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# **AN INTERVIEW WITH KIM BIRD & PAM FOGLIASSO**

An Oral History Conducted by Claytee D. White

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The Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project

Oral History Research Center at UNLV  
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Produced by: The Oral History Research Center at UNLV – University Libraries  
Director: Claytee D. White  
Editors: Barbara Tabach, Joyce Moore  
Transcriber: Kristin Hicks  
Interviewers and Project Assistants: Barbara Tabach and Claytee D. White

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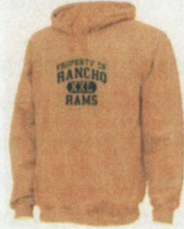
The transcript received minimal editing that includes the elimination of fragments, false starts, and repetitions in order to enhance the reader's understanding of the material. All measures have been taken to preserve the style and language of the narrator. In several cases photographic sources accompany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

The following interview is part of a series of interviews conducted under the auspices of the Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project.

Claytee D. White, Project Director  
Director, Oral History Research Center  
University Libraries  
University Nevada, Las Vegas

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER AT UNLV

Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project  
*Rancho High School Class of '62*



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Name of Narrator:

PAMUKA MARTIN (FOGLIASSO)

Name of Interviewer:

CLAYTEE D. WHITE

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Pamuka Martin 2-8-13  
Signature of Narrator Date

Claytee D. White 2/8/2013  
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## Preface

Kim Bird's family moved to Las Vegas in 1955 when she was twelve years old. Pam Fogliasso arrived in 1954 with her family in 1954, when she was ten. Kim married and had a son and a daughter; she lives in Las Vegas. Pam married, had two children, and lives in Parumph, Nevada.

Though Kim and Pam moved here in the mid-1950s, they had family members who had lived in Southern Nevada and worked on building Hoover Dam – Kim's grandfather and Pam's great-uncle. Both women remember growing up in a Las Vegas that was run by the mob and safe for teenagers; meeting friends in local hangouts such as the Blue Onion and attending sock hops, babysitting, and cruising down Fremont Street. They attended high school with black students but were also aware of the segregation that existed on the Strip.

This interview focuses on Kim and Pam's experiences growing up in Las Vegas, and on their teenaged years attending Rancho High School.

**It is February eighth, 2013. This is Claytee White and I'm in the home of Kim Bird.**

**How are you this morning?**

I'm fine, thank you.

**Fantastic. Kim, first thing, could you pronounce and spell your name for me, please.**

I am Kim Bird, my married name. Bird is B-I-R-D. My maiden name was Kim Pickering.

Pickering is P-I-C-K-E-R-I-N-G.

**Thank you so much. Now Kim, can you tell me a little about your early life, where you grew up, what the family was like?**

I actually was born in Salt Lake City. We came down here in 1955. Dad was reaching out to get out of the snow; he couldn't do it anymore, so we came down here.

**How old were you in 1955?**

I was twelve.

**So tell me what it was like growing up in Salt Lake City.**

Salt Lake City was cold. We kind of moved here and there. My last place of residence was Morningside Heights, which is up kind of on the side of the mountains. Really enjoyed it up there. We lived there for about three years. My aunt and uncle lived up on top of the hill and they're the ones that made sure that I got baptized and took me to church and all that fun stuff, which I'm not very good on following.

**So did you ski?**

Yes. I tried skiing once. I put some skis on and I went down the hill and I ran into somebody's house. So I probably put my skis away and I found sledding down the mountain was much more fun.

**And did you have brothers and sisters to go with?**

I did. I had a wonderful brother, nine years younger than I. I absolutely loved him. I kind of felt like I raised him to a certain degree. He was three when we moved down here. In fact, I still have a lot of family up in Salt Lake. Because of me being a care-giving situation, I can't get Dad up as often as I'd like to; it depends on his health, because I still have dad's baby sister up there and lots of cousins. And his baby sister is eighty-seven.

**So what is your father's name?**

My dad's name is Paul Pickering.

**And he lives here with you.**

He lives here with me; I am so fortunate on that. He's ninety-three. Right now he's carrying on with a little so-called girlfriend, which he's out with today.

**Oh, fabulous.**

I'm not thrilled about it, but he is. She's quite a bit younger, by about thirty years. I hope everybody that's put in a position to have their dad with them can have the joyous time that I've had with my dad because it's phenomenal.

**Oh, that's wonderful. Tell me who the girlfriend is who's going to join us in a little while.**

Pam Fogliasso. I met her in grade school. In fact, there's a lot of us that we met in grade school, when we went to Twin Lakes Grade School. We met I believe through one of our classes; I believe it was Mr. Barnes, our fifth grade teacher. In fact, we did some kind of rehashing at our last reunion this year and we actually went to North Ninth School together and Fifth Street together, which is kind of interesting. So we've got pictures of all that. She and I just kind of developed a really close relationship amongst some of our other friends that I'm sure a lot of you guys know and it just kind of has carried on for the whole time.

**Tell me about going to Fifth Street School. And was that the school that burned down?**

No. Fifth Street School is on Las Vegas Boulevard.

**The one that was just rehabbed?**

It's turned into government buildings. I do believe they had a fire in the gymnasium or something and I believe that was restored. That was kind of an interesting part of our life—or my life because where I lived. I lived on North Ninth Street and there wasn't any bussing, so I either had to walk or take a bus or do whatever I had to do because I was like twelve or thirteen at that time and I had to get to school somehow.

**So you lived at Ninth and what?**

It was Ninth and Bonanza, I believe. There was North Ninth Street School, which is right up on the next block.

**So why did you go to Fifth Street School for a while?**

Because Mom and Dad had moved here from Salt Lake. We stayed in an apartment until they could find a home to buy. And eventually, in '56 I believe it was, we found a home up in Twin Lakes and we moved up there.

**You were telling me about Fifth Street School.**

Fifth Street School was really kind of fun. As a matter of fact, two of my dad's siblings, my aunt and then my uncle, went to Fifth Street during the period that my grandfather was up working on the dam and then the older siblings all went to Vegas High. So it's kind of nostalgic to me to think that my aunt and uncle went to that school. And still in pretty good shape. In fact, I could walk on the campus right now and probably tell you—I know where the music room is. I know where the gym is. I can kind of tell you where different areas was. My forte was I was the tetherball champion.

**So explain tetherball to me.**



Tetherball is a pole; it has a ball on a string that comes around and you have to sock the ball everywhere and get it around the pole. So I was the championship of the school for that year.

**Fantastic. What are your memories of your grandfather? What kinds of stories did he tell you?**

My grandfather, kind of like my dad, he liked to fabricate a little bit, so you kind of had to read between the lines with him. But he took me down to the dam. He was one of the electricians that helped install all the turbines in the dam.

**What is his name?**

His name was George Pickering. And he is in the archives, I believe; my granddaughter looked it up. When he took me through the dam, he took me through all the tunnels or that used to be tunnels and he said I used to go there, there, kind of showed me underneath when we went in the bottom of the dam. And then he showed me the turbines and kind of explained to me what the turbines were, what he did, what a nightmare it was getting them installed and just kind of went through that and the basic construction of the dam. Then we went upstairs and he told me how they made the dam, layer after layer after layer. Then he did tell me—this could be a fabrication—that there was more people actually lost their lives in the dam than what they're saying. And he also said look at that wall over there; a guy lost his hand and it's buried in the cement. I can't guarantee it; I know my grandfather, because he liked to get reactions. I really think he was serious because he was trying to give me some historical points of the dam. And I said, well, Grandpa, I didn't hear that. And he said I don't care what you hear; I know what I saw. And that was kind of what he told me.

**So at that time when he was working on the dam, where did he live?**

He actually lived here in Las Vegas and he communicated (sic) I believe it was once a week. I

think he stayed in either Henderson or Boulder City and then would communicate (sic) here on the weekends to be here with the family because there was seven kids.

**So this is back in the 1930s when he was commuting?**

This was around 1936 and '7 when Grandpa was working on the dam.

**Okay. So there was no Henderson.**

Henderson had been started to be developed because of the dam. Was it the dam or Second World War? It was Boulder City that he actually lived in. But I think Henderson was in the prospect of being developed. I think it was Second World War that actually developed that.

**That's right. The Basic Magnesium plant over there during the war.**

Exactly, that blew up, Yes.

