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2007

An Interview with Bruce Layne

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

2007

Recorded interviews and transcripts supporting the Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project have been made possible through the generosity of Dr. Harold Boyer and the Libraries Advisory Board. UNLV Library provided a wide variety of administrative services and the Special Collection Department, part of the Oral History Research Center, provided advice. The Oral History Research Center enabled students and staff to work together with community members to generate the selection of first-person narratives. Participants in this project thank the University of Nevada Las Vegas for the support given that allowed an idea the opportunity to flourish.

The transcripts received editorial editing. These measures include the elimination of fragments, false starts, and digressions 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. 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.

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Claytee D. White, Project Director
Director, Oral History Research Center
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Illustrations

**ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER OF UNLV
The Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project**

Some of the photographs are courtesy of Bruce Layne.

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Name of Narrator: BRUCE LAYNE

Name of interviewer: CLAYTEE D. WHITE

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Bruce Layne 6-18-04
Signature of Narrator Date

Address of narrator

Claytee D. White 6/18/00
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Illustrations

Unless otherwise noted, all photographs are courtesy of Bruce Layne.

Preface

Bruce Layne came to Las Vegas in March of 1955 when he was 10 years of age. He attended High school at Bishop Gorman and college at the University of Nevada Las Vegas where he received a B.S. in Economics. In college, he played baseball for three years and was named All Conference Player in 1966. Growing up in Las Vegas, two of his closest long time friends are Governor Bob Miller and Tito Tiberti. Bruce later went on to become the President of Layne & Associates Insurance which was the largest Insurance Agency in Nevada.

Bruce tells fabulous stories of his 40-year experience in the Las Vegas community. When he first arrived there were only about 25,000 people living here. Since then, Bruce has been witness to the enormous growth the city has undergone. Throughout the interview, he discusses his book, *My Gift*, which he wrote after he discovered he had Parkinson's disease in 1999. The book contains valuable advice on life and it has touched the lives of many people who have read it.

Today Bruce Layne is relentlessly fighting his battle with Parkinson's disease both for himself and for thousands of others. He continues to have a positive attitude and is supported by his wife, Sherry Layne, and his two sons, Chad and Trevor.

Good morning. This is Claytee White and I'm with Mr. Bruce Layne. It is June 18th, 2004.

And we're in his office in Henderson. How are you this morning?

Hi, Claytee. That's a mouthful, but it's a beautiful name, and it suits you perfectly.

Thank you.

I'm great this morning. It's June 18th, '04 [2004].

That's right. Is it true that you've given me permission to do this recording, that you know it's for educational and research purposes?

Absolutely.

We're not going to start in the usual way, by talking about your life first. I just read your book, and I'm still very enthusiastic about it. And I love the concept of "paying it forward."

Now, how can we really get that off the ground in a big way?

Let's talk about the movie for a second, Claytee. Kevin Spacey starred in the movie, and he was the sixth grade teacher. He was an interesting guy because he was sensitive, but he was kind of overbearing. So he had the sixth grade class. And what he told them is that the world is pretty brutal out there. It's a jungle out there. And his whole point, his whole theme was, if you treat human beings with kindness, it'll come back tenfold. So all the kids, as a project, were supposed to go out and find three people to help and be kind to them. And it would proliferate, and we'd have a kinder world. It's amazing how when you compound something like that, it has tremendous results.

Have you thought about using this in any of your speeches, any of the presentations that you're doing now?

Great idea. Let me go back to my book. There's so much goodwill and inspiration relative to that.

And there's so much goodwill from it, as you can see by those letters that responded to my book,

that there is just something to be found. And I'm not sure what it is. I'm still exploring it philosophically. But there's some magic in the book to motivate people to be kinder, to be thought-provoking. I mean, it's thought-provoking about, Are you successful? Do you appreciate? Should I go into that a little bit?

Yes.

A couple of the points that I'm finding out in speaking that's having some impact is that we don't appreciate anything enough. We're always seeking "tens" in life. Hopefully, it's appropriate. I'm going to back up and go over the HELL on Earth. I'm friends with Dr. Jack Jeraski, a psychiatrist here in Las Vegas. And he had this program, and I'm just taking it and tweaked it a little bit. But his point was HELL is the acronym for happiness, enthusiasm, love, and laughter. And the point is we're all into survival. And we all aren't maximizing good events and satisfying events. We aren't looking for beauty and love. And there are ten experiences in those types of virtues. And anyway, we're into survival; food, shelter, clothing. And you have to get past survival to really enjoy life and to be satisfied, find fulfillment in life. So I think it kind of shows you what you choose.

So happiness is just finding gratification, finding out what turns you on, what excites you, what gives you satisfaction. And E in HELL is enthusiasm, that you should have a curiosity about you. [Leonardo] Da Vinci talked about curiosity. And you should have a curiosity about you. You should make yourself be interested in things that you have to take the initiative to do it. And most people don't take the initiative. So love, love is kind of beauty. I talk about love. The epitome of love is when you die for it like the monk, the Zen monk. He was falling down that cliff. But all of a sudden, he saw the tulips, the magnificent blue-gold tulips. And he just saw beauty, and he didn't mind the plant pulling out and dying. That's taking it to the other -- but it

makes the point. So love. And you talk about love, it's really beauty is love. Even you could see beauty in a kiwi. Isn't that kiwi beautiful?

Yes.

What else is beautiful for you?

A rose.

A rose. Okay. I think it should be a pure, pristine white rose. Maybe that's more beautiful. I like vanilla ice cream. Anyway, so that's just of a purist. And laughter. You have to look at humor. You have to look for humor. And I've given my close friend, Claytee, my book that's the best book I've ever read of keeping life in perspective. And it's "Ten Fun Things to Do Before You Die," written by a nun in Chicago, Sister Kowalski, who I was trying to track her down to talk to her, interview her. But it gives you a perspective going through this world. I'm sorry it gets to the F word, fun. So I recommend you read this book.

So anyway, what we're looking at is to appreciate more. Appreciate meaning looking for tens, looking for tens in all the wrong places. And you also appreciate what you have. And people that are your parents, do you appreciate them deep enough? I had to find out things the hard way.

Do you want to talk about your early life here in Las Vegas now?

While we're on appreciation. I've always been a want-to-be philosopher king. So understand more in pursuit of the ideal world. Anyway, I've been successful in most everything that I've done. But I never really appreciated it that deeply. When you're going 122 miles an hour, you can't smell that white rose very well. You don't even see it. It's a blur. So I was probably a seven on a scale of one to ten on appreciating. I had to learn it the hard way.

And actually my world changed on April 19th, 1999. I was working out and my personal

trainer said, Go see your doctor, I don't like the way you're carrying your arm, and I don't like your gait. So I go see my doctor, Corey Brown, Fremont Medical Center. He looks at me, and he said, you're going to the neurologist. And I said, well, what the hell's wrong? And he said, "You either have a brain tumor, or you've had a stroke, or you have Parkinson's." And I said, "Oh great." Is there a D, none of the above? I've been sick, according to Monte, my aide of 28 years, three days, I've been sick in 35 years. Never been to the hospital. Not perfect health. Overweight, of course.

Anyway, so I go and find out that I have Parkinson's. And I went into a deep depression, deep depression for -- I don't know -- days, weeks, it felt like years because that's not my normal nature. So I said, Oh, my God. I was shocked. I was afraid. My arm was shaking, so I would go nowhere. Your face gets more zombie-like. You lose your animation in your face. And I had a little bit of that. So I was in a state of depression. In fact, I've seen people in wheelchairs all shriveled up and trembling and drooling. That's what I saw the first time he sent me to a support group. So anyway, I was depressed.

And then all of a sudden, I said, "Wait a minute." Whatever I have to live, I'm going to live, and I'm going to do some good things. And I started to look on the bright side. And I said, you know, this Parkinson's, it's kind of the fashionable disease. It's the "in" disease. It's in vogue. I mean, Michael J. Fox has it, the Pope, and Muhammad Ali, all the movers and shakers. It is a gift. The Parkinson's is an absolute gift, and I can say that with all truthfulness. And I feel that way because that made me turn around and decide I'm going to appreciate life more and deeper, emerge myself in what's important. So that's what I've been doing. I want to do something more significant. It's fueled that fire. That's one of the reasons, the second reason, why I wrote the book. It was more my grandkids, the first reason.

But anyway, I've come out of it. I lecture people. And I've had it for five years. And a lot

of people are in wheelchairs at three years or four years or five years, whatever. And I've played their game, kind of a turning point here. I played their game. They told me to quit playing tennis and that type of thing. So after three years of doing that type of nothing, I went back to playing tennis. I've been taking Pilates. And I'm a pretty good example right now. You know, it's a progressive disease. It's incurable. You progressively get worse. Everybody gets worse; it's just more how quick.

But the other thing that I developed when I got out of my state of depression for a week or two was I came up with a triad of strength and hope. And it's a triangle. And the first top is positive thinking, a positive attitude. And the second leg is clarity of purpose. And the third leg is faith, faith in yourself. So this has really helped me. I've gone back to this several times. So this becomes a lot stronger than just having a positive attitude. And you could put it in writing, and it makes you more accountable. Like Claytee did, she did that letter of destiny in her portfolio [I wrote a letter regarding a future position that I wanted and it came to fruition.]. So she knew where she was going. But this gives you strength, and it gives you hope. And those are important items when it comes to Parkinson's. I went into a tangent, but...

Do you talk to a lot of Parkinson's patients?

Yes, I do. These Parkies, there's an estimate of 8,000 people with Parkinson's in Las Vegas. And there are two organizations that I'm involved with. And they have a mailing list of like 500 each. So it shows you that people don't even get involved in any of these programs. Also, funded six classes for a year, every Sunday, six classes, and it costs -- well, it was \$50,000, but it's been worth it, I think. I have some backup on that, if you want, some letters of what we're doing, Claytee. I've spoken to both groups. I talked to them, just get out, be active. Or I'll talk about perseverance and determination. And that's one of my idols that I find encouragement from is

someone like Superman, Christopher Reeves. I mean, everybody knows about him. Ten years ago he fell off a horse, broke his neck, and can't move anything below his neck. You know, we whine about persevering and determination. This guy has worked out ten hours a day for ten years. And finally, six months ago he could move his little finger, and he's ecstatic. He's triumphant. He's blissful. It's unbelievable. Now, we've got to learn perseverance from someone like him.

That's right.

But I go and tell them to get active, get involved.

Have you shared this triad of thought with them?

Yeah, I have given it to those two people, yeah. I don't always talk about that. It's such a terrible disease. It's so debilitating. It affects your nerves. And you lose your dopamine. Everybody loses their dopamine. It's brain chemistry. So it's a movement disorder. And everybody loses their dopamine as they get older. And they estimate that if everybody were 110 years old, everybody would have Parkinson's. That ought to scare the hell out of you.

Can we make a synthetic dopamine, and can we put it back?

The pills are getting better. The medicine and drugs are getting better. They keep looking for the cure, and I'm not sure. You know, they talk about the cure. They think they're close to it. About every two weeks for the last five years, I've read. And you keep hope, but they just aren't moving that quickly. But they're devoting more money towards it. And then you get into the stem cells. The researchers think that these stem cells will really be the cure. But it's pretty controversial. Some people think it would violate the right to life.

With something as controversial as stem cells, how do you look at that? I don't know what your views are on abortion. But how do you justify within yourself that kind of research?

Well, I don't see it as abortion. I mean, I think there are some people that take that view. If it was abortion, then maybe I'm not for it. But I don't think it is. When they just throw the embryos away -- I don't think it's abortion, but that battle will go on. You can go to London or in Sweden or a few places like that that are doing a lot of experimenting. And they're doing a lot of experimenting. Harvard just committed \$300 million to set up a whole stem cell research center.

I don't know if this is appropriate. And these stem cells could help Parkinson's, MS, and what's worse is Alzheimer's. And there are those three things they think they could cure out of stem cells. So you've got to try and get involved in that and research that. Just to put things in perspective nationally, there are a million and a half people that have Parkinson's. There is four and a half million that have Alzheimer's and about the same with multiple sclerosis. And strokes, that would be part of that help, too. They all come out of kind of the same approach. Its brain chemistry and nervous system.

Since this is our first interview -- we're doing a series of interviews on early Las Vegas -- what I'd like to do today is to talk about your family's move to Las Vegas. I want to talk about your memories of that first day, that first week, those first years here, what it looked like and all of that.

Coming up from Los Angeles and being in a new world. Boy, I remember I said it best in that Johnny Hicks, the friend of mine who owned the hotel, his dad and all that. I went to these Strip shows -- that's the wrong -- the hotels had shows, and I don't mean strip shows, huh? But that's the best example. I remember how hot it was. I played baseball and met a lot of friends. And we grew up on Maryland Parkway and Charleston. And we used to play baseball and football and everything on that. This was like "Andy of Mayberry." This was Mayberry here. It was 25,000 people, I think, around then.

Now, which year was this?

'55.

So in 1955, what did the Maryland Parkway, Charleston area look like?

