more on "tabloid information, whether it's violence or sex or Bobbitt or whatever." She fears that at some point the public will say, "Hey, what good is that amendment?"—and damage the First Amendment.

She values good journalism as highly as anyone and believes that without the news media we'd be in bad shape. "People are deeply dissatisfied with government," she says. "If it wasn't for journalists scurrying around out there on the crust of the cake, trying to dig down and find out what it tastes like, government would really stall." But she warns that if journalists aren't careful, "They're going to blow it."

Borders is amused and amusing; a witty conversationalist. But her mind runs in serious paths, as it did even when graduating from Las Vegas High. She was thinking of majoring in law, but her father wasn't feeling well and he had to quit work. She was the one student from her school picked for a four-year Harolds Club scholarship to the University of Nevada. "I had been accepted at Berkeley, but I couldn't very well say, 'Hey, Daddy, I don't want to go to Nevada on this full scholarship.' So I went to Reno and I majored in journalism."

Borders was "almost" a Nevada native; her family moved to Las Vegas when she was four, in 1940 or '41. She had worked on the student paper, the Desert Breeze, and was yearbook editor in high school, so journalism wasn't necessarily a change of direction. At Nevada, Borders edited the 1957 yearbook, Artemesia. She was a member of Pi Beta Phi and was elected president of the Associated Women Students, which at that time also made her vice president of the student body.

Nevada's journalism department even then had a national reputation, thanks in large part to its chairman, Dr. Alfred L. Higginbotham, whom she remembers somewhat irreverently. "The one thing that Higgie got across was this ivory tower stuff. If you didn't get anything

else, it was like, 'You will do it correctly; you will be accurate.' He was like a scolding father." Borders was well scolded and the ivory tower stuff stuck permanently.

After graduation, she went to work in the Reno office of UPI, then served in its San Diego and Los Angeles office. When UPI opened a Las Vegas office in 1962, she asked for the position of manager. "I was told very clearly that a woman couldn't really handle that." When the spot opened again in 1965, she re-applied. This time tradition yielded.

Traditions were as thick as heads back then. SDX, the national journalism fraternity, had just dropped its national men-only tradition, but the Las Vegas chapter wasn't so enlightened. It rejected the new UPI office manager. "So I went back to L.A. and joined there." Then Las Vegas couldn't refuse her. She went on to serve as Las Vegas chapter president for three terms.

Pulitzer Prize-winning Nevada journalist Warren Lerude, another graduate, praises Borders and emphasizes the fact that she's a serious journalist. "One of her great strengths was that she stayed in Nevada," he says. "It meant that when Myram covered a story, she knew the background, and when politicians tried to fool her, they couldn't do it."

Borders stayed because "Nevada's a great place for a reporter. And Las Vegas can't be beat. Because at one time or another, through our portals pass everybody—from presidents to the world's best-known entertainers, to classical musicians to foreign diplomats. It's a great news town for a reporter."

And in Nevada, things are out in the open, because it's still a small state. In Nevada politics, "You get to see the skeleton . . . as opposed to this blobby mass that you don't understand how to penetrate. Where else but in Nevada can you be on a first-name basis with a U.S. senator or governor?"

That access makes a big difference for the right reporter. At the beginning of 1981, Frank Sinatra, whose Nevada gaming license had been revoked in 1963, faced a hearing to be licensed as a key employee at Caesars Palace. Borders was tipped to a secret pre-hearing meeting between Sinatra and state officials. She couldn't print the story without confirma-

tion, and the few people who attended had strong reasons to keep the meeting secret. Then Governor Robert List came to Las Vegas on his re-election campaign.

"I was riding around with him that night as he was running in and making various political speeches. I was desperately trying to understand the tax proposal that he was making." When the night ended and they pulled up at the airport, his tired aides climbed out of the car. It was the moment Borders had been waiting for. "I just asked the Governor, 'Tell me about the meeting with Sinatra at the Aladdin.' There was this long pause. When you ask somebody a question like that and they don't really want to answer you, you can almost hear them weighing: 'Shall I tell all the truth or not really answer—what do they know?'"

After the pause, List admitted the meeting had taken place. He said, "Mr. Sinatra just wanted assurances that it wouldn't become a circus." Borders then called the chairman of the Gaming Control Board and asked him about the meeting. He said, "There wasn't any meeting." Borders smiles at the memory. "I said, 'The Governor just told me there was.' He hung up on me."