**So did he live in the barracks in Boulder City?**

Grandpa never told me. He just said that he lived there and he would commute and they gave him something like ten cents a week extra to commute from Boulder Dam to Vegas when he came. He made something like thirty-six cents an hour or something like that and he said he made higher wages than a lot of other guys.

**Because he was one of the skilled people.**

He had a skill; he was an electrician. And do I believe there were times that he even had to help with those high wires that went over the top. He was a brilliant man. I lost him when he was eighty-two, so he lived to be a good old life.

**Wonderful. Now, we have just been joined by Pam.**

**Pam, how are you today?**

*I am fine, thank you.*

**Fantastic. Pam, right there in front of you we have a pen and paper. The first one is an**

agreement that we'd like for you to read over and sign, and the other one is just a biographical sheet that we're going to use in the archives. You can do your paperwork later. Right now we're just going to talk about your early life. So I just asked Kim about her early life, growing up here and everything. So first, could you give me your full name?

*Pamela Martin.*

**Pamela, where do you live?**

*Right now in Pahrump.*

**Tell me how that happened.**

*My folks moved to Pahrump in '77-78. My dad had a honey company; he had bees. So they had five acres out there and they moved out on the five acres.*

**Can you tell me what it was like as a young person here in Las Vegas? Did you grow up in Las Vegas?**

*I moved here when I was ten.*

**Where were you born?**

*In Riverside, California.*

**And why did the family decide to move here from Riverside?**

*My dad got a better job. He was working as an electrician.*

**So you were telling me about the family moving from Riverside.**

*Yes, and we moved up here. At first we lived off of Stewart and Ninth.*

That's where Kim and I went to North Ninth School, but we didn't know it.

*Then we were there only two months and we found a house and we moved out off the Tonopah Highway. We lived there for about four years, whenever I started high school.*

**So Tonopah and what?**

*The Tonopah Highway and Harrison Lane.*

**Harrison, okay, good. Brothers and sisters? And your father was an electrician. Both of you had electricians for fathers.**

No. My grandfather was an electrician.

**Your grandfather; that's correct.**

*I heard her saying something about her grandfather worked on the dam. So did my great uncle; he worked on the dam.*

**What did he do on the dam?**

*I really don't know. He was working in construction; that's all I know.*

**So you never had any family stories about the dam?**

*Not a whole lot; I just know that he worked there. He worked there from the beginning to the end. They lived in Boulder City. My great-grandfather drove a twenty-mule team through Death Valley for Borax.*

**No. What kinds of stories does the family tell about that period?**

*Not a whole lot. My grandfather just said it was a job and it was hot, it didn't pay much, but back then nothing paid much. He did that for a couple of years. But most of my family were farmers in Idaho on my mom's side. My dad's side were kind of farmers and they had orange groves and walnut groves and things like that in Southern California.*

**So they came here because of a job.**

*My dad came because of a job. He worked for Ousley Electric.*

**So you already had a great-uncle who had been here. Did your father apply for this job?**

**Did you get it through that great-uncle?**

*No. My great-uncle had moved back to Idaho. No. It was a family friend; he worked in sales*

*for some electrical company or something and he knew Mr. Ousley and so he got my dad the job. My dad worked for them for several years. When he was working for them is when they put in all the streetlights and stuff over by where Rancho High School is now. Then he left them in, oh, the late fifties and went to work for what was Consolidated Electric. He worked with them for a long time. Then he became the head electrician at the Las Vegas Convention Center.*

**So what were some of your memories of being a young girl here in Las Vegas?**

*I really liked it. I mean it was safe, a lot safer than now.*

We had fun.

*Yes, we had fun. We had a skating rink on Bonanza and Las Vegas Boulevard.*

**Do you remember the name of the skating rink?**

Where was it?

*On Las Vegas Boulevard.*

And Maryland Parkway?

*No. Las Vegas Boulevard and Bonanza. I think it was called the Bonanza Rink.*

It might have been because it was up from the icehouse.

*Yes.*

**So was it near the Biltmore? Do you remember a hotel in that little area named the Biltmore?**

Boy, I don't. I remember there on Bonanza and Las Vegas Boulevard back in the beginning times they had kind of a dugout and there was—whose bones laid in that forever? Kit Carson's bones because supposedly he had something to do with Las Vegas.

**So where was this?**

I believe it was on Las Vegas Boulevard and Bonanza.

*Yes. Wasn't it like on the corner?*

Yes, it was kind of on the corner.

*And then the skating rink was next to it and set back.*

Yes. And it was right before, oh, the arena down there, Cashman Field.

**Do you remember Helldorado?**

Oh, yes.

*Oh, yes, because it was a lot nicer than it is now.*

We actually participated in it.

**Do the two of you talk about it with each other?**

When we were kids we did. In fact, I think we went.

*Yes. We used to go to the rodeos. When we were in school we were in the parades.*

Yes, marching.

*Marching in the parades down Fremont Street. It was very family oriented. All the hotels in town contributed. They had a big barbeque, Western Days at the Old Frontier and the Silver Slipper. Everybody went. Everybody dressed western.*

Yes. Even us when we were kids, we wore gun in holster and the boots and a hat.

*And they don't do that now. I mean Vegas is not—the same.*

No. They had an old jail set up on Fremont Street. Remember that? And they used to lock you up.

**How did you get out of jail?**

It was parents that got in the jails; we never did. It was the older people. I don't know if they got rowdy or drinking or whatever, but I remember that.

**I think it was to raise money.**

*Probably.*

**What about the beards?**

*Oh, all the guys used to grow beards. My dad did; every year my dad grew a beard for Helldorado.*

This is the first year my dad ever grew a beard in his life [laughing]. Ninety three...he's growing a beard.

**I like it.**

*All the guys used to say—I've got pictures somewhere—that my dad looked like Lincoln with his beard.*

**Which parade did you like better? Did they have three parades or two?**

I only remember one.

*They only had one Helldorado Parade.*

And it went down Fifth Street.

*Fifth and then down Fremont.*

**So did casinos and the school children, everybody were in the same parade?**

*Yes, it was one big parade. Some of the casinos would have floats, things like that. But there was a lot of horses and bands.*

We always had our sheriffs in it.

*Yes. And the school bands.*

The school bands were in it, batons. I think there was even back in our days we even had kids riding trikes and bikes.

**So you came here in 1955, Kim.**

She beat me.

**So you were—**

*Fifty-four.*

**Oh, just one year. Do either of you remember anyone talking about the Moulin Rouge Casino?**

Yes. My mom and dad used to patronize it.

**Tell me about that. What kinds of stories did they tell you about it?**

Mom and Dad really enjoyed it, actually. I was traumatized by it because of the brutality that the Strip showed a person like Sammy Davis Junior. I mean there was a story that went around that Sammy Davis had his child with him at one time, I believe it was the Riviera, and the child stuck his foot or something in the pool and they chastised the boy and they actually changed all the water in the pool because it contaminated it. He had to go in and out of the back door. So they would stay at the Moulin Rouge. A lot of the Rat Pack went down there on occasions. Mom and Dad used to go there and said that it was wonderful. They enjoyed it. They loved it. They loved the people. They socialized with everybody. I don't know if it went broke or if it just wasn't patronized enough; I don't know what happened, but it closed up and eventually it got burned.

**And people did not tell stories about why it closed? You never remember hearing rumors of why it closed?**

My dad might be able to tell you that. Unfortunately, he's not here right now. I just heard that it went bankrupt; they just weren't getting the people in there.

*Because they had changed over and allowed everyone to go in all the other hotels. When they changed that rule, then the Moulin Rouge was sitting off over there by itself and wasn't getting any business.*

**So the Moulin Rouge was 1955.**



*My dad helped build the Moulin Rouge; he did the electrical work there.*

**So the town was not integrated until 1960. So tell me about your father's working on the Moulin Rouge. So that must have been in 1954.**

*In '54 and '55 he worked on the Moulin Rouge. In fact, in a house that we built we had two lights on the side of our fireplace that came from the Moulin Rouge. They had ordered and they weren't the right ones, so my dad bought them from the company. But they matched the ones in there, but they were a little smaller and they were supposed to be the bigger ones. So we had those in our house. I actually have a creamer, silver creamer with the Moulin Rouge on it.*

**Where did you get that?**

*From the Moulin Rouge. We used to go there when I was a kid. They had a coffee shop on one end and a friend of ours worked in the little coffee shop and we would sometimes go there. And then sometimes my folks, like hers, would go to the Moulin Rouge to see things.*

They usually had some great bands, great entertainment. And Mom and Dad were dancers; they loved to dance. They went for the dancing and the music because they played a lot of the oldies.