It's kind of dilapidated now. The sprawl keeps going to the mountains, and now we're out of land. The BLM owns all the land around here. We've got some serious problems, water problems and land problems, affordable land. But the other side of the coin is this is like the gold -- what word am I searching for, Claytee -- gold strike, panning for gold. It's like the Frontier or the Barbary Coast. It's the last frontier.

The Gold Rush.

Yeah, the Gold Rush. That's what is I was trying to say. Thank you. But there's a wonderful can-do attitude, and it's always been there. People are generous, and they can do, and they don't resent people coming in. You don't have to have six generations of blue bloods. Kind of like you being a blue blood, Claytee.

I was just saying the other side of this getting busy, I bought a piece of land seven years ago -- I closed escrow a month ago -- but it increased in value 25 times. You can still make it here. A lot of people have done well and worked hard. There's good work ethic here.

Back to the future here. I remember the first time I drank beer and got a little tipsy, and the cop stopped us, and he brought me home. I was scared to death of my parents, what they were going to do. But now you couldn't do that. Johnny Hicks had a brand-new Corvette when he was 14 years old, and we'd cruise around in it. But people were nice. If you got lost, a little baby would get lost, the whole neighborhood would look for him, you know, that type of thing. It was a wonderful place. We all came in our covered wagons [he's joking]. I think there were two hotels. There was the Sahara [opened Oct. 7, 1952] and the Rancho Las Vegas [April 3, 1941] -- it's

across from the T-Bird, the Thunderbird. There was like four. And the Flamingo [December 26, 1946].

Frontier. [Last Frontier opened October 30, 1942]

Frontier was just being built. Frontier and the Riviera and the Sahara were kind of -- I don't know -- in the late 50s, I think they were. But the Flamingo, with Bugsy Segal, the mobster. He built that, and everybody thought he was crazy. The Rancho Vegas. I can't think of --

El Rancho.

El Rancho. I remember Lili St. Cyr was a stripper. They had people like that that starred there. You know where Sahara and Maryland is? Sahara was one lane, one lane of paved and one lane of rocks. We'd get on our bicycles -- and this was Tito Tiberti and Johnny Hicks and Bob Miller -- and we'd ride our bikes to the artesian wells to go crawdad hunting.

Now, where was that located?

You know where Commercial Square is, right there. Commercial Square. Maryland and Sahara and go west, and that's where it was. Between the Sahara Hotel and the Commercial Square. I mean, the Las Vegas Country Club, that's probably a closer approximation.

Tell me what school was like. You attended school at Gorman?

Yes.

What kind of reputation did it have at that time?

It had a good reputation. We had 105 people in our graduating class of 1963. It was close. That's why I have such great relationships now; a lot of people stayed here or came back to their home to work. And doctors and lawyers.

Why did your parents decide to send you to a private school rather than to the public school system?

I don't know. That's a good question. See, there were 400 kids at Gorman. So you knew everybody. My mom, she was very forceful. She thought it was important to do that. I think I did meet some of the people, the future leaders of today, their future looking 30 years back. I remember it was \$250 in tuition, and now it's like \$5,000. I don't know if that's progress or not. But they're moving Gorman, and they raised \$36 million in about a year. They're moving it.

Where are they going?

Out to Summerlin.

The area is pretty congested, and they don't have any room to grow.

And it's going downhill. The neighborhood is not as good as it once was. But I remember you could walk 15 minutes from one side of the town to the other. If you go out there by Cheyenne and 215, if you live out there and go to Green Valley or Anthem where I live, it's like 36 miles. It's like L.A.

Yes. Because I live in the northwest, Durango and the 95.

It's the worst.

It is.

From these dusty roads on Sahara Avenue to this loop that goes around 40 miles, it's definitely startling changes.

Tell me about your friends: Bob Miller, Tito Tiberti, and Johnny Hicks. Tell me what they were like at that age.

Johnny Hicks, he was kind of the class clown and always looking for the thrills. As we talked about in the book, he had a gangster complex. Maybe a lot of kids had that kind of a complex.

But he came by it legitimately, didn't he?

Yeah. His dad was kind of a front. His mother was the most lovely lady in the world. I'd always

mooch meals because my family life was so messed up. Everybody says theirs is dysfunctional. I'm thinking of a better word for dysfunctional. But everybody has their skeletons in the closet. So Johnny Hicks, he used to get \$2,000 a month from the wedding chapel.

Did he actually do any work at the wedding chapel?

No. And his sister got the same thing, Mary Ann, who's a lovely lady, still here.

So what did they do, teenagers, with \$2,000 a month?

Well, drugs weren't even around then.

(End side 1, tape 1.)

Some of the things that we did when we were kids is I'd go over to Bob Miller's house, and we'd go to the putting range and just putt for hours at a time. And to this day, we're both great putters. He's better than I am. But he had a basketball hoop. His mother was the sweetest lady in the world. She was my second son's -- Trevor -- she was the godmother. She was just a sweetheart. She would always cook food for us, take us to shows. You know, the old Mayberry type of approach. And Bob always had all these games, these beautiful -- it reminds me of the Joker, Jack Nicholson, in Batman. Where did he get all those wonderful toys? Bob had this hockey game. He had different board games. And he was always very competitive. He was competitive in politics and competitive in basketball and tenacious and competitive in these games. He didn't like to lose. He'd get mad and throw a tantrum and turn the game over.

Tito was always serious. If I had only two best buddies, it'd probably be Bob and Tito. And Tito was always older than all of us mentally. We all played sports all day. I can't stand to be ten minutes out in the heat now. But, you know, when you're little kids, you're out there playing baseball and football.

Johnny Hicks always would take us to one of those hotels to eat. I had swimming pool

jobs. And Bob got me a job at the Riviera Hotel for several years. And Johnny Hicks got me a job at the Algiers as a pool boy.

I think Mrs. Miller used to take you to shows sometimes. What kind of shows did she take you to see?

You're really stretching my -- I've got to look back 50 years, Claytee. I remember The Palace Theater. There were three theaters: The El Portal, The Palace, and The Fremont. And then the Huntridge. The Huntridge ended up becoming kind of a -- they have rock groups, exhibitions. You ever been in there? The Rocky Horror Picture Show, they still do that. That's what I'm trying to turn my book into. I'm trying to figure out what makes a cult a cult? So I'm trying to make my book kind of a cult thing. It's offbeat, but fascinating. And I think that's the Rocky Horror Picture Show. And I'll call it the Parkie Picture Show, the Horror Picture Show.

But anyway, the Huntridge, you know, I remember you make a loud noise with those DOT boxes. I don't know where I'm getting all this stuff.

What's a DOT box?

DOTs. You ever have DOTs, the little chewy candies? And that box, you used to be able to blow on it and make a loud kazoo noise. Or take the popcorn containers, and you would smash it down, and it would really cause fights. But I remember it was fun to go to the show. You'd see who was there by walking down the line. I remember the Palace [Theater], that's where I saw *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* with Michael Landon. That was his first movie he ever made.

What did The Palace Theater look like?

Oh, it was really kind of a rundown place. I probably shouldn't go there. But I remember there were a lot of black people there. It was no big thing, but I just remembered I'd never been to a theater -- thinking about it now, people made a big thing about it, and I didn't think it was a big

thing. And it isn't and still isn't. But I remember it was different races went there, for some reason. Isn't that funny?

Did everybody sit together?

You know, I think they kind of evolved in their own groups, now that I'm thinking about that.

Now, what is the one theater where the seating was outside?

I don't remember that. No, I don't remember that. But you know the other thing I remember, though, back on the racial thing, I didn't understand why -- I remember like Nat King Cole and Sammy Davis, instead of the hotel rooms, a couple of them were in trailers. And I never understood that until I grew up and then know how racial this thing is. I mean, maybe those are dumb remarks. I don't know.

I think it's pretty good that kids don't understand what's going on. Did you have any African-American or Native American or any non-white friends growing up?

Yes, definitely. Ray Jackson. He grew up here, and his kids went to Gorman. Ray Jackson was a heck of an athlete. And Glen Walker was a heck of a guy. He died of leukemia four years ago. I was good friends with them. We played sports together. But they were nice guys. They were not treated any different as anybody. I mean, it was Gorman. It was a small school. They were just friends. I remember my mom took home those two guys, and it was through the Westside. It was kind of a -- not an epiphany, but I never really spent time over there. But a couple of times, my mom and I took them home after football practice, and we saw it was a little different.

Yes. Because 1955 was when the first African-American dentist --

McMillan?

-- uh-huh -- moved to the city. And a year before that, '54, was the first African-American medical doctor. So things were just beginning to change at the time that you moved here?

Yeah. I think I always had a sense of fairness. I'm not sure where that came from, sense of fairness. Maybe being sensitive to other people helps that.

You moved here from California; is that correct?

Los Angeles.

So how old were you when you moved here?

Oh, I think I was nine.

Do you remember what race relations were like in Los Angeles?

No. I mean, I never understood -- except we had a maid named Ruby, and she was the sweetest thing in the world. I remember I liked her a lot, and she was very affectionate. You know, the second child is always affectionate. It's kind of like the number one son or kid has 4,383 pictures, and the second one has 3.

I think you must have been the second child.

I was. I still like hugs. Some people call me a serial hugger.

Gorman went through the 12th grade. Where did you go to school after Gorman? And where did Bob and Tito go to school, as well?

Well, Bob went to Santa Clara, and Tito went to USC. And I stayed home. I had no direction. I talk about this in my book. I had no direction and no motivation. So I flunked out the first semester. I went to work at the titanium plant. This was a big turning point in my life. Went to the titanium plant, and it was dirty, dusty, and dangerous. So I'm working there for about six months. And the baseball coach, "Chub" Drakulich, he was the first baseball coach, first athletic director, golf and baseball. He came out to the titanium office, and I didn't know who he was. He introduced himself. He said, Hi, I'm Chub Drakulich. And he said, "I want you to play baseball for me." He said, "You get back to school."

I was starting to get a little fear. I think fear is the biggest motivator for most people, and it was for me. The fear was that I was going to be a zero and a nothing. You know, a grease monkey, a mechanic -- well, I shouldn't say that. A grease monkey or something. So it was the timing. But it was really Chub Drakulich who got me back to school. And I hit .395 for him that year.

Now, before you finish that story, because I have some questions about it, how did you feel when Tito and Bob would come home for holidays?

They talked about school seriously. It was a good environment for me to grow up and have aspirations. But, yeah, they knew when they were going. Bob knew he was going to be an attorney. Tito knew he was going to go in with the Tiberti Company because his dad had a formidable business that Tito even grew bigger. They had something to do with being around people. I always thought Gorman was the difference between -- they ask, "What college are you going to?" And some of the other schools just say, "Are you going to college?" That's a much more positive environment to say, "Which one are you going to?" So I came back, and I probably had a B average after that. So we were talking about them, do they motivate me. Yeah, they definitely motivated me. But I didn't catch it being around them. I wasn't a very good student. I wasn't that motivated. I didn't care.

So compare your home life with theirs.

Well, Tito's half Italian, half Irish. His mother was feisty and a nurse here. And his dad was just starting to get big. I remember he had a wheelbarrow attached to a truck, and he started from nothing. He built up a \$250 million company. But you could still make it here. The best story is just to tell them what my wife said when we got married at the Landmark, at the top of the Landmark. There were 250 people there. There was the wedding line. She'd already met about a

dozen ladies -- I exaggerate, a dozen -- but ten -- eight or ten ladies said -- because I was kind of a waif. I kind of had no really home life. I'd go by and mooch meals off of them. So when Sherry went through the line, the lady would go, "Oh, hi, I'm Mrs. Payne, I fed Bruce on Tuesday." So the Tiberti. Yeah, the Tibertis say, yeah, I'd mooch about every other day, different places. But they had I think, what, six or seven kids. They had no TV. J.A. Tiberti didn't believe in TV, didn't think it was good for the kids. Was he the forerunner of -- it was crazy. Their house was bedlam with all the kids, seven kids.

So they didn't even notice if you were there?

No. I was just another one to throw on a meal. Bob Miller, he lived in the high-rent district on Desert Inn Road on the golf course there. His sweet mom, she was the Irish, Colletta Jane, the Irish songbird. She was a beautiful woman, and she was a singer in Chicago. That's where Ross, his dad, met her. She used to go to mass every day at 12 o'clock. A very church-going lady. That was always the high-rent district. We loved chili dogs, but she'd make whatever we'd ask for. I think she always kind of had a soft spot for me because I was, you know, kind of homeless. I was the first homeless.

And R.J. Harrah, that's in the book. But a lot of things in the book that I never knew until I did the book. But R.J., he had a Grandma Manix. She was 91 years old.

At that time, as you were growing up?

Yeah. So that was my Thursday meal. She was this sweet lady. I thought she was full of wisdom. She would get all excited when I was going to be coming. R.J. put it in there -- he answered why finally. And R.J. never told me this. But she said I was the only person that didn't treat her like a piece of furniture out of all his friends, that I always sat down and looked her in the eye and talked to her. And you know that RJ has never brought that up until he put it in the book.