Despite such satisfactions, Borders plays down the real effects of her reportage. Running back over the years, she can only recall one concrete, significant change made by her work: "I probably changed the career of Danny Demers."

Demers was a powerful assemblyman with many successes behind him and a man many thought the next assembly speaker. In a year when the hot issue was the possible legalization of the purported youth-restoring drug Laetrile, Borders was in Carson City a few days. That was rare during a session, since the legislature is usually covered for UPI by Cy Ryan. "Someone mentioned to me a resolution that had been introduced in the Assembly requiring assemblymen to live in Nevada. I thought, 'That's a strange resolution. I wonder who's not living here.'" She began checking and quickly found out that Demers was living in a rented condominium at Lake Tahoe, across the California line. Borders wondered why.

She checked property records and found the name of the company that owned the condo. Back in Vegas, she sent a note over the interbureau wire to Sacramento, asking who owned the company. When the answer came back, someone in the San Diego bureau chimed in and said, "That guy's indicted down here for Laetrile violations by the feds." So I had a story of a Nevada assemblyman living in a condo for very little rent, owned by a gentleman who was profiting from Laetrile, and they were trying to legalize Laetrile in the state of Nevada. . . ."

She promptly called Demers. She says, "I remember counting the number of no's. There were about 15: 'No, no, no, no, no, no, no. . . .' Demers ultimately decided not to run for re-election and left Nevada, but that was

the only story I can recall that really made a graphic change."

She covered Howard Hughes, through all the secrecy, the rumors, his death, the seemingly endless "Mormon Will" trial. "Howard Hughes died of a kidney ailment and the reporters were beginning to think the same might happen to them before the trial was over."

For years Borders fought the over-protectiveness of police and security guards who wanted to keep a woman reporter from seeing the shocking and the ugly. And the naked, at locker room press conferences after Las Vegas boxing matches. When she was barred after one title fight, "I went to a phone and called the guy. He was having his news conference back there, but I got him on the phone. You just can't afford to be beat. So I interrupted his news conference with a phone call."

A constant struggle was against the nation's stereotypes of Nevada. The UPI control desk in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C. or New York would rewrite her stories to fit their preconceptions. "All they knew was show-girls, gambling—and then they remembered hearing something about warehouses out there, and gangsters." Again and again she objected, "Stop rewriting the story. You're making it wrong!" but to little or no effect. First the UPI editors would rewrite, and often the stories would be rewritten again by the editors of big eastern newspapers. "You would constantly see stories on Nevada and Las Vegas coming out the other end of the funnel very distorted."

As her reputation grew, Borders' news career began to involve more than reporting. In the seventies she helped draft and pass the Nevada Open Meeting Law. The Nevada Supreme Court appointed her to the blue-ribbon committee which drew up rules to allow still and video cameras into Nevada courtrooms for the first time.

In 1985 she quit UPI and opened a Las Vegas office for the Gannett newspaper chain, but after a year-and-a-half returned to the wire service, despite its growing financial problems. "I think you get wire service in your blood."

And few have had such a serious case of wire poisoning. Does anyone remember the 1956-59 television drama "Wire Service" with Dane Clark and George Brent? Mercedes McCambridge, as dedicated, driving reporter Katherine Wells, constantly pumping enough adrenaline to light cigarettes without a match, could have been playing Borders, whose intensity matched that of the job perhaps too well. With the overwhelming dedication she gave reporting, including hours around the clock, she has been accused of living her job instead of a life.

But she balanced work with travel. She used her vacations to truly travel the world: "Europe, Asia, Africa, Antarctica—everywhere but China and Russia—just traveling. That's why I drive an old car; everything went up in airline tickets."

Borders left UPI for good in 1991, when Governor Bob Miller named her Commissioner of Consumer Affairs for the State of Nevada, "a 20-month learning experience I will never forget."

After a lifelong career as a reporter, Borders says she thought she knew what was going on in government, but she found "I was unaware of all those people behind the scenes and how grueling it can be to try to follow all the statutes and laws and rules. It made me much more empathetic to the elected officials than I had ever been as a news reporter."

She learned that life as she knew it can't be lived inside the bureaucracy. "Reporters are constantly using their own judgment, flying by the seat of their pants lots of times, using their instincts and getting to their goal"—precisely the kind of behavior government doesn't allow. In a bureaucracy, every action has to be checked against a thousand regulations. She recalls, "It was almost like, 'I have to call my attorney and find out if I can really do this.'"