**Wonderful. Where did your parents go out on the Strip, which casinos were the most family friendly to locals?**

At one time they all were. My parents liked the Rat Pack, of course, which was the Sahara, Riviera. What was the one that burned down?

*The El Rancho.*

The El Rancho, they used to go there. They had a little amusement park in the back where you could ride things. I used to love bumper cars. So Mom and Dad would take us down there and I would baby-sit my brother and I'd put him in a bumper car and that's where we lived [laughing].

**That's great. Now, did you also go there?**

*Uh-huh. I saw Shecky Greene at the El Rancho. When I was in high school—or junior high; I can't remember.*

Junior high is when you met Wayne Newton. No. It was grade school we met Wayne Newton. No. Junior high. He didn't move here until we were in junior high. Let's see. Who was it? We used to go to the things. I know I went to the Riviera to see Liberace one year; our class went.

**What do you remember from that show?**

*Oh, he's fantastic. I have loved him since I was a little kid because I used to watch him. There was a half hour show on television. Fifteen minutes was Harry Ponda, who played an organ, and then the next fifteen minutes was Liberace. I used to get home from school just in time to catch their show because I love piano music.*

Yes, and so do I. He had the most amazing hands, the way that he could just pick the keys. And my brother was playing piano, so that even made it more so in our house to where we were also piano buffs. Then, of course, the one thing that I'm sure her parents did, we all had to watch Lawrence Welk. We still do.

*My folks weren't too much on Lawrence Welk, but my grandmother was. If I ever stayed with my grandmother, we never missed Lawrence Welk.*

And we still don't.

**Your grandmother lived in Las Vegas?**

*She actually lived in a little town called Perris, California. But she would spend two or three months with us here and then she'd go home for a while and then she'd come back.*

And my grandmother did the same thing.

**And she was living?**

She'd live here three or four times at a—

**Then go back to Salt Lake?**

Then she'd go back to Salt Lake and live with my mom's sister, my aunt, or wherever. It depended if she were married or not. I had a very flamboyant grandmother who actually sang in the silent movies, very flamboyant.

**That's wonderful. We're going to talk about Rancho High School. But at the same time we're talking about Rancho, I'm going to start by having you tell me about the Blue Onion.**

Oh, my [laughing].

**At the same time you can tell me about cruising Fremont Street.**

Oh, my [laughing].

**So just talk to each other about that.**

Were you with us when I got my driver's license, the first time I took my car out, that old '49 Merk?

*No.*

I know Donna was with us. Dad had given me when I was sixteen his work car and it was an old '49 Mercury. Right now it's worth a mint. It was an eyesore, literally.

*I remember that.*

I said, Dad, this is really embarrassing. So he took it down, because he was an auto body, talked to his buddies in the paint shop. So they took all the extra cans of paint, put it in one bucket and they painted the car. It was the ugliest grayest mouse-colored thing you ever saw. It was a monster. Then the cloth headliner was falling out. So I went out and I got some paint and then I got some duct tape, the same color as the paint, and I duct-taped the whole headliner back up and I sprayed it. So then I finally took it down on my first little cruise down Fremont Street, went through the Blue Onion, a nervous wreck, had my girlfriends in with me. I pulled in, ordered a

cherry coke; that's what I always ordered. Time to go. I couldn't get the car in reverse because Dad had forgot to tell me, well, sometimes the gear slips out and you have to get out and you have to reorganize this. I was so humiliated. I had to ask a couple of policemen that happened to be there, I don't have reverse; could you please push me out? They pushed me out and then I think I was able to get it in first and third at that point and I got it home. That was my first experience. Then Dad told me he fixed it with tin foil, which I'm sure he didn't. But he fixed it with tin foil, so be very gentle on the gears; in other words, don't quick shift; make sure you put your stuff through.

Then of course, we'd go to the Blue Onion, go up Fremont Street, go through where the Plaza is now; it used to be the train station. You make the round, come back down. God, by the time you got through with the night, you were so full of cokes that we could blow up.

**So what did you eat?**

I usually had cherry cokes, once in a while a hamburger and fries.

*I used to drive my dad's old pickup. He had a '52 Chevy pickup; that's the first vehicle I took downtown. Then I bought my very first car; it was a '57 Ford Wagon and I bought it from a kid that was going in the service. He had it back in the days when the cars ran on their nose.*

Yes. They used to jack up the rear.

*Yes. That's what I drove up and down Fremont Street. It didn't bounce, though; it just went on its nose.*

**Did you work part-time jobs as young women?**

*Yes, I did. I had a full-time baby-sitting job. I took care of the same two kids from 1959 up through 1964, from the time they were babies. The husband and wife, she was a cocktail waitress at the Flamingo and he was a dealer at the New Frontier.*

*There used to be a hotel on the Strip called the Royal Nevada. My dad worked on the Royal Nevada. He worked on the Tropicana. And I have stuff from all the hotels that he worked on.*

**What kind of stuff do you have?**

*From the Royal Nevada I have a shower curtain of all things; don't ask me why. I think I have a piece of silverware, also, from there and I have silverware from the Riviera. And from the Trop, I'm not sure what we had from the Trop. I've got a lot of this stuff in a box.*

You need to dig it out. That would be fun to go through.

*My mom worked for what was then Bonanza Airlines.*

**What did she do?**

*She worked with the comptroller of the airline. So she was kind of like a comptroller, financial. She worked for them for a long time. So I have stuff from there.*

**Fabulous. What kind of part-time job did you have?**

Like Pam, I baby-sat probably from the age of twelve to maybe fourteen, again the same family. And then I got a job; I believe I was sixteen. I worked at the Flamingo down in the basement. I stuffed mailers that they would mail. So I did all the stuff in there. And I also worked in a hamburger place up right across from where we went to junior high school. Don't ask me the name of it. There used to be a Texaco station there and then a "geedunk" store.

*I don't remember what it was called, either.*

White Cross Drugs is there on one side now and then there was a service station. White Cross Drugs then was across the street because they actually changed locations.

**So it's at Oakey now.**

No. It's Charleston and—

*I think that call that Hyde Park now.*

There's a street called Hyde Park? Because we went to Hyde Park Junior High. Yes. So I worked there. In fact, that's where I met my late husband when I was sixteen. I had to work split shifts and it was really difficult because either Mom or Dad would have to come pick me up. It was kind of a nightmare for them, but they did it. I was grateful, till I got my car. But my late husband came in one time when I was in my late sixteen's. He had just gone to his sister's wedding and he had a little bit too much to drink and had his mother in the car. He came in and he says I need two cokes, very polite, very cute. He was young, just gotten out of the Navy. I gave him two cokes and then he got them and took his mother home. This is the kind of sense of humor he had. Then an hour later he came back and he ordered another coke and I believe a hamburger or something or fries; I don't remember which. And he came back in and ordered again and he gave me like a dollar and he had change. Well, back in those days I wasn't used to a tip, especially at my age. So I walked out and I said, sir, you forgot your change, and I handed him the change. He looked at me and says something like, you silly girl, don't you know what a tip is? Well, what am I supposed to do with it? He said keep it. So then I said, well, your mother was with you, where is she? He says, oh, I took her home, put her to bed in the bathtub; I came back down to see you.

**So you like that sense of humor.**

Oh, he was that way till the day he died. He was a corker, absolutely a corker.

**You said you worked for the Flamingo mailing center. Did they do mailings out of town, in town? How far did the mailings reach?**

I don't really remember the addresses. I just remember stuffing them with fliers; that's what they were. I always came home with paper cuts. So Dianne—I don't remember her last name—got

me the job. She was the gal that stood up for me in my wedding. She got me the job stuffing fliers. I mean we would do a thousand a day, just stack them in boxes, take them up. You seal them; you don't have any spit left after that. And then they'd mail them out. But I don't remember if there was addresses on them; I can't remember. They were fliers; they were advertising fliers is what they were. So they probably went all over, just advertising.