"He always gave me the impression of knowing exactly what he wanted from life, and he was clever about how he went about it. He was so charming and tactful; he gave you the impression of being the type of guy who would smile at you while he was eating your lunch. I always admired that about him. I also recall that he would come to our house for dinner. He was the only one among my friends who would take the time to engage my grandmother in conversation. She was about 90 years old at the time, and it wasn't uncommon for people to ignore her or just treat her like she was part of the furniture. But Bruce would always visit with her and genuinely seemed concerned about her. And grandma always got excited when she heard Bruce was coming by because he treated her like a human being." [He read passage from book.]

That's wonderful.

Isn't that nice? So I just thought it was better to be read than me talk.

Yes, that's good.

You see how it ties in? It does.

We were talking about the different friends. So when you finished school at UNLV, you didn't go right into the insurance business right away. You worked at a couple of casinos, working in the pools during all this time. Then you went to work eventually at a bank.

What was that like? That was kind of your first professional job, wasn't it?

Well, Qualicraft Shoes, that was the training ground.

Tell me about that. Because you actually mentioned that you learned some good work ethic there. Tell me about that.

No. I learned salesmanship.

So tell me about a woman who was a size 13, but she would come in and ask for a size 7.

Women are all funny. I learned more about women out of that job than anything else.

So what would you do when somebody was really a size 13?

You had to learn to be persuasive and not offend them and to make them happy. It depends on who you talk to. But you would just try and say, Ma'am, let me re-measure your foot. Maybe you're growing -- no. Women understate their shoe size. And maybe I learned about women and a lot of about salesmanship. But you would have to just say, But this doesn't look good on you anyway. And so you'd go into colors or -- I'm just thinking out loud here. But I always appreciated it when they said, stretch these out on that machine. And you'd take their shoe, and the machine was a broomstick that you would sit and go like this and open the toe up more. That was their state of the art mechanical stretching machine. I don't know. Some women were hard to please. And no matter what you did with them, if you would have given it to them free, they would have complained. But maybe I learned how to deal with women out of that.

At what point did you meet your wife?

It's when Howard Hughes came in and bought up everything. And he brought out a lot of military people. And her dad was a colonel in the Air Force and a pilot. He was an architect, also. So she came out to meet some other guy on the baseball field and met me. And she's cute. She's sweet. She was the first lifeguard on the Strip at the Frontier Hotel.

So I went over and saw her that next day, saw her in her bathing suit. Thought she was even cuter. So I talked to her. But I took her out for two months. I was really in love. So one night after about two months of dating and courting -- she always could get things comped because her dad was an executive. But, you know, you have to tip people. So I said, I hate to tell you this, Sherry, but I can't take you out anymore. And she said, "Well, why?" And I said, "Because I can't afford the tips." I mean, I had nothing.

You said that Howard Hughes was buying out --

The whole Strip.

-- military people? What does that mean?

He trusted military people more. They had loyalty and discretion and confidentiality, and that's why he hired these ex-military people.

So once you didn't have to tip anymore, how long did the relationship last before you got married?

Well, she tells this story. We only dated for a couple months. We went and saw Jack Jones. Remember Jack Jones, the singer? "Hey, little girl, let me fix your makeup." Well, that's his big song. Anyway, we went backstage and met him. Sherry had met him before. So he's making these drinks for us, and she's giving me her drinks, and I'm drinking them. And I ended up kind of inebriated. She took me home. I proposed to her that night. So I said nothing to her for a month, nothing. And it was her birthday, and I bought her this ring, this God awful, ugly pearl ring as a friendship ring. So I gave it to her. And she opens it and is very disappointed. And I didn't understand why she was so grumpy.

So you didn't remember proposing?

Oh, I absolutely did, but I just kind of wanted to let it go on a little bit longer. I was 24, and I didn't think I was ready for marriage. I probably was, but I didn't think so.

Were you the first out of the group -- Tito, Bob -- were you the first to get married?

Tito got married first, I got married second, and Bob third.

Were you each other's best men? I guess that's the way to say that.

I was in the wedding party. I don't think I was the best man for either one. I don't think so. No story out of that one.

Where did your family live when you first arrived?

We lived on Canosa and Maryland which is 12th Street, an old section of town in Griffith in downtown where the unemployment building is. Isn't that still there at Eighth and Carson, do you know? We lived at the corner of Eighth and Carson, which was kind of a crummy area at that time. I don't have anything profound to say about that.

(End side 2, tape 1.)

Today is Tuesday, June 29th, and we're in a restaurant called Lucille's [Smokehouse] Barbeques in Green Valley, and I'm with Mr. Bruce Layne. Bruce, how are you today?

Hi, Claytee. How are you doing today?

Great.

I'll try and talk up louder so it'll hear it.

I'll allow you to cheat. I don't allow most of my people to cheat. I sent you a list of some of the questions that we're going to answer. You said something very interesting a few minutes ago about pay it forward. That's really my first question on the list because we talked about it on the first tape. But would you repeat some of the things that you said about paying it forward and how we could make that a big event.

Somehow I think we should alert kids when they're real young, explain to them about life and what's important. I mean, when you give out something, it comes back tenfold. But maybe we should make it a club. Have an organization where you can have some pride and being kind. It's fashionable to be kind and nice to people. I think if you like people and you like friends, the nicer you are, the more people want to be in your life. You brighten the room every time. I'm going to call you C.T. from now on. She brightens everybody's life. Lights up a room. But I think we should start a club or a movement and coin it the "Pay It Forward Movement."

Now, what about a book to go along with the movement?

Well, we could do a book, and it'll say why the movement exists. We'll give them a captain midnight decoder ring. Where do I get this stuff? And a certificate so they're proud of that certificate. But, yeah, I'm in the Pay It Forward Club. We'll call it the Forward Club maybe to make it simpler. You need a manual. That's what it is. It's not a book. It's a manual. And it's how to be happier in life, how to be more successful. There's some real answers to that, how to get that satisfaction and to get that enjoyment out of life. But this will be a how-to. I'll have to think about that more, C.T.

I think that's great. One of the things that's important to me in life is freedom. Could you talk a little about the freedom that comes with having money?

That's all that money does, it gives you freedom. It's another problem to not have. I think it's harder to be happy when you have a lot of money. Because if you're given it, everybody has a tendency -- an attitude of entitlement, and that's almost as bad as doing nothing. But anyway, it just gives you freedom, money. But you remember when you bought your first car or anything, you saved up for it and you got an old piece of junk. 1973 Desoto. But you earned that. Or when you cut the grass and your dad gave you two quarters, how did that make you feel? It makes you feel just as good as when strangers come up to you and say, Aren't you Mr. Layne? And I say, Yes. And they say, You improved my life, you changed my life 12 years ago in Mrs. Mahoney's class. And a stranger, you know, it's the same feeling. Talk about freedom comes with having money. No, it really doesn't give you that much freedom. Not freedom spiritually, certainly.

Spiritual versus money, that's an interesting concept, C.T. I can't read this.

I'm going to read the whole thing. He's cheating, by the way. Freedom is important to me on a series of levels. Talk about the freedom that comes with having money. I am still waiting for that one to materialize. You see it materially only, but not emotionally or

spiritually. I believe that it's possible to see money on all those levels, as well. Any comments on that?

I stumbled over that and said spiritually. You know, everything is metaphysical -- your thoughts, the vibrations in the world -- that change things. But it's your emotional well-being. It's like a businessman. Just because he is financial successful and made millions of dollars, has he really enjoyed it thoroughly? His kids, do they feel loved? That's what's more important than any damn material thing because that's where we can find happiness and enjoy life is -- it's all spiritual. It's all what you believe and how you believe. That's why I wrote the book, was I wanted my grandchildren to know about values. I had principles and values, and you need that in life. You get more satisfaction out of life. Life is funny. It's a crack-up. That's why I can't ever believe these people that end their lives. It's too funny. Oscar Wilde said -- well, the first thing he said is, Old is always ten years older than whatever I am right now. Oscar Wilde said, Life is too important to be taken seriously. That's relevant.

I don't know if I should go into it. But when I first sold the company and got a bag full of money, all the brothers and sisters -- Sherry and I sent \$22,000 to them. I thought it was fascinating human nature how some of them -- both ends of the spectrum. We didn't say anything. I just put it in a card, \$22,000, and just said, Merry Christmas.

How did you come up with the amount?

Because that's what you can give away without getting taxed as gifts. You'll learn that one day. Anyway, it was interesting how one person wanted to know why wasn't it more. Talk about entitlement. At the other end of the spectrum was one of the brothers. He was so thankful that he kept writing cards and calling for about a year. And then most of the people were in the middle. But one of them, in fact, brother Jeffrey, he got disillusioned and quit becoming a chiropractor,

and he was a good chiropractor. So anyway, I gave him that money, and he bought a new machine, which made him go back to become a chiropractor. But he's still mad at me because I don't think the chiropractic can heal or cure my Parkinson's, and he's offended of that. But it's okay.

This is a good time to segue and talk about your grandmother.

Grandma Mimi. She was the best. I don't know where to start with her. The first thing she did, she divorced her husband in 1937 when she was 38 years old, and then she went to chiropractor school, which was unheard of then.

How did she deal with a divorce at that time in our history because that wasn't something that women did at that point?

She was just feisty and didn't care. She just wanted something more. And he put her down. She was 4' 11" and 95 pounds. She worked as a chiropractor until she was 85 years old.

Now, is she the one who moved here in 1955 when you moved here?

No. She never moved here. She helped my mother move up here, but she never personally. But she loved Las Vegas. That's the first time I ever heard about all this astrology stuff. She'd have like a certain perfume or a certain vase. She'd come up at a certain hour. She'd gamble. But I'd never heard of those astrology charts. It's still a little different.

Did she win often?

Yeah, she did. But she'd spend it all. She was a big spender. But she used to talk about how she went up and was captured in a UFO once. I don't know. She got me to believe. But she'd always give me advice everyone even until the day she died at 95, which was eight years ago, she'd give me business advice and self-esteem. What she did for self-esteem was so simple. And I pass this on to a lot of different people. She would take my hands and hold my hands and say, C.T., you're

special. And I still remember that to this day. She did it until I was 40 years old. If you look at somebody and say that, they start believing it. Look at how I remember it. I mean, I don't think that much of my self-esteem until -- it's another one of the things -- I found so many things writing that book. It was an unbelievable experience. Things like this about my grandmother.

Tell me more about her. Where did she go to school? Do you know?

She went to Los Angeles Chiropractic College.

Was her family in Los Angeles with her, or did she move there and do this on her own?

She moved from Minnesota. She was Dutch and French. She was feisty. She used to drive around the country by herself, to New York and back. I never heard of "chautauqua" that she would talk about. I never understood what the hell they were until I got older. Sam, in the art of motorcycle maintenance, talked about that, "chautauqua." That's when you go out on a walk way in the desert, and you have kind of like a leap of faith, you know, one of those -- oh, what do you call that? The tents, the canvas tents. She'd talk about that. And then chautauqua. That's a good word. Have you ever heard that, chautauqua?

I've heard the word "chautauqua." That's different. [The words are the same.]

Well, maybe I'm not saying it right.

No, no, no. I think it's different. I'm talking about when someone impersonates a person.

Okay. That's a different word. But she'd go out in the desert, a hundred miles out in the desert, and have these retreats like, these spiritual retreats. I still do remember talking about vibrations to people. She gave me the gift. The gift is a certain spiritual influence that you have on people. It can only be used for the good. It should motivate people. You get them wanting to do their best in the world.

How do you explain your grandmother in her time? How did she get that kind of

independence, that kind of self confidence? Where did that come from?

That's a good question. She had conviction. She had what she believed. She had beliefs. Most women were like Stefford Wives, I think. They just were there for a piece of furniture. And she always thought that she had philosophy, deep philosophy, and reflected a lot. Maybe that's why I do that. Her enthusiasm was contagious. She had vision, and she knew what she wanted, and she'd attack. But she was still quirky. She was a combination of Lucille Ball and Marlena Dietrich. When you look at those pictures, you can see them out of there.

Oh, reincarnation. I'm Catholic, and they don't believe in reincarnation. My Grandma Mimi always talked about reincarnation. She talked about all these different lives she had, other layers of life. Like she was a soldier in Asia under Genghis Kahn. And she talked about that she was a frontier woman. I've got to think about that, frontier woman. What else about her? I remember her telling me about you be careful with those women. They're like a spider weaving their web. They'll try and trap you. I don't know where I'm going with this, but it's the truth. And that God put in that libido in men, and it was like catnip. That's what she said. So just be careful and make sure they really love you.

Are there any other stories about her that the family tells?

She was a vagabond and a princess at the same time. She was a gypsy, and she moved around constantly. She was never happy. She always thought that the next -- waiting for the next rainbow. But she bought a new car every year. And she owned her own apartment building in Los Angeles on Hollywood Boulevard when my dad met my mother who was 16, the daughter of Mimi, and married her. And I have pictures of this apartment. I think it was like six or eight rooms. She lost that in her first divorce, she said. She was feisty and independent then and entrepreneurial. She always made a lot of money, but she blew it all.

When you say entrepreneurial --

She moved to L.A., a couple of different areas, into Big Bear Lake. And then ended up in Oroville, California, which is between Victorville and Barstow, the old road. She always liked the desert. She was in love with the desert. I still see the beauty in it. Most people don't see the beauty in the desert, but I see that because she always talked about it. But it was a desolate old road that they lived on. She did her practice, and then they had a restaurant. If anybody drove that road that many years ago, there would be these orange juice stands and lemonade stands. And we'd stop and have a -- okay. Entrepreneurial?