In August of 1992, she returned to work "in the English language." The Las Vegas News Bureau, created to publicize gaming and the city, was sharply downsized and Borders was hired to run it. It could have been a grinding return to the image wars, but the image of Nevada was changing.

Over a few quick months the revolutionary theme resorts Luxor, Treasure Island and the MGM opened, attracting national attention. A cover story in TIME magazine was quickly followed by one national cover after another. "The day that Nevada made the cover of TIME without the face of a mobster on it was wonderful," says Borders. "It was a major breakthrough in my mind for East Coast editors. What more can you say? It's absolutely amazing what's happened around here in the last year."

So Borders is riding the wave, more relaxed than usual and enjoying life. "Normally a city that's involved in tourism is trying to pitch writers to write stories about their wonderful city. Las Vegas isn't having to pitch anybody. All you have to do is try to answer the phone, it rings so much. They're pounding the doors of Vegas."

But Myram Borders' soul is the soul of a reporter, and her keen eye remains fixed on the profession. She hasn't forgotten what she still cautions the practitioners. "There are no requirements for a reporter. You don't have to go to grammar school. You don't have to have a degree. You don't have to pass any test, like a doctor or a lawyer. So what have you got? What you've got is truth and ethics." ■

Patrick Gaffey graduated with honors from Nevada in 1968 and earned a master's in English there in 1975. He was executive director of the Allied Arts Council in Las Vegas from 1983 through 1991 and is now with Clark County Parks and Recreation's Cultural Division.

Borders reflects on trailblazing career

Editor's note: *This is the first in an occasional series of Accent stories about longtime Las Vegas personalities:*

By Kristen Peterson
LAS VEGAS SUN

Myram Borders glanced out the window of the Marie Callender's on the corner of Tropicana and Eastern avenues.

The lunch rush was long over. The restaurant was quiet.

Between sips of iced coffee, the former Las Vegas newswoman of 30 years paused to reflect on her career and share tidbits about the early days of Las Vegas.

As the sole Las Vegas reporter working for United Press International during the 1960s, '70s and '80s, Borders could probably thread together enough stories to write an engaging book about the city she grew up with.

But she doesn't plan to.

"It sounds like an awful lot of hard work to me," the 65-year-old retired journalist said flatly with a smile.

It's a surprising comment coming from someone who aggressively broke into the newspaper industry at a time when women reporters were often relegated to the society page, and battled "The Uniform

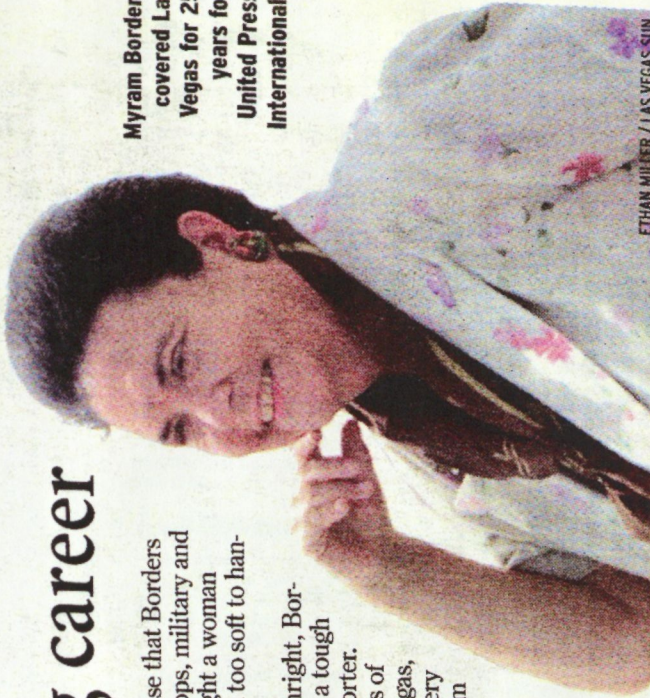
Syndrome," a phrase that Borders used to describe cops, military and athletes who thought a woman reporter was much too soft to handle hard news.

Astute and forthright, Borders was known as a tough and aggressive reporter.

During her 25 years of reporting in Las Vegas, she was chasing every Las Vegas story from mob crime to

celebrity antics. "There was a tremendous

See Borders, 2E



ETHAN MILLER / LAS VEGAS SUN

Myram Borders covered Las Vegas for 25 years for United Press International.