**Tell me about your first memories of Rancho High School.**

Scared. It was a big school. I didn't know what my teachers were going to be. I didn't know what I was getting into and I wanted to be with our friends. About the first couple of weeks I didn't know the dress code. When you go from junior high to high school, it was a big change, kind of scary. As time, you go to your different classes and you meet people and after about the first six weeks you get a little in the groove and then you're fine. But I remember being scared, nervous.

*I wasn't really excited about it because it was, what, like maybe the second year the school had been open? So they weren't really up to date on what was going on either; everything was up in the air of what was happening and that. Then running from classroom to classroom to classroom—*

Oh, that was interesting.

*—none of the classes were in the same hall. This class was here and the next one was clear over there somewhere.*

And then you get dressed up to go to school so you look halfway decent because by the time you go to high school you're interested in boys, right? So what if you have PE, which Donna always got, first period? Then you go through all day stringy. PE was—I enjoyed some of it; some of it I didn't. It was very frustrating to me. I had Mrs. Hill.

*You had Mrs. Hill. I had Mrs. Laneer.*

She was ornery and she terrified me. That's because I'm not lazy and I tend to be rather athletic, but I had at the time induced asthma by strenuous exercising. So I was told to go out and run the track. You have to run a track, two laps or whatever the heck it was. Whatever it was I don't remember. And I made it like three-fourths through and I got an attack of asthma and I couldn't breathe. So I stopped running and walked, trying to get my breath so I could kind of start doing a slow jog. And she came up and she says I told you to run. And I looked at her and I said Mrs. Hill—or Ms. Hill it was—I couldn't breathe and I told her why. She says you will run or you will go to the principal's office. And I know I was blue; I looked bad because I couldn't breathe. And I didn't have my—at the time it was an atomizer; we don't have inhalers back in those days. I always carried a sweater on my arm and I had to carry the atomizer this way [demonstrating] because it looked like a douche bag. It was very embarrassing to me when I was having my attacks, so I always had a sweater. Well, if you didn't keep it upright, the medication that you would put in the bulb would run out. So I didn't have any medication and I didn't have any medication at that point—I was in PE—to do anything about it. So she marched me up to the dean's office. And I told the dean what was going on; I said I can't breathe, which I couldn't and I didn't have any medicine. So then they got the principal involved and I said please call my dad. So they called my dad and I said, Dad, I need some medicine; I can't breathe; they're making me run the track. He got a hold of—it was either the dean or the principal; I forgot which. But he took off work. Had to go home and get my medicine. He came to school and he ripped that whole office apart. He was livid. I ended up going home. And because of the stress and everything I couldn't go back to school for two weeks. I couldn't breathe.

**So who were some of the teachers that you enjoyed? The most memorable ones.**



*We had one his name was Barry; I think that was his last name.*

What did he teach?

*I don't even remember what he taught. Was it math? The history teacher, our history teacher, he was really funny. He's the one that—we'd write papers and one of the kids that we ran around, Doug, with would sometimes not get his homework done. He could take tests—he didn't have to study; he was one of those. He could read it and he knew it. But he didn't like to do the homework, so he would copy mine. There was one I was writing that had the little caret sign in it. So, when he did his paper he drew an actual carrot. I remember the teacher standing up in front of the class saying, now, I know you copied Pam's homework and I know she didn't have a carrot drawn in there.*

**[Laughing] That's funny.**

*Our driver's ed teacher, Mr. Ruparcich, him I remember.*

Ruparcich?

*Yes. He was the driver's ed teacher.*

Oh. I didn't take driver's ed, but I do remember him.

*So he was one of our teachers. I had a Mr. Peterson and he, I think, was our distributive education teacher.*

**What is that?**

*Back then distributive education, you actually made a product or whatever for the first part of the year and then the second part of the year you actually went to work for someplace. They helped you get a job. This was our senior year. I went to work in the auditing department at Sears. I worked for Sears for a year. I left Sears and went to work for Ms. Sidney's. It was a dress shop on the Strip on Sahara. It was almost on the corner of Sahara and Las Vegas*

*Boulevard. I worked there for a year. And then I went to work for First National Bank and I worked for them for fifteen years.*

*I met my husband at the Blue Onion.*

**Tell me about that. How did you meet him?**

*We were out of school and one of the girls was going back to Wisconsin to go to school. This is in January. So my other friend Betty and I were taking her to the train. So we went to the Blue Onion to have our last coke and hamburger before we took her to the train. This car pulled in next to us and it had three Air Force kids in it. We were kind of flirting with them. I turned around to them and said the one in the backseat's mine. We got engaged that following April. You didn't tell her about Johnny [last name redacted].*

*Oh, Yes, Johnny. Yes, he went to school with us, too.*

**What about Johnny?**

*We both ended up halfway engaged to him.*

**At the same time?**

*Well, no.*

*Her first, then me. He just wanted to be married. He's a sweet kid, but he just wanted to be married. He came home at Christmas, well, it was the Christmas before I met my husband. He came home for Christmas and he brought me an engagement ring. I loved him to death, but not that way. Everybody loved Johnny. So I told him this isn't what I want, John. Three days later he got engaged.*

**Same ring?**

*Same ring. Well, he had me keep it for three days. He wanted me to wear it for three days and think about it. I had given it back to them. In the meantime, he went and got engaged to another*

*kid that he went to school with, his little sister, younger sister. So she walked up to me and said, oh, look, John and I got engaged. He hadn't really called and told me, so I didn't know anything about it. It was just the way she was and still is. I smiled and I said, oh, Yes, I know and I liked it, too. I said it looked really nice on my hand, as well.*

**And so you were engaged to the same person at one time?**

He wanted to marry me. God, it was during junior high and first part of high school. I just had no interest in getting married. He was a nice guy, maybe too nice. Really skinny. I guess kind of cute in his own way, wasn't he?

*Yes. He was like a little puppy dog.*

Yes, basically.

**So whom did he finally end up marrying?**

That one gal.

*The one that took the ring.*

Then I actually saw him back in '76 or something. He was really skinny and probably about, what, five six, five seven? Really skinny. In fact, he ate bananas up the kazoo to even be able to get into military because he was so thin; he was underweight. Then he came and saw me when I was married to Ron, my late husband, and he was very portly at that point. He kind of looked like his dad; he was kind of baldish, very portly. Very nice. Still married to the same gal. The one thing I admired about him is he loved kids and he was so good to his nephew. Remember that?

*Yes.*

He had one child, a little girl. He wanted more kids. I kind of got the gist from our conversation that he wasn't really happy and she just absolutely refused to have any more kids and he really

wanted more kids. That's the last I've seen of him. Pam and I both have wondered what has become of him. We don't know.

**So getting back to Rancho, any kinds of school activities that you were active in, clubs, sports?**

I loved fencing, absolutely. Remember when we did the fencing? I loved it. In fact, about four years ago I was looking for a fencing club to join to take it up again. I loved fencing.

**And did you find one here?**

There was one. At the time I didn't have the finances to carry through.

*My thing was gymnastics. I liked the gymnastics. I even tried out for the school mascot. I think I was like runner-up. But it was fun. That was my favorite thing.*

Then we had some tumbling, too, though.

*Yes, and tumbling.*

**So any clubs like the French club, the history club, any of those?**

I didn't join any because when it came to take a foreign language, I wanted to take German and my mother absolutely refused to let me take German. Then most of the kids were taking, what, Latin?

*Yes. Latin or Spanish.*

Yes. And she made me take French. I said why French? It's the romantic language. Again, it's the flamboyant part that came from my grandmother and went into my mom. And I hated it.

**What was wrong with taking German?**

Don't know. That's part of my heritage. She did not want me to take German. I got fascinated with it because my Grandma Ada spoke quite a bit of German to me.

*And we always had to get out the dictionary so we'd know what she was talking about. I actually*

*had an English to German dictionary so that when she was talking we'd be in there—oh, okay.*

And she wasn't really German, either. Her second or third husband was a German and that's how she picked it up.

**So how did you get back and forth to school?**

*We rode the bus for a long time.*

Till we each got our cars.

*Sometimes I'd take the bus in and my dad would pick me up depending on what was going on and where he was working.*

**Tell me about movie theaters at the time.**

We had two that we patronized. There was the Fremont and the El Portal.