So she had a restaurant?

Yeah. Just always would take risks. She liked taking risks. She loved life.

What part of that personality do you see in yourself?

I think I'm a lot like her. I care about people, and I enjoy helping people. I recognize the fact that that's where the satisfaction is at. It's vision, but it's almost a cavalier vision. She was like Auntie Mame. She was kind of an Auntie Mame personality. Sometimes I'm very quiet, and the other half of me is flamboyant. I think I got that from her. I was very serious, pensive. But there's a fun-loving side that I got from her. She was a devil. She was always pulling practical jokes.

That's the other thing; she was ahead of Imelda Marcos [former Philippine first lady - 1200 pairs] because she had like 120 shoes. And they were mostly cheap, from Pier One. But she loved shoes. I have a lot of shoes in my closet. Probably a lot of Mimi in my closet, too.

I really appreciate that. Earlier you were also telling me, before we turned the recorder on, about some of your earliest jobs here. And you told me about a job that you had that you spent about three years on this job.

You mean, the busboy at the Thunderbird Hotel?

Could you tell us a little something about what it was like to work in a place like that during that time? We are talking about the 60s; is that correct?

I graduated from high school in '63. Yeah, early 60s, you're right. Oh, Johnny Hicks, who I was friends with, his parents got me the job there. I was a busboy. I think I learned how to treat people. I learned the good decent work ethic, even though I learned more when I went to the titanium plant. But I was a hard worker, but I seemed to get enjoyment out of pleasing people. I guess I still I have that. I don't know if that's good or bad.

That was great for the insurance industry, wasn't it?

Yeah. Because you're insuring people's personal effects; things that are important to them. It was good because I was kind of on my own then, and I would eat meals at the Thunderbird Hotel.

Were you in a union?

Yes. I was in the Culinary Union. I should have used that when I ran for office more.

Was Al Bramlet a part of the union at that time?

He was. He was the head guy.

Did you ever get to know him before his death?

No.

You said something about another job just a few seconds ago. You said something about the titanium plant. What kind of things did you learn there?

Well, that's when I flunked out of school my first semester, and I was fledgling. I was just wandering around. I had no idea what I wanted to do. This goes into the whole thing about Drakulich and UNLV and all that.

(End side 1, tape 2.)

This is Claytee White. It is July 13th, 2004. I'm with Mr. Bruce Layne. How are you this

morning?

Fine. How are you, Claytee?

Good. Today is the third part of your interview. I'd like to start where we stopped before. You were talking about your job at the Thunderbird. I know it was the Hicks family that helped you get this job. How did that work?

I grew up with Johnny that was here, and his dad is the guy that started off hitchhiking, getting on a train ride to get out here. He ended up being a hotel executive, owning the Thunderbird. He definitely had connections back in St. Louis. He died at an early age. I remember that. It affected Johnny big time, even though I knew Johnny was adopted, which was kind of a big thing then.

Mrs. [Georgia] Hicks, she was just a lovely lady, good friends with my mother. The Thunderbird is kind of interesting. It was when I was 16. Was it my first job? Yeah, my first job. It was hard work. I remember that.

What did you do?

I was a busboy. The other thing I remember -- I think it's interesting -- is in the showroom, they had all the biggest stars. But they brought several plays in. I remember *Some Enchanted Evening*, isn't that the name of it? Yeah. Robert Goulet was singing it. They'd always rehearse in the showroom, which was right next to it, which I thought was kind of fascinating. I thought it was big league to see that big league entertainment. I remember they used to have fighters. That was the first time before Tyson and all the rest of the gang. I remember Sonny Liston used to hang out there all the time, at the bar. And he also would train every day, and you could go watch him train. They don't do that anymore. But those are just two memories of that. I learned kind of a good ethic there because it was kind of hard work.

Claytee, we've been talking about race relations. I told you I think I always was

color-blind, hopefully I still am. But Mrs. Hicks had the nicest lady. She was the cook, made beds, the maid. Her name was -- I just had it a second ago -- Georgia. I'm just thinking about Georgia right now. She was the best cook. But she was part of the family. She was just Georgia. I mean, she was in charge of the kids. All of us kids, she'd yell at us if we were out of line or too loud. I remember one of the last times Mrs. Hicks had us over to her house. Georgia had no insurance, and they paid for her a hip transplant. They had her out at the house. She was just friends. There was no color then. That's when I didn't understand how in the paper they'd always talk about -- I just remember it must have been like '58 [1958] or '59 [1959] or something to talk about Nat King Cole and Sammy Davis. I remember they complained because they were in a trailer in the back of the hotel.

But anyway, the Thunderbird. Then I went on to be at the Riviera as a busboy and a lifeguard. Being a lifeguard was fun because it was good work. I mean, it was work, and it was kind of fun. There was a lot of cute little ladies. That was fun.

As a busboy, did you earn tips?

Yes. If you worked hard, people would just slip a couple bucks in your hand. I knew I wanted more than that.

Did other young people work there, as well?

Yes. Well, there really wasn't that many young kids. Busboy was the only job or pool lifeguards. My wife, I met her in '69, married her in '70. But she was the first lifeguard on the Strip that was a female, at the Frontier Hotel.

Now, when you left the Thunderbird -- I don't know if it was right after or not -- but one of the other jobs you had at this time after going to school for a while, you were at the titanium plant. Tell me about the work at the titanium plant. Exactly what did you do?

Well, the first point is I ended up in a precarious manner to go there. I didn't mean to work there, but I flunked out of school in the first semester I went to UNLV. So I went to work at the titanium plant, and that cured me. I decided I wanted to get an education. So I went back to school.

Should I go into Chub?

You've already talked about Chub. But tell me what kind of work --

Okay. It was dirty and dangerous, just hard work. I was in the leaching department, which there was like ten of us. Leaching, they would drop the nuggets, and they would take this acid, and it would burn up everything else except keep the titanium. You had to go and open these valves and close them. It was kind of confusing. I mean, I felt under pressure all the time. That's the first time I really started dealing with unions. I couldn't understand why these workers hated the company so much. They would go out of their way to not work half the time. All they did was hide behind the union. So it wasn't a very good taste in my mouth to see unions. I never could understand it. But some different unions are that way, or union mentality that they don't care about the company. And maybe it's the company's fault, that they should share more of the profits with them or whatever. But definitely, it's always been a problem.

Did you feel the same way about the Culinary Union?

No. A couple hundred dollars is your buy-in. I think the culinary union was a lot more effective. I looked at them as a necessary evil that I had to pay them. You've got monthly union dues. They did protect people. In those days, you know, you would fire somebody, and you didn't have anybody to answer to. So unions are definitely needed when there's some exploitation or it's not fair, management's not being fair.

One of the things you talked about in the book was that later on in life you started an investment club. I think it was called the Sunride Investment Club. Tell me about that and

whether or not it's still alive [Sunride Investments].

Well, it is still alive, and the investment's probably worth a million and a half dollars. My role was I initiated it, I implemented it, and had a vision -- or I could see beyond the vision maybe, off the horizon. I mean, here are all these land things going up. You know, you could buy land for a thousand bucks and get \$5,000 back. I was enamored with that. The principle of synergism, you get things done in geometric progressions, I guess. The whole is worth more than the parts. But anyway, I initiated it. I had like 12 guys. When it boiled down, there was four of us left. We gave \$50 a month for two years and ended up with like -- do the math -- 4 or \$5,000 for a down payment. And then leveraged it into land. You know, did payments. And everybody was supposed to pay \$50 a month. And everybody dropped out except Tito Tiberti, Bob Miller, and Michael Leavitt. So our little \$50 for two years -- probably two, three, four or five years, we leveraged that into a million-and-a-half-dollar investment. We own a couple of warehouses.

So are you accepting new members?

The buy-in is too steep now.

When you talk to young people today in classrooms at the college or in a high school setting or even a middle school, what do you tell them about investing and saving?

Well, I start off by talking about goals. They should have financial goals. I tell them they should be balanced. I'm trying to lecture them on their career path. I say that they should be balanced with their academics and athletics and socially. That's one of the things besides education. Well, that's part of other education. I was an economic major, and consumer economics is important. People don't know interest rates and how to balance a checkbook. I go into that and tell them that they have to do that. They need communication skills and people skills.

Back to investments. I lecture about saving. And I think that Sunride showed that you can

do this with a small, small down payment, you could leverage yourself. You also see on TV those people in Hawaii, how they have 22 houses. But there is a point to that. And you can leverage it. And anybody could make it if they want to. If they borrow the money or save it, a down payment, and leverage themselves and get properties and keep turning in the equity and getting a good return. But back to teaching kids saving, you know, I bought a piece of land seven years ago for \$702,000, and I closed escrow last month and sold it for \$1.8 million. Only in Las Vegas. Not really. Anywhere. But just to do it. The appreciation will catch up with you if you have confidence. So I would say have confidence and look for the long-term investment and have balance in your portfolio, whether it's stocks and bonds and some real estate. But anybody could do it if they want to. The opportunity is there.

Where did the name Sunride come from?

I'm not that creative. I think Tito thought of it. It was just a little different, Sunride.

Tell me how you got started in the insurance business.

I was the first graduating class of UNLV. It was Nevada Southern before. January of 1969. Nobody else has told you that, huh, Claytee? I even have a ring, an NSU ring. It's kind of obsolete.

I always was a good observer of human nature and people. I always observed that after people start a job, it's forever. So I didn't really want to go to work and be committed. So I did just little pick-up jobs for about a year at Circus Circus and at QualiCraft selling shoes and then encyclopedias. My first real job was with Valley Bank. I was making \$525 a month. You never see an old poor banker. But I didn't like the structured hours. I liked the flexibility of I'll work until midnight tonight, and then I'll take off tomorrow and go skiing. So after a year and a half at the bank, I got into the insurance business. Actually, Mr. Tiberti -- I mean, he recommended that I

get in the insurance business. So I went with Marsh & McLennan, the world's largest insurance broker.

You have a special license.

A CPCU [Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter]. It's like a CPA of the property casualty business. It's like a master's degree in insurance. I don't know how many there are; 20,000 in the state. There used to only be three or four here in town, but there's probably a dozen now.

Where do you take classes?

At usually UNLV or even individuals' offices, you could take classes.

You were doing all of that, and you had just gotten married and just started a family at the same time; is that correct?

Yes.

That must have been quite difficult to juggle all of that.

I've always been a juggler, having 50 balls in the air. I was always working hard. I put in a lot of hours. I was usually coaching baseball and soccer for the kids. It's always been tough in that balance.

Did your sons go to Gorman, as well?

Yeah, they went to Gorman; then UNLV.

How did you come up with the idea of taking them individually on vacations?

Good question. Back to being an observer of human nature, I just could observe that kids acted different when they were one on one with you as opposed to their brothers or sisters around or the spouse even. I just thought that was a meaningful dialogue. My wife did a wonderful job of raising the kids. She deserves a lot of credit because she'd forego some of her interests to help me. Her number one priority was to raise the kids, and I respect her for that and admire her for that.

But I could just see that there's a different relationship when you're one on one with them. And I just thought I'd make it more of a bigger deal so they'd appreciate it more. And they appreciate it to this day. We still do it. I went with Trevor two weeks ago to San Francisco and saw the Giants game. And Chad, we're supposed to go down to San Diego probably or Chicago and see that. But I always let them pick. But Chad kind of wants to go to Chicago and Boston, Fenway Park, because of the two classic parks, baseball parks. So we've been making plans to go in August sometime.

That's great. You've just gotten back from a vacation; is that true?

I was in San Diego, yeah, for six days.

So how was that?

That was great. That's the best weather in the country.

I agree. Getting back to the insurance business, I know that this is a very private business, and you can't talk a lot about your clients and things like that. But tell me about the early days and some of the struggles and some of the triumphs that you earned and how you went from working for someone to going into your own business.

Well, getting that degree, CPCU, accelerated my education. So I was working for Marsh & McLennan for two years in L.A. They sent me first to train and then two years up here. Then I ended up meeting this Cash, Sullivan & Cross people who were very generous, very nice people. They hired me. That was 1973.

Now, what was the name of this company?

Cash, Sullivan & Cross. I always asked Ed Sullivan, How did you guys decide what names to place where? He says, Well, I wanted to be protected by both sides, the cash and the cross. That was always a good line. And I did all Del Webb's insurance. They couldn't get insurance almost

at any price. So I set up a loss control program that when you take a big deductible and do it yourself and you have the guidance of an adjuster on the telephone -- and anybody in the world could do it. I improved things by making better investigation reports that could prove that you weren't negligent. And it cut down the claims. But also by taking a thousand or \$10,000 deductible, the client had some skin in the game, and he would make sure there were no claims. It was prevention. And they monitored it. All of a sudden, care and have an affinity for the program. So you'd handle claims easier. I saw broken hips being settled for a thousand-dollar room and food. You know, that type of thing. It just changed the whole mentality. But it just got them involved on the prevention of it.