*There was the Fremont, the El Portal and the Huntridge.*

And the Huntridge. That came on later.

**Did you ever go to any of the openings?**

No. My brother did; I didn't.

**Did he talk about those?**

Yes, because he ended up in theatrics. There was one at the Huntridge and I don't know what it was. I do remember the one show that he was absolutely mesmerized by was—oh, what in the heck was it called? He made us go to it. Dad and I went. Where they're up in an astronaut thing up in the air and the gal is walking around on a—oh, Exidy, Odessey? It's the one where it starts out with the chimpanzees in the very beginning and it has this music and it shows a monolith that's coming up through the ground.

*I don't remember because by then I probably was down in Tucson.*

You could have been. What the heck was the name of that? It's been on TV. Because he kept

saying you need to watch it more than once because there's so much going on there you're not going to understand it the first time; you need to watch it. And he actually was an usher. I think he got to see the preview. But he watched it night after night after night. I can't remember the name of it, but I can remember how it started. Hal was the computer and Hal ended up taking over.

**The computer war. Yes, okay. Tell me about race relations at Rancho High School. What groups were there?**

Mainly white, a few African-Americans, a few Spanish. I'm not a bigot, so I don't remember ever having an issue with it.

*In fact, one of my best friends, they called him Moon; I think that was his last name. I knew him all through high school. He played basketball. He was partially deaf. He went from Rancho to UNLV and he played basketball for UNLV when we were there. He was the sweetest guy. Tall, oh, gosh, he was tall. He would walk down the hall and he'd say how are you doing today? He'd just be moving right along and we'd be walking. I couldn't keep up with him because he was so tall and his strides would be like this and I'd be—and there was Angie. I don't even know what Angie's last name was anymore.*

**So years later when you heard about riots at Rancho High School, what did you think?**

It was disturbing. I didn't understand it. I don't understand why it's still this day.

*No, I don't either.*

So to me it's just been disturbing. I remember the first time in Rancho when—what were we freshmen when we started or sophomore?

*Sophomore.*

The shower stall you had to share with other people. So there was a little gal that I had to share

with and she happened to be African-American. Well, I had never seen—I didn't realize that from here down people were still black. I was very naive. I hate to tell you that. But she didn't realize that from here down we were all white. So when we got in the shower—and we had PE together and we ended up really kind of being good friends—we kind of checked out each other and I said, oh, you're black down there, too. She said, Yes, and you're white [laughing]. And in the shower we'd just get in there and we would talk. That's what you do, a learning experience.

*I've worked with all races and I lived in Singapore. I just don't get it.*

I don't either. In fact, I have a cousin married to an African-American. I don't get it. Never have.

**Tell me about the school dances.**

Sock hops.

**Tell me about the sock hops.**

Sock hops we used to do quite a bit in the wintertime during lunch. You take your shoes off and go in there. If you were lucky a boy might ask you to dance. If not, then the girls would get up dance. We just did our sock hops.

*Then we'd have like Sadie Hawkins once a year.*

Oh, god, those were fun. I've got pictures of those.

**Tell me about those.**

*You get to pick out who you want to take to the dance.*

**How did you do it?**

It was tough.

**Tell me the process of picking out the one you wanted to take to the dance.**

I don't remember ever picking anyone out.

*I always took Doug.*

**Did you have to chase him down?**

*No. He lived across the street. If he wanted to use my car, he had to be nice to me. My dad would loan him my car for the band because he was in the school band. And because I had a station wagon, he always wanted to borrow my car to haul all the band stuff in. So if I wanted to go to one of the dances, didn't matter what it was, I'd say are you going to take me to this?*

**I love it. What about proms and senior dances? Do you have any memories?**

I went to a prom with—was it Mike Cunningham? I think it was. He actually had a crush on me and I went. He was a bright, bright—I think he became a doctor, actually. I don't know what became of him. But I did go to a prom with him. Then I had another little guy, Fish. Remember Fish?

*Yes, I remember Fish.*

He asked me to go. He used to haunt me. He used to bang on my door all the time when we were little.

*He was a stalker, an early stalker.*

Yes, he was.

**Where did you go after the prom?**

I think he took me out to dinner and then we went home. It's been so many years ago I can't guarantee.

**Do you remember young people for those dances like that being able to go into casinos and have dinner in the casinos?**

In the dinner areas, Yes.

*In the coffees shops. We could even go to the dinner shows.*



We just couldn't drink.

*Yes. But we couldn't go to the midnight shows. But we could go to the dinner shows. I know that I was dating a guy from California and he came up and took me to the junior prom. Then we went after the prom—we would have loved to have gone, but by then it was too late for the dinner show. So I think we went to the Fremont for dinner at their coffee shop or something, their restaurant at the Fremont.*

**So you could go into the downtown hotels later?**

*Yes. But only into like their restaurants and that because I remember we used to go watch Wayne Newton when he was in the lounge at the Fremont. But we had to sit in the back; we couldn't sit up by the bar. But we could go in and watch him sing.*

**The sock hops that you were talking about were during lunch hour?**

A lot of them, Yes. Well, they would have some at night, but a lot of it was during lunch.

**It was also an open campus. Did you eat lunch on campus or did you go off?**

Sometimes yes, sometimes no. It depended who had a car and who had gas. I mean our gas was, what, thirty-two cents a gallon or something like that back then? We used to whoever had the car, everybody would pool their allowance for the week to get gas to and from. Then I would always hit Dad up. Usually take his lunch money I found out later.

**You were working. Did you still get an allowance from your parents?**

No.

**So once you started working you were on your own.**

My parents were middle class. They weren't rich. They were struggling. If I needed something really bad, as a general rule I got it. But there was nothing extra to spare.

*The middle of my junior year until about November of my senior year, my dad was in the*

*hospital in California. He was in Loma Linda. He had osteomyelitis. One of the doctors here gave him a shot of cortisone, which why we still hadn't figured out because osteomyelitis feeds on it. My dad almost lost his leg because of it. He developed a staph infection from it and was in the hospital for six, eight months. And so everything I made working at Sears and that went to my mom to pay the bills because my dad wasn't getting any.*

I remember having to give, too.

*Yes. There was nothing coming in on my dad's side. So it was just my mom's salary and my salary making the car payments and the house payment.*

**So what did your mom do for a living?**

*She worked as the comptroller for Bonanza Airlines.*

And my mom was a housewife. So what my dad brought in, he brought in. When times were tough, times were tough. Then when my grandmother came, that was another extra mouth to feed. Then my brother was sick quite a bit and that was a lot of medical. It made us stronger, though.

**What is your favorite memory of high school? When you're talking at these reunions that you have, what is your favorite memory?**

I can't say I have exactly a favorite memory. I had a lot of good times. I don't have a specific favorite. I really wasn't too crazy about school. I really enjoyed my friends. I enjoyed the social life. I struggled to maintain a B-C average, if I was lucky. A horrible memory was geometry. Guy gave me a D only because he was nice; I should have got an F. I couldn't comprehend it.

One of my times I laughed the most was in algebra. I actually enjoyed algebra. I did well in it. I had a teacher, his name was Mr. Hall; he was my algebra teacher. I don't know if he had a drinking problem. Anyway, he left the room a lot. We used to kind of horse around

although I understood the concept (indiscernible). I remember this one kid and I don't remember his name. But he always slept through class, always had long shaggy hair down to here. Then when Mr. Hall would leave the room, we'd all get our straws and Red Hots candies and shoot them at each other. This one particular time this kid was driving me nuts and he went to sleep and I got my scissors while he was asleep in the class, the teacher was gone, and I trimmed his hair. I remember doing that. I'm not a brazen person; I can't believe I did that. But when he woke up and the teacher was in the room, he looked around and he saw hair everywhere.

*I'm glad I didn't have any classes with you. We'd have been in trouble.*

That was fun. Another fun time I had was with Pat Cavendish. We had typing together and we used to horse around a little bit. We would type and then one of us would go—and we'd get these weird letters and whatever we were writing. We did pretty good on it, though.

Another time that Mr. Hall came in and he said—because everybody was absolutely wild when he came back into the room. We all sat down and he said what's going on? There were these spit balls and Red Hots and everything else and it was report card day. So he asked every child what happened as they left. I don't know, and they'd take a hike. I don't know, and they'd take a hike. It was my turn. What happened? I said you need to be here more. I said it got chaotic and we were shooting spit balls and whatever. He handed me my report card and it went from a B-minus to a B-plus and he said that's for telling me the truth.

**Wow. That's great. Any vivid memories?**

He actually committed suicide, by the way.

**So maybe he was out there drinking.**

I don't know. It's because he ran over his child accidentally in a tractor. I found out later. He was actually a nice guy.

**Oh, that's sad.**

It broke my heart. He was a nice guy. My dad was working at Community Chevrolet. He drove a tractor. He was kind of a lot man. When I was taking Dad lunch one day—I was not too far from where he was at, so I had packed Dad's lunch up and put Randy in a stroller and taken Dad's lunch down to him and I happened to see him. All of a sudden he disappeared. He told me what happened. He said I had a son about the same age as yours. I said, oh, really? I said how is he doing? He said he's dead. I said what? It shocked me. What happened? He said I killed him; I ran over him with my tractor. And then right after that he disappeared. Remember Mr. Hall?

*Uh-huh, yes.*

**Any vivid memories?**

*My favorite things were the football games.*

**Tell me about those.**

*I loved to go to football games. I like football. If I can go and sit in the stands, I love it. Sit and watch it on TV, nope, not interested. My dad, he had been out of the hospital maybe two weeks, took me when Rancho was playing Reno for the state championship. My mom worked for the airlines, so we got free tickets. We flew to Reno, my dad and I, to watch the game.*

I didn't know that.

**That's exciting.**

*Yes. Coming back we got bumped, so we'd had to stay overnight. Do you know nowhere would rent us a room?*

**Why?**

*Because I was underage; I wasn't eighteen, even though he said I was his daughter.*

**Oh, they didn't believe that.**

*They would not rent us a room. One of the stews that worked for the airline was a friend of my mom's and knew us and she let us stay at her house and made sure that we got to the airport the next morning for our flight. They were so strict back then in where you could go and all that. They don't do that now; they don't check anymore.*

**Exactly. No one takes that responsibility. So tell me about that time when things like that would happen. What was it like living in a city that was mob controlled?**

I loved it.

*Loved it.*

**Explain to me why.**

*Safe.*

It was very safe. Of course, we didn't deal with the hotels and the skimming and all that. My dad dealt with a lot of the mob people.

**In what way?**

He was an auto body man; he was one of the best in town. He also dealt with a lot of movie stars because he was the only man in town that could do fiber class like on the Corvettes and whatnot. So if Dad wanted to take Momma to a show, for instance, he would go to somebody and say I would really like to take my wife to see whatever it was. He says okay, when you want to go it's comped. So then they would get Daddy into the front row and Mom and Dad used to go and see all the shows. But that's because dad took care of all the cars. Sometimes it was comps, as far as even what my dad did. Sometimes they paid good money. You never know. Steve McQueen was another one that used to always go to my dad to fix his Corvette whenever he'd bang it up. There was another guy, I believe he worked at the Riviera and he married Daglidge—Dorothy—

**Dandridge.**

Dandridge. She was dating the floor man there. It was a white guy. Dad and he became very close. Well, when he married her he got fired. He was banned, which is ludicrous. But that's what happened. And she was a beautiful woman. In fact, I think she was half white and a half black if I'm not mistaken. So Dad knew them.

**So when your dad had a business arrangement with one of the owners, how was the transaction handled?**

Up and up. He worked for Lloyd Tritle at the time, who owned Community Chevrolet. It was on Maryland Parkway and Charleston. That's where they used to bring the cars in and they used to ask for Dad because he was the best body man in town. If they had a fender bender, Dad fixed it. They all knew him by name and Dad knew them. There was no hanky-panky or any of that; it was all aboveboard, straight deal. It went through Chevrolet. But Dad's very social. It's too bad you couldn't meet him. He's very likable, lovable person. They just went to him because of the way Dad was. He was honest. They would like give him a tip or whatever and he'd say that's too much money. And they would say just take it, Paul, just put it in your pocket, be quiet. And then if he ever needed a favor to go and see a show—and that's about all he ever did—he asked for that kind of favor, whatever.

But safe. Pam and I could go in there when we were twelve years old in the mob hotels and if we would have to holler help and, man, we'd have everybody on us. It was safe.

**Say that again.**

*If we were to go into one of the hotels and someone would try and grab us when we were young or something, all we had to do was yell and I mean—*

We were taken care of. There just wasn't an issue. What went on behind the pits we don't know;

that was their thing. What went out as far as the public and our city was great. You can ask anybody. The best days of Las Vegas was when the mobsters were here.

*I mean you could drive down Fremont Street. It didn't matter. When they were here it was very family oriented. We didn't have all this problems with the kids being raped and all this.*

*Anybody who caused problems, they just kind of disappeared.*

**So do you think today, a city of two million, that the mob families could have that kind of control today?**

The mob's still here. They don't have the control that they used to because it's all underground.

We had two or three sheriffs that were really good during that period. Ralph Lamb is one.

*He was my neighbor.*

Great sheriff. Actually he hung out at my husband's station. Strict. I can't say sometimes he did things that suited my fancy, but he did what he needed to do and it kept our city in control. I mean he ran out the bike gangs. He ran them out; wouldn't let them come in. He took care of us. He really did take care of us.

*A lot of the guys on the force because it was a small town back then—when I first moved here there was only like maybe 24,000 people. So you knew most of the police because it was such a tight-knit community. We had one friend we called Long John. Remember Long John, the friend of my dad's, great, big, Pop?*

Yes.

*And if he'd see me out on Fremont Street—and he knew what my curfew was—he would pull up alongside of me and he would say running a little late, are we? He said you better be home because I'm going to call and you better answer the phone or I'm going to tell your dad. Well, I knew if that phone rang and I didn't grab it and it woke my dad up, I was dead meat. Believe me,*

*I was home when that phone rang. They were on the kids, made sure we were safe.*

They didn't deal with the rowdy kids. They were strict with the rowdy kids. But if it was an everyday ninety-percent Joe Blow like Pam and I, they took care of us. It's like having the officers when I was in the Blue Onion. I mean how many cops would you go out and say would you push my car out; I can't get it in reverse or whatever. Are you nuts? Why are you driving a car? I'll just give you a ticket.

**So when you say the rowdy kids, how were they handled?**

If they got in trouble, they got in trouble.

**So as you were growing up, kids your age who were rowdy, what kind of trouble did kids get into it?**

We weren't involved with them, so I don't know what they did.

*Probably one time some of the guys from the base were in. And I do remember one time one of the guys that was a friend of Gene's, I saw him one weekend and I said what happened to you? He actually got beat up by another kid in town because one of the local boys didn't like the fact that the Air Force kid came in and was hitting on his girlfriend, and so they beat him up. But he didn't want to cause trouble because he didn't want to get in trouble at the base, either. But the cops made him give a statement because there were witnesses that saw what happened. And the kid that did it, they arrested him. Now, what happened to him after that I don't know; I just know that they arrested him. But I know that the local boys weren't real happy with the airmen from the base; it was like taking over their territory.*

**So earlier, you told me about your career, working at the bank and all of that. What kind of work did you do after high school? And this is Kim.**

This is Kim. I did not graduate. I was lucky enough to fall in love with a wonderful husband of



thirty-two years. I got married, raised my two children. I had one child that for the first eight years of his life, my first one, was quite sickly. So I really wasn't able to go back to school; I kind of had to take care of him. After that I actually started up my own business when Ron said I'm the provider around here; you stay home and take care of the kids and I can bring plenty of money in to take care of you. Well, I got to the point where my kids got in junior high and high school and I got bored. So I said, well, I'm going to go to work. He said, well, if you go to work, I'm not going to talk to you. And I said, well, I'm going to work anyway. So I went to work.

I think the first job I had I went to work for a drugstore in their little kiosk post office; so I worked there. So I had to do the post office stuff and maintain their cards. Come to think about it, I did that; no wonder I got in Hallmark. And then from there we had an optometrist that used to come in all the time. Well, I got really kind of bored with that job. So I'm thinking medical would be kind of fun. So I started talking to his nurse that came in all the time, almost every day to mail stuff out. Then finally Dr. Kaye came in. I said I think I'd like to come to work for you. I said I'm tired of this place; I need a change. Anyway, I went in for an interview and I got hired.