Tell me about Del Webb. I always thought Del Webb was connected with Howard Hughes in some way. Is that true? [Webb and Hughes were friends. Webb did more than \$1 billion worth of business with Hughes.]

No. In fact, the story goes with Cash, Sullivan & Cross in the 50s, there was a guy that had a pickup truck and a tool kit, and that was Del Webb. They felt sorry for him and wrote a couple of bonds for him, and he never forgot it. So he never lost the coverage during those years. Then Del Webb spread his operation. He had four casinos. He owned the Yankees at that time.

Did he own casinos here in Las Vegas?

Four of them.

Do you remember which ones?

Four of them in the state of Nevada. Excuse me. The Sahara. He really developed that. The Sahara Reno. At the lake, I'm trying to think of the name of it. Incline Village, Lake Tahoe. There was one more. The New Porter Inn. [In Las Vegas, in addition to the Sahara, Webb owned The Thunderbird, The Lucky Club and The Mint.] That wasn't gaming. But he owned a lot of

hotel/casinos. But that was my claim to fame, that I set up this program. I just set up a \$5,000 deductible, and it reduced the claims in half overnight. So it kind of put me on the map, and I got to be known as the hotel expert. I probably have insured every hotel in the state over the years; over the 35 years of doing that, of being in the insurance business.

I wanted to go back to those early days. It was interesting, August of '84 [1984], August 1st of '84, I bought them out. There was five people and \$500,000 worth of revenue. We ended up selling when I had 75 people and almost \$7 million of revenue, commission income. But it was kind of interesting because when I bought it, these guys, they bought the Phoenix operation out, and I bought the Nevada operation out. There's a couple articles in the paper. I was president before, but I wasn't an owner. It was interesting because I had some media coverage. I took it over, and everybody treated me different after that. Maybe I had more confidence, and you are what you project to people. People treated me a little differently. It was funny. But at the same time, I got the Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1984. It was the same time. This was from UNLV, December 2nd, 1984.

Wow, just a few months later.

UNLV honors Las Vegas executives. It just was an explosion of media, maybe respect.

Which honor over the years -- this is going to be a tough question -- which honor do you cherish most?

I probably should look at my resume.

Or you can name a couple.

That's an important one. But I earned it. I was on their board of directors for a long time. I was the first -- maybe that's one of my best awards. I was the first alumni on the foundation board, board of trustees. For 12 years I was the only alumni. So I'm proud of that. I'm proud of what I'm

doing now, out there raising money. You know, I'm proud of that book. Can I talk about that?

Yes, of course.

But that's not an award, I guess. But I'm finding it rewarding. I've given a dozen speeches, raised \$30,000, and wrote a book. I'm trying to think what else. I was on the Boxing Commission for four years, and they just gave me a couple certificates, more than anything. You earn your money. You make \$80 a month. The State pays you \$80 a month to put up with all that abuse.

What does the Boxing Commission actually do?

They regulate boxing. The first thing they do is to have no mismatches where somebody could get hurt badly. That's the number one goal.

So do you have to know your history?

Yes. You have to understand boxing a lot. I really didn't, if the truth be known. But I studied it and learned it. Where I really helped was making it more business-like. That's what the governor, when he appointed me, wanted, to be a more business-like example. We could go to these licensed promoters; we could go to their bank and find out if they did have those balances. But the other goal, the other duty was you have to have a fair fight, and you have to have professionals being the referees and the judges. There are three judges. That's really important. It's so subjective, it's hard to tell. Every time there's a fight, people complain. You hear that all the time, don't you?

I want to get back to the beginning of your own insurance company in '84 [1984]. Where were you located at the time?

We were downtown with a couple lawyers. I bought part of that building, one-third of the building, when I moved in.

So what was downtown -- how did it look in 1984?

Well, I lived downtown. You know where the unemployment building is?

Yes.

On Eighth and Carson. Have they moved it, or is it still there? I lived across the street from there.

It wasn't even a great area then. In fact, that's where I used to watch these -- they weren't homeless, but they weren't dressed very good. Their teeth weren't very good. They weren't very well-groomed.

(End side 1, tape 3.)

But I just remember my sensitivity kind of made me feel sorry for them. Anyway, that's Eighth and Carson. It wasn't the best area, but it wasn't terrible.

Because today there's some portions down there that are still that way. But, yet, there are some blocks that they're renovating. Lawyers' offices, old houses have been turned into.

Isn't that great? Some of them are historical, aren't they? But that was the old neighborhood. We would ride our bikes around Las Vegas High School there. They closed the high school down, but then they became the Performing Arts. I guess that's progress.

I mean, it's one of those -- what do they call them -- magnet schools. With the Performing Arts.

That's good they did that with that.

Yes, I think that's wonderful.

And it's a wonderful building, too.

Do you remember the old El Cortez?

Yes.

That's not that far away from where you are.

No. It was about two blocks is all. Jackie Gaughan owned that. I remember that 49-cent

breakfast. The Silver Slipper, everybody went, all the college students. They must have hated us. The biggest play in baseball on these scholarships, a lot of times there'd be partial scholarships, and these kids would be brought in on the team, and they'd get food passes. See, like you'd get passes for a month. And they'd give you these tickets. I never thought about that until now.

So who gave you the passes?

The hotels. Like the Silver Slipper or Jackie Gaughan's. They were famous for that, helping the kids. It probably breaks some kind of NCAA rule, but it was different. We were always struggling. I remember buying chicken wings because they were the cheapest thing you could get. Now they're more expensive.

Because people like them a lot.

Yeah. Remember that? It used to be bad news if you had to eat chicken wings. And a bunch of us fraternity people would get together on Sunday nights and have roasted -- or how do you cook them -- bake them?

Yes. Or you can barbeque them.

Yeah, bake them. They were baking them.

So tell me a little bit more about the food vouchers. They would find you on campus, or how did that work?

Well, it was usually done through the coaches, and the better players got the food tickets. They only had X amount. Like I said, you can't get away with that today. That's breaking a rule. I've never understood that rule. I think it's kind of foolish that you can't eat. I mean, cars or anything else, I agree, don't let them have it, or money or whatever. But jeez. In fact, I used to be in charge of a tree, and I got paid. So that was part of my scholarship.

What did you have to do? Keep the tree alive?

Yeah, yeah. I had to rake the leaves. There was a couple of us that had that so we could get more money, so we could live.

When you got the food vouchers, you could go into one of those all-you-can-eat breakfasts?

Yes. Those buffets.

But that's interesting. I really appreciate that information. So you're downtown. You have your first office. How did that feel? I mean, after all these years of kind of struggling and helping your brother and now you have you have your own business, you have your own family started, how does that feel?

I was scared to death. I bought the agency -- \$500,000 of commission income. I mean, it was a total of \$167,000 over five years. And I used to have to come up with that \$38,000. I lost sleep over it. Trust me, that's what makes an entrepreneur to worry about how you're going to make payroll. So it was scary. But I ended up with a payroll of \$2 million -- two and a half million dollars.

You became known as the person to insure hotel/casinos. So in a city like this, that must have been very, very lucrative.

Yes. But you had to work hard.

So how did you go about training new people in that special niche of the market?

Good question. In 15 years, we increased from, I said before, \$500,000 in commissions to \$7 million in commissions. We grew at two and a half million a year in premiums, now. I always had that theory to hire more people than you needed because I was so positive and optimistic. So I'd have an extra person always and stay ahead of the game. And it did, and it gave better service. I think it was a little bit novel. I'd hire people that had a good attitude. I didn't care what their grades were, if they had a C average at school. I would hire people that had a good attitude, that

had some pride, but had a vested interest. They were self-sufficient because I had to rely on people -- you know, it's kind of organized chaos. When you're growing that much, five people a year, if you go from five to -- so you had to have good people, and you had to instill confidence, and you had to empower people. That's why we worked so well.

It was about eight or ten years ago, I did a study at UNLV. I had them do a survey. And the question asked, Are they good or excellent or poor or whatever? The number one point that people carried about was trustworthiness in their commercial insurance agent. It was 92 percent that said we were excellent. So I don't think that we had such a reputation. Our reputation was probably better than we were. So those are a couple secrets to my success.

When you got ready after all those years to sell your company, did you look for special kinds of people to sell it to?

I wanted people who would continue this atmosphere of a family. Brown & Brown did that. They were good people to work with. They let you be autonomous. They're not a big corporate structure. So they keep that entrepreneurial spirit. They kept that. Three years ago, I sold out and I got \$40 per share. I was paid that. It's \$90 now if you consider the split in three years.

So it's almost doubled -- it's more than doubled.

Two and a half times, almost two and a half times. Actually, one and a half times. But that's pretty strong.

From 40 to 90. When the Mandalay Bay was constructed here, we read these horror stories in the newspaper about the structure sinking. Now, of course, we had no idea what was happening or who was behind this or who the insurer was. We had no idea. So later on, though, we learned that your company was involved in this. Is this something that you can talk about?

Well, a little bit. It hasn't gone to court yet. It's been six years, and they're still doing depositions. It's for \$48 million, this piece of litigation, which has now increased to \$62 million. Insurance is interesting. You never have all-loss policies.

Now, explain what that means.

All losses, all perils, no matter what happens, you're covered. Sometimes there's a reason. Like they have a war risk exclusion. They always have. Terrorism coverage is a new problem. So insurance is not an all-loss policy no matter what. There is exclusions on there. And one of the exclusions in property policies is settlement. Sinking is covered.

So what they're warring over, the insurance company and the client, the policyholder or Mandalay Bay, they're warring over -- they say it's settlement, the insurance company does. The client says it's sinking. That's probably all I should say about it now.

Because it's still in litigation. I'd like to have your John Derek thoughts on tape.

Friendship is love. I always got a kick out of he got the most beautiful women in the world -- Ursula Andress; Bo Derek, *Ten*; and Linda Evans -- the most beautiful women in the world and recognizes that. And he ended up marrying all of them. But more important, he ended up with friendship after divorces. He was always their friend. I admire him for that, I guess. I think he can teach us all on relationships. I'm sorry I was so long-winded on that.

Other than your grandmother, who are your role models?

My grandmother was the biggest role model. I knew she was important to me, but I didn't know it until I wrote this, the depth of her effect on me, on advising me about business or religion. She could talk about anything and be mesmerizing. A role model, she was an astute businessperson. She bought land here, bought apartment buildings. She was a chiropractor, too. She worked hard. Remember, she was only four-eleven and 90 pounds.

And being able to adjust someone's body.

Unbelievable. But she was just a wonderful role model. I'd go to her for advice on anything. She was a good businessperson. She lived life to the fullest. I think I remember she told me she bought the corner of Las Vegas Boulevard around Charleston in the 1950s. She turned around and sold it six months later and made a tremendous profit of a thousand dollars. She was in Big Bear Lake, owned all kind of properties. She was always kind of on the cutting edge before. She was a frontier. But it hurt her because it became more popular after she left there. In fact, I saw pictures of Elizabeth Taylor. She worked on her back.

I just wondered if there was anyone else that gave you this push to do all the things that you've done. It seems that you are really a self-motivated person, as well.

Yes. I've always valued all my friendships. That's a lot of enjoyment in life is to have a lot of good friends that would help you and you'd help them.

One of the last topics that I want to talk about is politics. First, tell me how did you become involved in politics, and when did that start?

I've never been enamored with politics, particularly. I mean, the good they do is important. My idealism was shattered by running for office. I'd always worked in certain people's campaigns, like Bob Miller is my friend and different judges and county commissioners. And I'd give them money, or I would try and raise money for them if I believed in somebody. I always wanted to make a difference. You turn 50 years old, and you want some kind of legacy. So maybe I started thinking more about the politics. And I thought I could do something -- I was very idealistic. And I thought I must have some marketing skills if I started out from nothing and ended up with 80 people and \$7 million in revenue and sold the company for \$12 million. I knew I could do marketing. The Lieutenant Governor's Office was in charge of economic development and

tourism. I thought I'd be good doing that. I had this urge to do something worthwhile. So I picked a pretty lofty position, number two position in the state, Lieutenant Governor. If I really wanted to win, I should have gone to being a commissioner or something like that and learned first. But I got my head kicked in. I ended up losing. But I ended up making a lot of friends, understanding the politics a little bit. It is somewhat disillusioning.

But people are so dang fickle and whimsical. [George W.] Bush now is being whimsical. People are turning on him. Maybe rightly so, part of it. Maybe that's a bad example right now. The point is there are some good politicians out there that are doing it for the right reason and they're smart, but people just attack them. They think you're working for them. There's another side to that process.

But anyway, it was wonderful. It was a year quest. Got \$350,000 I raised from people, and I spent 150,000 of my own at the end just to kind of be credible. The brain surgeon beat me, Lonnie Hammargren. I wouldn't trade the experience in for anything.

But in politics, do you think that the person with the most money to put into the pot is the one who wins?

There are so many intangibles. I had a guy, he was first-class. I can't remember Jim's last name. He was a real professional, but he spent all my money towards the beginning. He had billboards in March, and I didn't have that kind of money. And he spent most of the money. In fact, I bought -- I don't know -- a couple thousand, 5,000, or something tapes of my family. It was a commercial. He sent out the tapes. It was kind of interesting, but it was too expensive, and it shouldn't have been done.

Would you run again?

Probably not. The night of the election, I was at my office with a bunch of people. The absentee

ballots came in from Moapa Valley and a couple of areas, and I was winning. I said, If I win, I'm going to demand a recount. And then my wife, Sherry, was there. And this reporter came up to her and said, Is Bruce going to run again? And she smiled at him and looked at him and said, "Yes, with his new wife." That's what I have; a bunch of old tapes and those two comments.

So, no. Okay. I know the answer.

Bob Miller still throws this in my face. He said I was too truthful. I was too truthful. It wasn't costing necessarily. But an example, I was in Lovelock giving a speech. I said, This is a beautiful area. There's a lot of nice life stock and cows. I've lived in this state for 50 years, and I've never been here. So it was comments like that that I was just kind of -- I don't want to say innocent.

Just a little naive.

Naive, yeah.

Because people want you to be familiar with them in their environment.

I was being truthful with them. But maybe my epitaph on politics is -- Jon Ralston, who's a political analyst and he's tough, but I respect him because he's fair, he nailed me for -- I gave [President Bill] Clinton a thousand bucks. This Arkansas hick came and gave a speech at a luncheon, and I gave the guy a thousand bucks. Ralston put me in the paper and roasted that rock-ribbed Republicans hated that. They hated Clinton. And they kept identifying my friendship with Bob Miller and said that I'm just a Democrat in Republican wolf's clothing. So I gave this thousand dollars. So Ralston crucified me, saying that I did that. And he says, Layne is a nice guy running for the right reason, but what does that mean?

That's really a horrible commentary on our --

Well, it was something along those lines. I'm trying to think of the exact words. But he just said, Running for the right reason, but is that enough, or something like that.

I don't know if you'll remember this, but you moved here in the mid-50s. At that time at the test site, they were testing atomic bombs. Do you remember any of those tests?

Yes. It used to be a big fun thing to do, was to go out there and watch the mushroom clouds. It wasn't scary then. Nobody knew. And it was 80 miles away, now. Maybe I'd glow if I turned the light off. The wind always went towards Utah. A couple of those places have more than their fair share of leukemia. Our parents would wake us up at night to see it. I think it was during the day, too, wasn't it?

Very, very early in the mornings, they used to do this.

Yeah, like 5 o'clock or something.

Yes. Those were some of the major points that I wanted to touch on, the early Las Vegas, your business life, your political life. Is there anything else that you would like to add to these series of tapes?

I love Nevada. It's made me. It's been generous to me. I think it's a wonderful place. It was a wonderful place to grow up then. Anybody can make it if they want to. It's a fair system. It's a can-do attitude here. There's reasons why we've been so successful, because of that attitude. There's a togetherness. There's affinity here, an affection, like a university. I just love Nevada.

One other thing I want to ask. You've been very close to the university. We have a female president that I just think is wonderful. How do you like this administration? Do you like working with the university presently?

Yes. I'm still on the board, the foundation board. Carol Harter has done an excellent job. I like her a lot. She's a little tough sometimes, but she's changed that. It's a tough job because everybody thinks they own and run the university in this community. You know, that's the other side of it. As much as they love it, the university, they think it's theirs. So they tend to look at it

that way. They're a little critical sometimes when they don't understand.

I agree. Well, I really appreciate this. I appreciate you taking all the time that you've taken to do these interviews. I'd just like to say thank you.

You mean, it's over? I never get to see you again?

We're going to have these transcribed. I'll bring it back and let you read it. So we'll be in touch. Thank you.

We never plugged my book. We've got to plug that.

Tell me about the book and why you wrote the book and how the book became a project for you.

I started thinking about it about two years ago. I really wrote it for my grandkids because I feel that I've developed a lot of wisdom through life, through the defeats and failures. And I had a lot of wisdom to give, and I wanted to give it to my grandkids. I wanted to try and inspire some people. I get my payback as that inspiration. So it was tough writing the book.

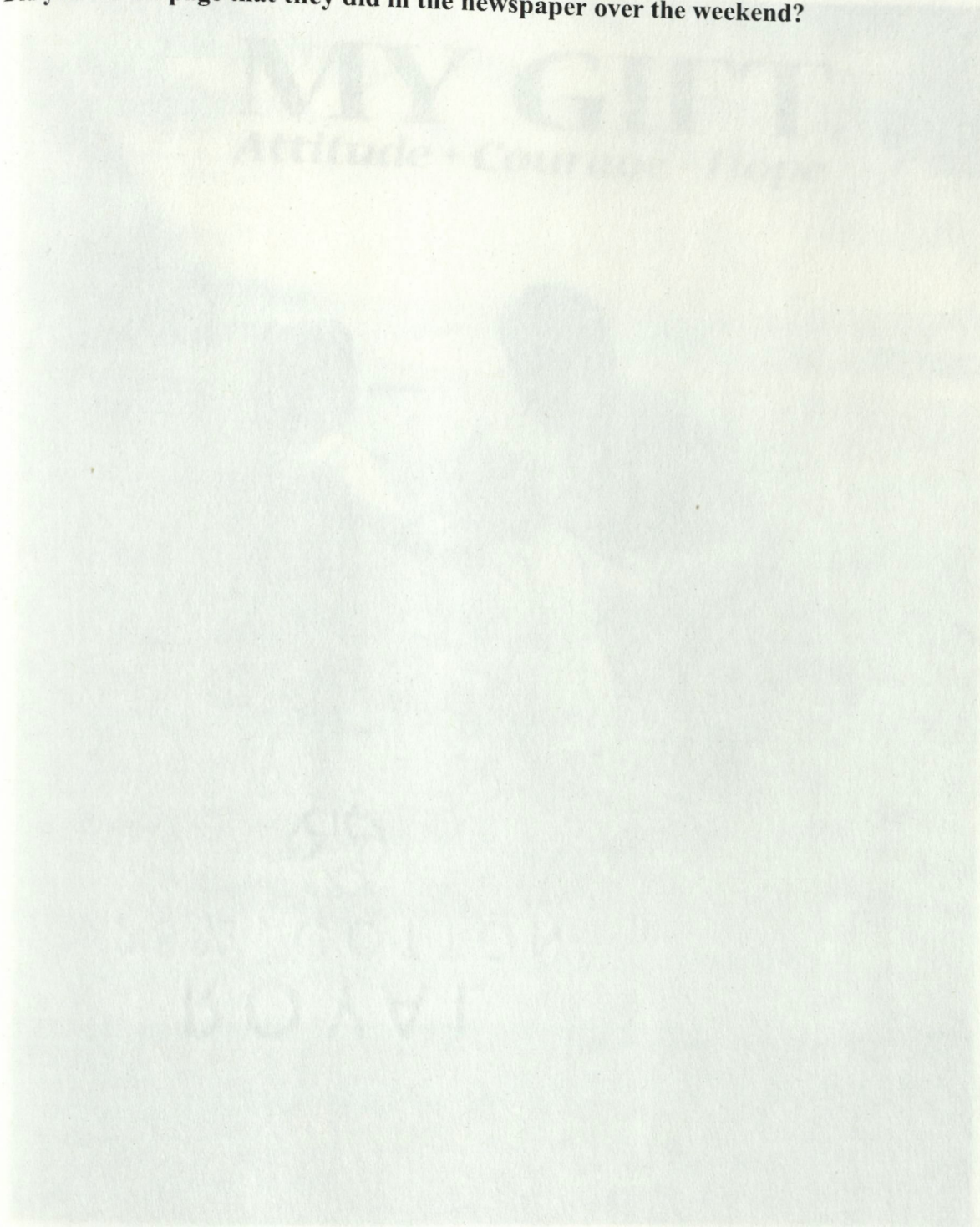
(End side 2, tape 3.)

I tried to do it myself a couple months, and it didn't work. It was not good. Not only was it boring, it was not interesting, and it was hard. So I went and got a co-writer, a ghostwriter, I don't know what you want to call him, but he's a heck of a guy, Jack Sheehan. He made the book come alive. We spent probably a thousand hours. He interviewed me for two hours about ten times. I wrote about four hours a day, is what I tried to do, six days a week. We finished it in six months. It takes a long time to find a publisher. I've had it out for five months, and I've sold 1250 copies, about. I'm donating all the money to the National Parkinson's Association.

How did you find your publisher?

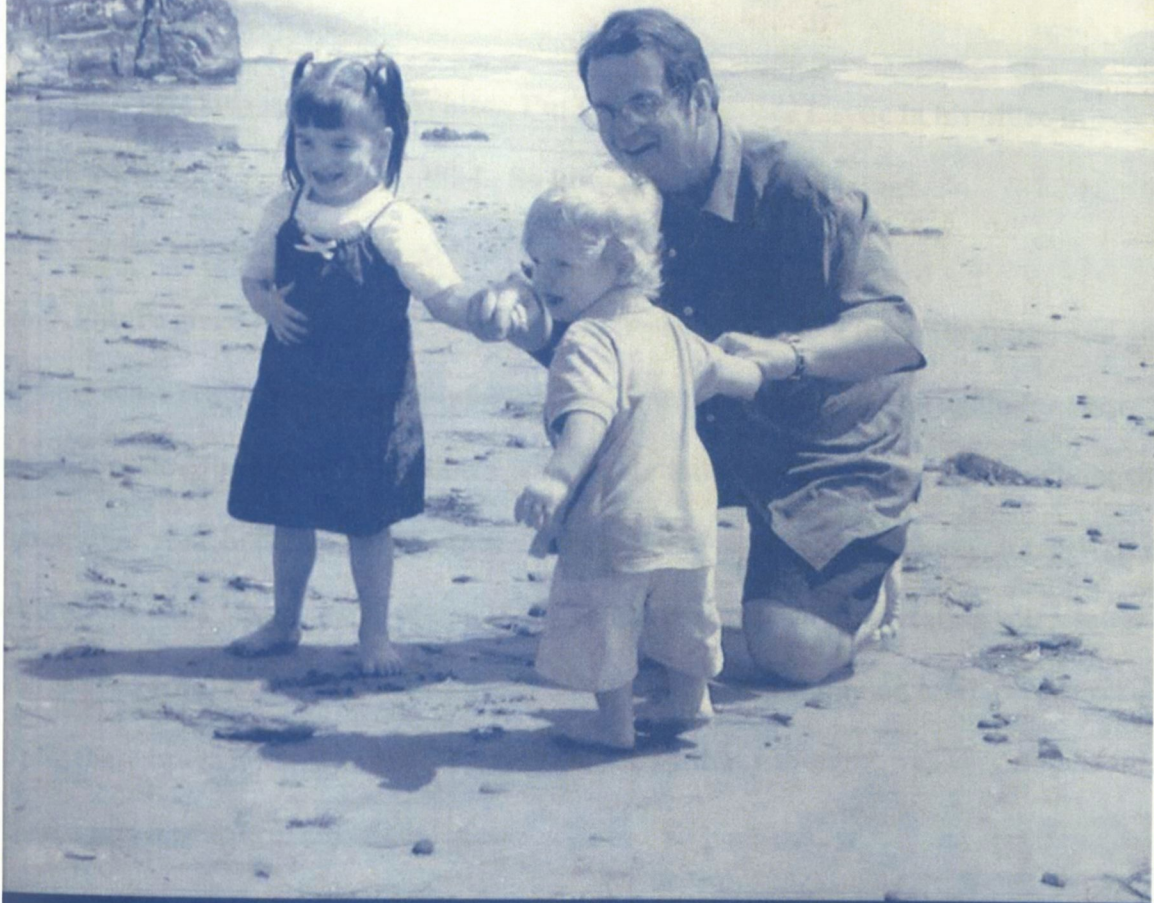
You read a lot and find out who's doing it. It's a local, Las Vegas Review-Journal, Stephens Press.

Did you see the page that they did in the newspaper over the weekend?



MY GIFT

Attitude + Courage = Hope



A Relentless Assault on Parkinson's and Life's Other Obstacles

Bruce Layne
with Jack Sheehan

Yes. I got a little bit of PR out of it. But the book has been rewarding in a lot of ways. I was showing you those letters. But that's my payback is when I inspire people to either do their best or have a philosophy or keep trying. I think that's probably dedication and perseverance that will make everybody successful. But the book is about success and failure and leaping over obstacles and finding contentment.

(End side 1, tape 4.)

Good morning. This is Claytee White. I'm here with Bruce Layne in his office in Henderson. Today is July 20th, 2004. So how are you this morning?

Fine. How are you, Claytee?

Good. You've given me so much information. I've listened to a lot of the tapes, and you've given me some really, really good information. I wanted to thank you again for your introduction to Mr. Tiberti. So what I want to do today is wind up by talking about the aftermath of your book. I want to talk about some of the responses that you received after writing your book. And the first one that I found really, really interesting was a letter that you received from a lady named Andrea. We talked about it paying it forward several times during these interviews. She talks about something that I thought was very important. And I'll read just a couple of these sentences.

"As you know, adolescence is not the prettiest of times. I keep envisioning a four-year program for high school students where they work on a family project based on their family strengths. Teaching them to focus on the positives during those years would be a real gift."