So then at that point my daughter was going to junior high, which was Cannon, which was right next door to the optometrist, which was perfect because she was always in trouble in junior high. So then I went to work for him. I worked for him for five years. Still one of my best friends. Still does my eyes. He almost lived with me when Ron had cancer before he passed on. Brenda would get in trouble at school. I'd say Dr. Kaye, you need to man the front two seconds; I've got to go get Brenda from school. I'd bring her over. She was on restriction again. She'd have to sit there while I'm doing my thing. Then at one point she wrote a nasty

letter to a teacher, I think, or something. She couldn't stand him. And he took me into his office and he said what did Brenda do this time? We showed him the letter. He read it and he says, you know what? My wife and I have been trying to have a child. I'm not having any. I'm cured. I'm done. No kids. He went home and told his wife no kids. They ended up having two after.

And she ended up being a great kid, actually. But it was just a four-year period of restriction. You've got to stay on top of them. Of course, I told her dad and he says you're grounded, grounded for a month. And then about a week into her restriction we'd go to bed and he'd say I was too rough. And I'd say I can't go against you; I think you was too. So what do we do? He said, well, I can't go back on my word. He said you go in and tell my daughter you talked me out of some of it and that she can get off next week. He would never give in to his kids. They knew. I didn't know that until after the fact. They knew that dad knew he was too strict. They knew eventually he'd cut back. But they waited for Mom to go in and say, well, I talked to your dad.

**I love it. That's great.**

He was pretty strict on them. But I used to do things with the kids, like if they wanted to have a sleep-out, more my daughter than my son. It was, again, junior high or high school. But I want to have boys over. And I said, okay, so how do you expect me to deal with this, boys and girls? She said, well, we're just going to do a slumber party in the front yard and we'll just all bring our sleeping bags and whatever. And I says okay, not a problem. Any booze, I take it. Anybody's drinking, I take their keys. I got my sleeping bag; I'll be out there with you. So I used to sleep out with them. If there was any booze, I took it and I drank it. Took their keys. Get up in the morning and fix breakfast for her and the kids.

**Wow. That's great.**

**So both of you told me about Fremont Street and cruising Fremont Street as young women. What do you think now when you see Fremont Street?**

I'm devastated by it.

*It's disgusting.*

**Explain that.**

There is no nostalgia. They have managed to destroy what Las Vegas was about. It's devastating.

*I don't even feel safe.*

Oh, I don't either. No. We went down there—

*In October for our class reunion.*

You don't dare go—I mean there's a group of girls going with you.

*We had to park in the parking building behind—what was the name of that place we went? I want to say Hooligans, but that isn't it.*

**So one of the big casinos you probably parked in.**

*Well, it's a pub.*

**Oh, Hennessy's.**

Hennessy's, there it is.

*Hooligans, same thing. So you had to go in the back in the parking area. There's no security in there and you're looking around. There was at that time just the two of us. So we got out of the car, locked the car, and we had no idea where we were going. Finally got through the maze on to Fremont Street and you're looking around and I'm going, oh, yes.*

What have they done?

*There was homeless people and guys that I think are shady looking and we're both sitting there*

*going where do we go?*

Which was a first.

*I did not feel safe. That was the third time that I've been on it since they closed it off. The first time we went down my son and daughter had moved out here from Chicago before we moved back and we went down with them. We parked on one of the side areas and walked down. My husband and I are both looking at it because we remember when we used to be able to drive down it. He said, well, you can't see anything. You can't see the hotels because they've got this big thing. Then we started back down towards our car and here is these guys standing there and they're watching you. All the sudden, they started to kind of follow us. My son-in-law is six three; so I mean he can be intimidating on his own. But these guys, there were four of them. And two guys and my daughter and I...I mean I was kind of leery. Just about then a patrolman happened to come up and was turning around to go back down and they turned around and went the other way.*

So you might have gotten mugged.

*So it was very possible that we would have probably gotten mugged if the cops hadn't come.*

Now, I know that where the California Club there is, right next to that was a Texaco station.

**On which side? On the Fremont side or the Main Street side?**

Main Street. It was right on the corner of Main Street and Bridger and there was a Texaco station there. Well, my son actually owned that station. So Ron used to go down all the time. That was before the new Fremont Street Experience. He was always down there helping his son or doing whatever. We always used to hang out at the California Club or we'd walk down the road to something else and go in. He had favorite places he liked to go. But we felt relatively safe, not as safe as you would like, but relatively safe. Randy would tell me stories and say,

Mom, can you come over and clean the men's bathroom? I don't think I can go in and face it. And I said, why, what's in there? Randy, I can't either. They would go in and instead of pooping in the toilet they would poop in the sink. The bum scenario in there was horrible.

Then when they had that riot on Westside with the fire—

**In '69?**

No. It was after that. It was in the seventies or eighties there was a fire and they had to close off—it was in the eighties—they had to close off the streets because of the fire, actually, and there was rioting, too, because they told Randy he had to close down his business and he had to leave because it was all taped off because what was going on. There was a fire and there was some kind of rioting.

*I don't remember because I wasn't here at the time.*

**There was a riot in 1969.**

Okay. But there was also one in the eighties.

**Was it a riot or a protest, a protest march?**

It might have been a protest. But whatever it was got out of hand. And I can't exactly tell you. All I know is I heard about it and I called my son and he didn't answer. And I called Ron and he said Randy was told to get out of there (indiscernible/hammering).

**Have you tried any of the restaurants downtown?**

Other than Hennessy's, no. I have no desire to go down there.

*We didn't even really want to go for our class reunion.*

I did go to the mob museum, though.

**And what did you think?**

She was supposed to be with me; she got sick. Unfortunately—or fortunately, I enjoyed the mob

museum. I thought they did a good job. It's very long.

**Oh, Yes, you need two or three days.**

Oh, Yes. And we did it in one day. I made two floors. I didn't do the bottom floor. That was a quick go through and whatever. I remember that as being the post office. So that kind of brought back some memories because I can remember going to Fifth Street School and at the time I used to collect stamps. So I used to go down to the post office and browse their stamp and when I had a penny or two then I'd buy a stamp or whatever for my stamp collection. And then I believe the bus depot was down there, too, somewhere. It was right next door or something.

**Oh, the bus station, yes. The city buses used to go there.**

Yes. And I remember going with my parents taking my grandmother down there. So I remember. There was a lot of nostalgia there that's changed. You go down there and it brings back memories. I remember at Fifth Street School we used to walk up towards Sahara. It was on the other side of the street from Fifth Street and it was called, I believe, Bonnie's. It was a little local restaurant. We used to, when we had the money, go in there and eat our lunch. Hurry up down there and have to run back to get to class in time. But we got French fries and whatever, I remember doing that, and a malt I think. And then go back to that. Then across the street from there, there was a car dealership.

**Across the street from Bonnie's?**

It was in that vicinity and it had the glass bricks in the front and it used to be a dealership. It's still there; it still has glass bricks, but I don't remember what it is. I remember the old icehouse that was down there.

*Yes, because I worked at the icehouse.*

**Tell me what that was like. Tell me how the icehouse operated. What did it actually do?**

**How did it make the ice?**

*They had these big coolers in the back with these pipes and it runs through and it fills up all these big containers with ice. When I worked there most of ours was blocked, the majority of it was blocked ice for the hotels and stuff. They would ship it, take it by refrigerated trucks to Laughlin and Kingman so that they would have ice because they didn't have icehouses there. So the truckers, they would truck it down.*

**What about families in Las Vegas, did they also get ice from the icehouse?**

*And they could come and buy ice there.*

Yes, if we went to the lake or something.

*Yes, you went to the icehouse and you bought ice.*

And I believe the R-J was there somewhere around.

*It was on Bonanza.*

**And it still is.**

*It's almost in the same place.*

Because I know it moved a little bit, Yes.

**So to end this—so you were talking about downtown. Have you been in the area of that new shopping center, the Smith Center and all of that?**

No.

*I have. I haven't been to the Smith Center, but I've been in the shopping center, the outlet mall.*

**But you've seen the Smith Center?**

*Yes, I've seen it from a distance.*

**So now, does that impress you?**

Is that those white buildings?