What did you think about that when you read it? And have you had time to think about Andrea's idea?

Yes, Claytee. First point is I wrote the book for the kids to try and pass on wisdom to the kids.

It's been inspirational. A lot of people have written me and say I've changed their life, this is a wonderful concept, the simple things that I told my wife that I love her and for no particular reason. That's my payback is that inspiration, to inspire people to do something better and more, create a better world.

So now this idea that Andrea came up with is -- it would be wonderful for anybody to focus on the positive. A family project, I could see maybe some genealogy work to see why and who they are. But I think you could do kind of a common sense approach to strengthening the family fabric. But you could have a program of ethics. You could talk about, maybe a series once a week in your family, things like common sense and ethics, what's right or wrong, things that you don't get in the normal curriculum of school. Maybe how to be happy in life. But anything that would increase all of our effectiveness and enhance the skills. Maybe spirituality would be another good one. We all talk about spirituality. So we could get people organized.

It seems like the Mormon Church does a good job of that. They care about the family. They spend time with it. They're committed. They're the only ones that can get these 18-year-old little brats that we have produced to go on missions and to sacrifice.

I wonder how they do that.

I don't know. But they start at an early age, and they do it by example. You see these young guys, young, scrubbed up, with their white short-sleeved dressing shirts. They're on their bicycles. They have passion about their religion. Why can't they get all these kids to do that?

Right. What is it about that teaching that really sticks with them? One of the things that I see in that belief system is that women seem to be different.

I don't know if that's religion or the heritage or the culture, but it does seem that the men come first.

Maybe we could change that part of it to some of the other things they do. Because you're right. That's a great example. To put something into practice, Las Vegas is not that big. You know, when we look at a Los Angeles or a New York, Las Vegas is not that big yet. This would be the right sized city to start something like that. Do you agree?

It has to come through the school or the church. Maybe you could do it as an after-school program. But it seems like the schools and the churches are the only ones that could get that going as a program, as a project. I mean, you have to invent some program. Then you have to market it. Then you have to implement it. Then there has to be some kind of payback so it makes it worthwhile. It seems like people are in a fast-food society, and us parents don't take the time to look in their eyes and say, How do you feel about right or wrong? Self-esteem. How do you build self-esteem? Maybe that's the key I just tripped over. How do you build self-esteem? You get a Grandma Mimi who holds your hands and looks you in the eyes when you're 42 years old and says, You're special, Claytee, you're special. Personal worth. How do you teach people to care and to do what's right?

I think I brought it up before. That gentleman that's head of the library board, I gave him some money before. But he has that program after school. It's to make kids that come from poverty or broken homes or whatever a place to go after 3 o'clock. It's constructive. They meet on some Saturdays. I can't think of the name of that. John is his first name. But that's a heck of a program. So it works on the self-esteem. It's not saying, Are you going to go to college? It's saying, What college are you going to? And that would have some impact. And he's done a good job. We can model our program after this gentleman.

There was another letter that I saw. It was from the State Treasurer.

Yeah. That was a nice letter.

Yes. He said to please call if there was anything that he could do to help you in any way. A lot of people have said that to you, I'm sure. So I think that you already have a core group of people that you can call on. They don't expect it. So I think you already have --

They hope. I'm always doing something that they get involved. Move forward.

So you can take them up on their offer, and you can find a way then to implement that program. That's what I've decided for you.

Thank you. I'm looking for a quest. So maybe that's a good one. But the first person I'll enlist in their help is you because you get the job done, also.

One of the things that I liked about your book is that you said not to take rejection personally. How do you do that?

You just be resilient. You take it with a grain of salt. The first point is you create a separate entity out here. You're saying, He doesn't want to buy my product out here. That's the question. It's not, He doesn't like me, or he doesn't want to buy it from me. He doesn't want to product for one reason or another. So you have to accept it that way. Hopefully, they don't talk demeaning to you. But whatever they say, if you feel rejection, you have to be resilient and bounce back and not take it personal. You set up your goals, and then you attack them. Have that vision. Look beyond the horizon. Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goals. But you've got to bounce back. And then you've got to persevere. That's what's made me is my perseverance, is my common sense and my perseverance. Those are my two strongest qualities.

The only thing is, in insurance all these years, it helps my resiliency factor if I don't take it personal. But the book has been a new revelation, a new illumination. Because when somebody doesn't want the book or doesn't buy it or whatever, that is personal. It's hard to create the other entity. So I don't practice what I preach on that one. But it's easier in insurance or something, but

the product is me.

One of the last things I want to talk about is I want to talk about kids. You talk to a lot of students. When you get beyond the teachings about self-esteem, self confidence, and perseverance and all of that, when you give them practical advice, if you were giving advice to a college class getting ready to go out into the world, what do you advise them about investments, about family? What kind of advice do you give them in those two areas?

I want them to do their goals, first of all, which ties in with investments and family. I want them to have good people skills, good communication skills. You're trying to get what you want.

You're trying to persuade people. So you have to have good communication. You have to write well and speak well because you're persuading people whatever you're doing. If you're asking a girl out for a date, you're persuading, aren't you? But family is important. The most important decision in someone's life, I think, after college is the significant other that you pick. That's going to help you or bring you down. I mean, that's who you're spending the rest of your life with, hopefully.

I'm just finishing college now. I'm working on my dissertation. So the next thing --

Well, you've run away from all these men for years, Claytee.

The next thing I want to do when I finish my dissertation is I want to find the right man. So what do I do?

A lot of people aren't good at picking out of the litter. So many people want to enable. You know, like a lost puppy dog. You women like to find lost puppy dogs.

No.

No, you don't. But too many do.

That's true.

And maybe it's both ways. It's not just women.

So tell me how should I go about this.

Well, you better write down what qualities you want, what's important to you. They treat you nice. That he's a good breadwinner. I think self-centeredness is probably the most important thing that makes a good relationship. The more selfish people are, the more me, I, and not us, I think it's harder to work out. I mean, marriage is tough. I think you have to support each other. Someone you could trust and has values, whatever they are, but thinks about values and says he believes in. To have belief. That you feel intimate with, the intimacy. That you feel close to. The type of people that say what's on their mind and people that are moody. Is this too soppy? I think that's the next book, How to Pick a Winner Out of the Litter.

That's good. Thank you for that. That's how I'm going to start looking.

Well, it's about time.

Another letter that impressed me, there was a person who was having you send a copy to her son, I believe. The son was getting ready to write a memoir.

Sylvia, yeah.

And she wanted you to send a copy of your book to him. When people ask you to do those kinds of things for these reasons, how does it make you feel?

That's the payback, to make somebody think. I think my book was thought-provoking, more than anything else. And that's what I wanted it to be. I mean, 30 or 40 people have sent me letters or called me and said I've changed their life or I've improved it somehow. They would explain why and how. I mean, that's difficult to get people to respond to something like that. And these aren't friends, necessarily. In fact, if you look at this, those 54 testimonials, I don't think there's one on there on what they thought about the book.

That's true. You're talking about the testimonials in the second part of the book?

Yes. So they aren't my closest friends. I hate to say it that way. But, I mean, some of these people I had never met. I liked the one where -- I had met him about a month before. He's an interesting gentleman. He owns Jurassic Travel, and there is only seven places he goes to. You can go like to San Andreas Fault, or you go to the Gobi Desert. He said this book is tremendous. He sent it to his best friend, who is with Reader's Digest, a regional manager, who's going blind. And he hired somebody to read it. There's a follow-up on that. I didn't put it in there. Things like that. It made people's life a little better. There's one gentleman from West Mutual from St. Louis. It's an insurance company. He came in the office, and he started talking to me about the book. He bought three of them, and he wanted to give one to his sister-in-law who was dying. He calls me three days later. He said, I hate to tell you this, but my sister-in-law died, and she didn't get to see the book. But I gave it to her husband and the kids and they've read the book, all of them. Made them feel a little better about the whole thing. Made them accept things a little bit more. I asked him to write. He's supposed to write me a note to that effect.

I think you should keep these notes. They're really inspiring. It shows how touched people are.

It's interesting to reach people's heartstrings sometimes or dig into their soul. It kind of did it.

Yes, I agree. That's what I want to talk about today, those kinds of things.

It's goodwill. It's making people reassess the way they look at something.

We hit on another topic when I first came in today. I usually like to talk about race relations just a bit. And the reason I like to do that is because we can learn things by seeing through each other's eyes sometimes. In 1955, you were a young boy at that time, just moving here. So '55 and '60, you were in school. What do you remember about race relations at Gorman,

at UNLV? What was that like?

I still was pretty colorblind. I guess the Catholic schools, they didn't have a lot of blacks. But I was friends with all the public school kids, too. I never could understand that. We touched on this one day before. I never understood until many years later that these Sammy Davis and Nat King Cole, I remember them complaining in the newspaper, there were articles, about them living in the back of the hotels in a trailer. And I really didn't understand that. And I couldn't understand from a national -- was it Montgomery, Alabama, where they had the first peace march or Martin Luther King? [the Montgomery Bus Boycott introduced MLK] I didn't understand why he was killed by the assassin. And I never understood until years later. Maybe in high school I more understood a little bit. I mean, the world would be a better place, wouldn't it, if we communicated to each other with respect? I hate to say, I, I, I, but I've always treated people with respect. I don't care if it's the file room girl, whether it's black, white, or yellow. And I don't know where that sense of fairness came in. But if you really have a sense of fairness, you wouldn't begrudge anybody to better themselves.

I guess I'm going to end up in the corner drooling with my Parkinson's and reading my press clippings there, all my letters, they'll be dog-eared and yellowed.

That's good. Because that's the part of life that we should embrace that sentiment from those kind letters that you received about the book.

I just wanted to finish that. Two of my close friends were black. They went to Gorman. It was Ray Jackson -- it was really through athletics that I was friends with them -- and Glen Walker. Glen passed away with leukemia. But he always was a neat, neat guy.

Did you ever meet his mother [Sarann Knight Preddy]?

Yes. Do you know her?

Yes. I've interviewed her.

What does she do now?

Well, she's retired really. She's still very, very active in the community. She owned the Moulin Rouge at one time. Do you remember that time?

I didn't know that.

In the 90s, she owned the Moulin Rouge, but that didn't go very well. She invested a lot of money in it. And as you know, that place still --

Just ended up not making it.

No. And it burned down not very long ago. So she's just very, very active in the community. She's kind of retired, doesn't really work now, but still very active.

That's another thing. You have dignity, as I said a few minutes ago. Glen Walker had dignity and was proudful. I think we'd all be better human beings if we were that way, had that pride. Is it self-esteem? Is it confidence? It's just a good attitude. So I just wanted to finish that.

I think I've said this several times, but I'm talking about this because, as you know, I'm trying to write my dissertation. In the dissertation, one chapter will be devoted to black entertainment in Las Vegas. Even though the entertainers would come, stay for a week, two weeks, three weeks, sometimes a little longer and then leave, do you think those kinds of visits from those named people had any impact on the development of Las Vegas?

Oh, tremendous. Sammy Davis and The *Oceans 11* and all that.

We had Lena Horne. We had Pearl Bailey. You had Nat King Cole, Harry Belafonte. Just a whole series of entertainers that would come in. The Treneers were here often, a black group, that was very, very popular in Las Vegas. So you have a series of popular entertainers who would come often.

They helped build Las Vegas. They were tremendous entertainers. Have you ever heard of The Checkmates? Have you?

Yes.

In college and after that, we'd love to go see them. They had the lounge of Caesars [Palace]. They packed them in. Sonny Charles, he was studly. He sang *Black Pearl*. "Black pearl, precious little girl." And Sweet Louie on the drums. Have people talked about them to you, or have you heard of them?

I've heard of them.

And Bobby something was one of them. They were great. They rocked. I mean, everybody was up dancing. There's still two of them out there. Sonny, him and Sweet Louie. The other guy's gone. I don't know where he went. Anyway, those are fond memories. Anybody that grew up around that time. But all those, they carried Las Vegas for years.

You mentioned something about a lounge show a few minutes ago. Lounge shows seem right now to be making a comeback in Las Vegas. As an early family just starting a business, did you go to any of the entertainment on the Strip early on?

No, not really. I mean, you're talking about after you're married?

After you got married.

No. Can't afford it.

Well, what about today? Do you and your wife or anyone in your family, do you do anything on the Strip at all now?

Rarely. Not much, no. Occasionally, I'd go as a business thing with business people like to "O" and some of those, *Mystere*. [Cirque Du Soleil shows]

Right. That's the new Las Vegas. How do you feel about that? At one time we had just the

regular showgirls, which we still have. Some of the shows are still here. But now we've taken that up another level. We have the old show and the *Zumanity* and those kinds of shows. How do you look at those? How does that impact the way you look at Las Vegas?

I'm not sure what you mean by the zoo, like the blue people and --

Right. *The Blue Man Group*. There's another show now called *Zumanity*, it's similar to "O".

As far as what? You mean, it's the type?

Do you like where the image of Las Vegas is going? Is the image changing?