*No. Those white buildings are just tents.*

**Oh, okay. You're talking about The Mart. What is it called?**

*The Mart.*

No, I haven't been to any of it.

**So how did you feel about that area of downtown?**

*I mean it's okay. My daughter and I've been there a couple of times. I used to live on what was then Highland; now it's Martin Luther King, on the other side. I was telling my daughter, gee, I remember when that was just all empty and it was just a train track and Holsum Bakery used to be there because you'd drive down the street, go down there and, oh, the smell was heavenly.*

*Zozobrus owned that.*

**So was it on Charleston where it still is?**

*Yes, where it is now. And every year—and it's still that way—every year when we have the flash floods in the summer Bonanza and Charleston underpass would fill with water.*

My husband sunk two trucks, one in each one.

*We used to have pictures. My dad worked just up the street on Bonanza. And one year it flooded and some guy had a boat on the back of his truck and he parked his truck at Consolidated, took the boat—it was a little boat—and he put the boat in the water and went under the Bonanza underpass. And my dad has a picture of this guy as he's waving goodbye going under the underpass.*

**I love it [laughing].**

*What's really sad is all these years they still haven't figured out that there are natural flood drains and you can't build houses there because they're going to flood. Nothing's changed.*

**So what do you see as the future of the city? You can talk about politically, businesswise,**



**casinos. What do you see as the future when you think about Las Vegas, downtown area especially?**

Downtown I'm not impressed with; that's somebody else's bailiwick. I think we really need to get on the stick with our kids. We used to have one of the better schools in town, believe it or not. Actually, when I moved in '55 from Salt Lake to here, I was an A-B student in Salt Lake and I came down here to be a C-D.

*Yes, the same. I went to school in California.*

**So you thought it was more difficult here?**

Oh, Yes, definitely.

*Oh, Yes. The schools here were almost a year ahead of us. But now we're so far behind.*

We're like forty-eighth in the state (sic).

*And what's really sad...they said, oh, well, it's the teachers. It's not the teachers. I mean, sure, some of the teachers aren't great. But I think that they've gone way too far on kids' rights. The parents (sic) have no rights anymore. They say, well, your kid's in trouble. Well, what do you want me to do about it? I can't spank them. I can't do anything to them.*

I can remember being smacked with a ruler. Of course, you couldn't do that now. But I do now if my kid got in trouble in school and I found out about it, school was (indiscernible) what they got when I got home.

*My kids were raised really strict. I never beat them. If they needed a spanking, they got a spanking. My grandkids are the same way. When they were little if they needed spanked, they got spanked. But when we went in stores they were told. Their hands were behind their backs or in their pockets. They were not to touch anything or Nana was going to whip their little fannies.*

See that fly swatter that's there? That's there for a purpose. I have one grandson that's

twenty-four years old. And if he gets out of line, I pick it up. I'm not afraid to smack him with it. Grandma, all right, I'll watch my mouth.

*That's the problem; the kids now—*

There's no respect.

*There's no consequence. There's no respect. They have no respect for their elders, no respect for other people's property.*

And I'm not finding it more or less from any class of people. Our younger generation, it's getting worse. Ethnic groups, it's all about the same. I'm finding some of the—because I worked at Hallmark for five years and I would watch a lot of the kids. I'm actually surprised that Orientals are—you think we're strict. They're generally very strict with their children. Now this generation, they're not.

**So your parents, that's what you're talking about—**

Right now there is no disciplinary actions taken at home. Where are these kids going to learn? They learn at home. So if your child gets in trouble at school and parents are busy working or whatever, they brush it off. Well, gee, Johnny, you shouldn't do that. Well, maybe it's the teacher's fault. No, it isn't. But the teachers don't have the restraint that they used to have, either. And now the poor teachers are afraid of getting beat up. Is that right? No, it's not.

*I used to have a friend who was a teacher and my mother-in-law, my ex-mother-in-law, George's mom, she taught at Western High School for years, from the time it opened. When it first opened there was still some control and she said she watched through the years as the different kids would start coming through the changes in the respect and how they didn't care if they learned.*

**So through the years she can almost plot on a chart.**

Yes, Yes.

And it doesn't look much better right now, unfortunately. And I've got great grandkids in school now.

*I mean I was at the University of Nevada. My ex went to school there and he taught there. His name was George T. Austin.*

**Right down the street?**

*Uh-huh, at UNLV. And he was the curator of the mammals at the Natural History Museum for a long time, as well. When we were going to school the kids were a lot different, a lot different than the college kids of today.*

I've gone to college because I have a granddaughter that's still going there and you can almost tell the mannerism of the child's personality by the way they dress. You can tell if a child has got respect for their elders, how they're taken care of the cleanliness is unexistent (sic). Pam and I wouldn't be caught dead going to school the way some of these kids go, literally. In fact, we would have been thrown out of school. If you don't have respect for yourself, how are you going to give respect to others? And this is what's really upsetting. And it's not being taught at home.

I don't understand that.

*Like where UNLV is now used to be a really nice area and now it's the pits.*

They call it Drugville.

*Yes. I took my grandson there last year because he wanted to go to school at UNLV. So we went and did a tour of the school, did all this stuff. He and one of his buddies, they were looking for an apartment. There is nowhere around that school I would even think of living and I used to live on campus. Then we lived across—well, now the airport's got the runway where our house used to be. But that's where we lived when George was going to school there. I wouldn't even think of living there now. You see these kids on the corner, their pants hanging down to their*

*knees. They're all passing stuff to each other. You know what they're doing. Most of them don't even go to the college; they're just hanging out around the school. Nobody does anything. I mean instead of trying to clean things up and all the hotels and everybody getting together and saying, okay, let's get the town straightened out, they're all worried about their dollars. They're all worried about their dollars and not their community. It's not a community-oriented place anymore.*

*We live in Pahrump. And believe me; Pahrump has got to be the pits. We have all of our problems and the schools there aren't any better than here.*

**But you have a winery.**

*We have two.*

**Oh, you have two wineries?**

*Two wineries now. Of course, we've got the brothels. But you know what? The girls worked here, too. I had customers at the bank that were from the brothels in Beatty and Pahrump and that. There were a couple of girls that came in from here that were escorts, so to speak, if that's what they wanted to call them. But they were the nicest people you'd ever want to meet. I mean they dressed nice. They were polite. They weren't the dime a dozen little hookers we have now. When it's controlled it's a whole lot safer.*

Yes. And we didn't have the child trafficking back then, either.

**That's totally different, yes. So to end this, any final thoughts, final memories?**

Well, I do have some final thoughts. I'll be seventy in October and I think I've been very, very blessed with my grade school and junior high, whatever. There's good memories everywhere. I remember when we stole Johnny's motorcycle and wrecked on it.

*Oh, Yes, that was fun. Just before eighth grade graduation, we both looked like we'd been*

*through the war.*

We were. I don't know if this generation is going to be able to stay in contact with their school chums. Pam and I are best friends. She's got a bedroom that's her bedroom upstairs when she comes in. She's one of my dearest friends. I mean there has been years that she's moved and hasn't been here, but we've always been able to reconnect and still be as close as ever. We've got three other girlfriends. One's back in—

*Ohio.*

Ohio?

*Or Indiana. One of the two.*

Indiana. That comes here and we're close to her. Linda Stevenson, we're close to her. I don't think people have the connections. Now, I know my daughter does, but she's a lot like I am. But the newer generation, are they going to be able to do this? Are they going to be able to say, oh, I wasn't a bad kid, but I had this connection and still carrying on at our age friendships? We still have great friends. I mean there isn't anything in the world I wouldn't do for her.

*Bonnie has a friend like that. When we lived in Singapore she met a friend named Kim. She and Kim still over the Internet stay in touch. Todd has a friend also from Singapore that he stays in touch with periodically. The other boy lives in Norway or somewhere now. So when he's in the States he always calls Todd.*

**They have Facebook today.**

*Yes, and they have Facebook.*

Exactly. Which we didn't have.

*Which I still don't.*

**Yes, but they stay in touch all over the world with Facebook. I really appreciate this,**

**ladies. This has been amazing.**

It's been fun. And I want to thank you for your graciousness. You're beautiful women.

**Thank you. Thank you so much.**

*Really nice.*

What a way to reconnect.

**Yes. Thank you so much.**

**[End of recorded interview]**

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