Now we've got a whole different question. Probably not for the better. It's a million-six people here. It became controversial. It's starting to become the underbelly of society, kind of. I have mixed emotions because it attracts people. Before it used to be the gangsters, the Mafia. People couldn't wait to get there. They'd criticize Las Vegas, and they couldn't wait to get there. And I've been defending Las Vegas for years and years, 40 years, 50 years.

I remember Bishop Dwyer -- why would I remember this -- in 1961, I think it was, wrote a letter to all the hotels saying that they thought it was obscene and immoral to have topless. Boy, that goes back awhile. But anymore now, I hate it that they're giving away, I mean, basically call girls' numbers in magazines. Jack Sheehan, my co-writer for my book, just finished a book called *Skin City: Uncovering the Las Vegas Sex Industry*. Actually, he's done a lot of research. I wanted to help him do the research, but he wouldn't let me. But Sheehan is a first-class human being with high morals. The Stephens Press gave him money to write this book. It's just come out, and it's probably sold 25,000 copies in the last month.

Would you recommend us read it?

Yeah. We're all adults.

(End side 1, tape 5.)

It's hard-hitting, but I think it's pretty accurate. I think the figure was 65 girlie bars and dancing, which is too much. I think a couple of those reality TV shows like *The Golden Nugget* [The show will be called *The Casino* and will be filmed at the Golden Nugget]. I think they kind of went too far to build an image. I mean, they're showing a lot of different hookers and people grabbing them.

And this was prime time television?

Yeah. If I had a daughter, I wouldn't want to be on the Strip to look at the billboards or the taxis. The pictures they have are kind of risqué. It's almost like you're accepting it and condoning it.

So what can we do as the people who live here, everyday people who live here and go to work, go to church? What can we do? We know how powerful the owners of those hotels and casinos are, but it's our community. So what should we do about this?

I went and saw Tito, and I was over at the Orleans. And I went home, drove down Tropicana. And right there from McDonalds to the Budget Suites, there's three corners. And there was five ladies that were not there for their health smiling and waving with these short skirts and teased hair. And I was shocked. And by the way, I think the sheriff is just outstanding and does an outstanding job. But, boy, we might want to tone down a couple of those things. That's on Tropicana by the freeway.

I don't think we have enough police officers, number one.

Probably not.

I think that's really, really one of the major shortcomings here. But as a female driving down the street, I don't see that. I know it's there. People tell me about it. I don't know what I'm looking at, but I don't see it.

You could tell these, Claytee. They're painted up and a little bit on the trashy side -- a lot a bit on

the trashy side. And they were sitting there waving and catching your eye and smiling at you. I know you're pretty, so you're used to all these guys waving at you.

I guess they didn't wave at women, so I don't pay that much attention to that. Today is a Tuesday. So this is every day we're talking about, then?

Well, this was Saturday at 4 o'clock. I hope we don't go too far the other way. I guess our community just has to be the voice of reason and conscience. I don't want to be too self-righteous, but it could get carried away and be a little too sleazy. I'll leave it at that.

A new movie is coming out about Howard Hughes. Were you aware of Howard Hughes and his interest in Las Vegas at one point?

Yes. I happened to know who's a real neat guy, Bob Maheu. Do you know Bob Maheu?

He worked for him.

You should be interviewing Bob Maheu. I'll call him if you want. He was the number one guy for Summa [Corporation]. And he was a real class gentleman. He used to be with the FBI, and he was a trusted person. He wrote a book about five years ago. I can't remember the name of it, but it was very insightful. But Howard Hughes, what year did he start buying those hotels? He got irritated, didn't he? They tried to get him out for New Year's Eve, and he had a whole floor on the DI [Desert Inn]. So he just irritated them, so he bought them [a series of hotels]. That's what I always threaten to do in a restaurant where they irritate me. I'll just buy you. There's a lot of credibility, I think, that he gave this city. I don't think he ever made any money. He didn't know how to run hotels very well.

In fact, that's how I met my wife. Her dad worked for Summa [Corporation]. He was an architect, and he came out to help redesign the Sands and The Landmark. So I met her that way. But Howard Hughes, boy, he did have impact. There was a mistake. What year was this?

It was in the 60s [1966]. You know, I really don't know. I don't have the year written down.

I was in college. I was going to college, I'm almost sure, because we used to have all those cheap Silver Slipper breakfasts and buffets at the Sands. I talked about my wife, didn't I? She had comping privileges at all the Howard Hughes things. I finally told her I couldn't take her out anymore because I couldn't afford the tips.

When were you dating her?

1969.

So Howard Hughes must have come '68, '69.

You're right, it was in the 60s.

But then his influence, though, continued on into the 70s.

Oh, yes, he kept those on, those hotels. He probably sold some of them in the 80s. No. All 70s, you think?

Probably. Because he became ill in the 80s, I believe [Hughes moved to Las Vegas in 1966, left in 1970, and died in 1976].

And the other thing that's kind of interesting. He had the influence where he was trying to stop the testing. That's interesting that it's coming back clear around. Now we won't let the dump come in.

It's the same principle.

How do you feel about the dump, the Yucca Mountain?

Oh, I don't want it here, and it shouldn't be here. It's too close. They could do it in Central Nevada, but it's 80 miles away from us. That's too close. And it's wrong to shove it down our throats with so many people around. They could be more isolated.

Even though we know that it has to go somewhere, where do you think it should go?

Not here.

I agree. I agree wholeheartedly.

But it's interesting that Howard Hughes was trying to stop the testing.

So he knew something?

Oh, yeah. Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Now, are you aware that they're making a movie about him now?

No.

I went to the movie on Saturday, and I saw a preview of the movie that will be coming soon.

It's going to be about the life of Howard Hughes.

That relationship between Hughes and Greenspun, the editor of the Sun, they had a close relationship. That's when Hank Greenspun bought land, bought all of Green Valley. That's what gave rise to that, his relationship with Hughes.

Would you tell young people today, not just yours friends, but young people to invest in land in this area?

Absolutely. You asked that question earlier on investments. But you should definitely save. And you could do anything. As we talked about my little group, we raised that money for a down payment on land and then made payments all these years. We have great value. I told you it's worth about a million and a half dollars, what we parlayed that into. I bought a piece of property for \$72,000 seven years ago. I closed escrow on it a month ago at \$1.8 million. That's in seven years. But you just have to get involved. You have to take the initiative and do it. I try to be diversified. So I've done all that saving and investing. I've tried to diversify out of Nevada -- out of Las Vegas. I don't want all my wealth just in Las Vegas. So I bought stocks and bonds out of state and land out of state.

Now, getting back to the Greenspuns and that investment that they made, because now we're

talking about Green Valley --

Green Valley was like -- I can't remember how many acres -- but something like a thousand acres. Probably more. It goes from Sunset to 215. What would be the other border? Probably Pecos and Stephanie. They were good business people, and they turned it into something.

How did that relationship develop between Greenspun and Howard Hughes? Did you know anything about that?

No. I'm not sure.

Right now when you think about Las Vegas and the way other people in the country see Las Vegas, do you see it as a gambling town? How do you see Las Vegas?

An adult Disneyland. It's got everything. It's got gambling. It's got the best entertainers. It's got the best food. You know, they've changed that from being family to -- now it's evolved into "what you do here stays here." That's part of that provocative image. I always got a kick out of that there's 140,000 rooms here. Have you heard this before? The corner of Tropicana, where all the hookers are, and Las Vegas Boulevard, you know, that corner there?

The MGM, Excalibur.

There's 15,000 rooms. Just those four hotels on those four corners, that's more rooms than the entire city of San Francisco. They have 14,500.

And we fill them up.

And we fill them up. That's correct. You do know that they're coming in with this best shopping and best eating in the world. It's a phenomenon. But it's another way of us being resourceful, creative.

We're diversifying.

So all these restaurants from all over the country.

Right. All the five-star restaurants are here now. Since you've been an adult starting your business, if you had to say what the major change in this city has been, let's say from 1975 until today, what do you see as the major change in Las Vegas?

There is every fast food, hotel. Marriott, Hyatt. There's every hotel company in the world and every fast food, Pep Boys, car dealerships. There's everything here. Supposedly, once you get to a million or a million and a quarter, everybody wants to be there. But they never came before. So I think that's what I see.

In Clark County where would you say is the power base? Is it the business community, Strip, big business, or is it the government, county commissioners, city council? Who holds the power?

That's interesting. Well, we have to define what the power is, Claytee.

Who makes the decisions and puts in all the changes?

Well, the Gaming Control Board is the most powerful. My friend Steve DuCharme was in charge of that several years. Honest and capable and intelligent. Then maybe the commissioners, the county commissioners. I think they're kind of the power elite. The power elite, there's probably 100, 200 people that are powerful, not necessarily in government. But I think they're the commissioners, a couple of them. A couple of them aren't that powerful, even though they have a powerful vote. But they aren't persuasive. They aren't a center of influence.

But the hotels, I don't think, necessarily dominate everything. I really don't think that. Some of them don't give money to the university. Some of them just support sports programs only, not the academic. And some of them aren't involved. The ones that are, are very generous. But I don't think they just have power over everybody. I think the casinos pay 80 percent of the taxes, but there's 20 percent on mining and general business. Money doesn't buy power all the time with

government. I think we have a pretty honorable government. People like Harley Harmon from 50 years ago, they had the dream of McCarran field. Give him credit. And Thomas & Mack, buying all that land for the university. Give him credit. I think there's diverse power.

If in the next few years the Oral History Research Center is going to put a book together on politics in Clark County, who should we interview to put a book together like that?

You should start with those people like Harley Harmon and Paul Christianson and Keith Ashworth.

I haven't heard that name. Keith -- what is that?

He is a state senator and a powerful guy. I'm not sure he's still alive. He knows politics.

All the governors. There's about five governors that really have a lot of insight, starting with Bob Miller and Bob List. Michael O'Callaghan just passed away. His daughter is a neat lady, Colleen. Her office is right in the next building. But all those governors. Of course, Kenny Guinn, the present governor. He was head of the school district. And his dad was a sharecropper. Yes, he was.

Now, that's very interesting. Where is he from?

I think Utah. I'm not sure. I'm 0-for-1 in my record of politics so don't ask me anything. I brought in \$350,000 and spent 150,000 of my own. That was my introduction to politics when I ran for lieutenant governor. But I'm sure glad I did it. But it's very tough. It's tough not to take things personal.

Downtown Las Vegas is going to be going through major renovations. It's already started.

We have a nice shopping center down there now called the Premium Outlet Mall. Have you seen that?

I haven't been there, but I've driven by there, yeah.

Well, some of them are very, very nice shops. The Furniture Mart is coming. The mayor has plans to do things like a hospital, performing arts center, condominiums. And I think some condominiums are already being built. What do you think of this concept for downtown, and what do you think of things like the Fremont Street Experience, just all of downtown in this redevelopment effort?

They have gotten very frustrated over it. They've been trying to do this for 20 years, and it hasn't worked out very well. The Fremont Experience, I don't think that's been very good and a great drawing card. It seems like cities go through this, and then they rebuild everything. Las Vegas, they're 50 years old probably, and it doesn't have the huge infrastructure -- no, that's not the right word. It doesn't have the 100-year or 200-year homes. Fifty years is about the oldest.

Yes. But as you know, the city is 100 years old exactly. Next year we'll be 100.

Well, 1950 they probably had 25,000 people here or something like that.

A little more.

So I don't know if they have that many things to say. There's not as many houses and things to redo. The city is a small area. They haven't been very successful. I don't think governments are very successful ever. I don't remember many ones to be an entrepreneur.

So for the kinds of things that some of our city planners, the mayor, some of the things that they have in mind, how do you think that those things can be accomplished?

They've just got to get more support because there's not that much support for downtown. It's kind of been almost abandoned just financially. They just aren't getting the people down there gambling. But there has been a resurgence with Tom --

The Golden Nugget.

Yeah, The Golden Nugget, Poster and Breitling. There's also been good influences come in that

have bought the Gaughan properties. Are they Colonial? You should go interview them. Phil Flaherty is the controller. He's a great storyteller. But it's a new corporation, but they're big. They have big money behind them. So maybe all these guys could get together and have that synergism and be stronger.

Well, it is improving. It is improving. Nostalgically, I would like them to rebuild everything and restore and keep any of the historical buildings that we have. I think we should try and promote it and spend some money there, but it is tough.

The mayor believes that until we get people living down there, that we're not going to have the kind of clientele that we need in that area until people are actually living there. So, therefore, he wants the apartment buildings, the condominiums, the town houses.

Oh, San Francisco. They're downtown, and they're selling these lofts for a million dollars. And people are starting to come back there. There is that movement of people coming back from rural to urban, instead of the outlaying.

I just saw in the paper yesterday or today, it was one of the best smells in this city for all these years is to drive down Charleston towards Main Street and you'd smell this Holsum bread. They're a bread baker, and they've had that building for 60 years. He's putting condos in there. So you've got to give the mayor credit for trying to be the town crier and staying in the corner and having a positive attitude because it will be better downtown. It will be better.

I appreciate this so much.

Thank you.

Any last comments?

It's been a slice of heaven dealing with you, Claytee. I hope I've helped you. It jogs my memory when you ask questions and I think about it. I've enjoyed it a lot. I love Las Vegas and Nevada. I

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