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An Interview with Kerin Rodgers

An Oral History Conducted by

Suzanne Becker &

Claytee D. White

Voices of the Historic John S. Park Neighborhood

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

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

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

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Preface

Kerin Rodgers was born in 1936. She recounts her family history and stories of her youth growing up in Boston, MA, and shares how the family relocated to Seattle, WA in the mid-1940s. She talks about her enjoyment of theatrical arts and politics, and about being a resourceful divorced, single-mom and entrepreneur. In 1958 she opened a retail fashion store and modeling agency with a friend in Santa Monica, CA. Kerin had a knack for fashion and interior design that would assist her then and into the future.

She also shares the story of arriving in Las Vegas as part of retail job with The Broadway stores in 1966—a two-week stint that seemed to have no ending. Her transition into Las Vegas included remarriage, a 1974 Keno win that enabled her to put down money on a home (a house built by Paul Huffey) in the John S. Park neighborhood, and making close friends in the community.

Her interview is sprinkled with tales of activities and personalities from the neighborhood's past and present. Kerin was involved with the Focus Youth House, speaks about First Fridays and art, as well as gives a perspective of police, criminal behaviors and changes in the neighborhood over the years. She hosted a local television show and enjoyed being a community activist.

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER AT UNLV

Voices of the Historic John S. Park Neighborhood



Use Agreement

Name of Narrator: Kerin Rodgers

Name of Interviewer: Suzanne Becker

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 Kerin Rodgers Feb 17, 09
Signature of Narrator Date

 [Signature] 2/17/09
Signature of Interviewer Date

Interview with Kerin Rodgers

February 17, 2009 in Las Vegas, Nevada
Conducted by Suzanne Becker

August 11 & 16, 2011 in Las Vegas, Nevada
Conducted by Claytee D. White

Today is February 17, 2009. I'm here with Kerin Rodgers for the John S. Park Oral History Project. And Kerin, thank you again.

Thank you.

You have great stories. We've been talking and I want to come back to those. But also I want to start at the beginning with you: when you were born, where you're from, where did you grow up.

Me before John S. Park?

Yeah.

Oh my Lord! Life before life! All right, well, I was born in Belmont, Massachusetts, which is a luxury town (that means no industry or something), a small town outside of Cambridge, Massachusetts. And my grandfather was Doctor Charles W. Rodgers, an important man in Boston [Massachusetts]. Amongst other things, Doctor Rodgers wrote books, and served as a temporary ambassador to Wales back in [the] Coolidge [administration]. And then my father Anthony Rodgers, he's written about in some of these, was Mr. Boston in 1923, which is quite a title. There's even books called Mr. Boston. Not about him but about the title. That's like Man of the Year for the Boston Commons and so forth. So I had a popular family. And my mother and her sister, Margaret Mary Healy, were popular people, too.

What did your father do for a living?

And my father was -- kind of an interesting story from being Mr. Boston. My father was born into a wealthy family and didn't really have -- educated man. But actually, until after the war, I don't think he did much except trust fund or something. But he was an orator and he spoke at civil things. We'd go to the Public Gardens in Boston and ride the swan boats, and my father would talk about Curley or whatever it was. Later, after the war -- that's World War II -- he took a position a representative for Lily-Tulip paper cup company. That's how we ended up traveling and ending up in Seattle, Washington.

So your mother was a schoolteacher.

...My mother, while we were in Boston, was a schoolteacher and especially into -- they didn't call it special education at the time. But anyhow, she worked with Rose Marie (Kennedy), the daughter (of Joseph and Rose Kennedy), before she had her surgery. So we knew the Kennedys from way back when, but didn't know they were going to become the first family of the United States of America.

And they're from the same area?

Yeah. Right. My mother and my Aunt Mary were the best-dressed ladies at one time in Boston. And as a matter of fact, in my entry here you'll see a picture of Margaret Hamilton. Well, Margaret Hamilton and [actor] Ray Bolger were their good friends, and Ray Bolger dated my mother before she married my father. She told Ray Bolger that she didn't think he could keep her in Coty's cold cream, and didn't marry him. And my aunt tells the story, so it might not have been quite as bad as all that, but at any rate it was quite a treat for him when he was able to send her a case of cold cream. [Laughing]

And my sister was very talented back in Belmont. She was in Boston. She went to the Boston Conservatory.

Is she older or younger?

Three years older. She's deceased now.

What's her name?

Janet Elaine Rodgers. And she was a protégé Chopin pianist, and also artist, and I'll show you one of her recent, before she died, pieces of art, in a minute. I won't interrupt the taping for that.

At any rate, after the war—to me there's only one war—but after World War II, and my years at Kendall School in Belmont and so forth—oh, oh, I had a radio show there. I was on the radio. I didn't own the radio show. It was Adele Bailey's Little Bear Club, and I was one of the characters on the Little Bear Club, on WMEX in Boston.

How long did you do that?

I guess it must've been a couple of years.

How did you get involved in that?

Well, I was always that way, wanting to do this. I wrote letters to the club and asked the lady [if I could appear on the show]. My sister was so talented that I was always looking for things I could do.

How old were you when you were doing that?

Eight, nine, and ten, I guess. It was '44, '45, '46, in there. I was born in 1936.

Anyhow, so I would go to downtown Boston in my little red patent [leather] shoes with pink socks, and a red dress with pink bows on it, and off I'd go in my little Shirley Temple outfit to do [singing] "Cream of Wheat is so good to eat and we have it every

day,” and that kind of thing, on the Little Bear Club. There’s still a Little Bear cartoon that’s on TV that I notice on one of the cartoon channels, and I keep wondering, I wonder if that’s the same character, the same original author, because it’s called Little Bear, and this was called Little Bear, you’d think maybe [that something came out of it]. It’s a cartoon, however, rather than a radio [show]. Of course, on the radio, you could pretend to be cartoons. It didn’t matter. We were cartoons but we were just voices.

But at any rate, sometime after the war, my father transferred to Seattle, Washington. And in Seattle, my sister and I went to Holy Rosary Grade School and High School, Catholic schools there. And she continued to do very, very well in music, and until the day she died she was winning music [awards]. She never wanted to be a professional because she was in the religion, but she always entered things just to keep herself in tune. And as an artist and musician, she was just marvelous. So I always went in the direction of plays and drama and radio and television and that kind of thing. And I did some television in Seattle, and I was Sea Fair Princess in the Sea Fair in 1956 and had my picture and my trophy in the newspaper and all that. So that was fun.

My girlfriend, Marilyn Pepper Peterson, the artist that painted that picture and that picture and others throughout the house; she and I were best friends in school, and she became an artist. I mean not just a hobby. She’s a professional artist, with a gallery. But in those days, we were doing all the modeling kind of things, and I was doing a radio show called *Tony Lease’s Lease on Life*. And the emcee of the show or the mistress of ceremonies of the show turned up in Las Vegas in the eighties. This was in the fifties, don’t forget. So like thirty years later I see this lady over at Rainbow’s End health food store and I said, are you Zeo? Zeo Trombley. She said yeah. I said, I’m Kerin Rodgers.

And we kind of hit it off for a few times and then [it ended]. We weren't destined to be best friends but it was kind of a funny, small-world kind of thing, you know. [Actress Dorothy] Dottie Provine was on the show, too.

What kind of a show was it? What did you guys do?

I just introduced people to the host. You know, smaller than Vanna White. And Dottie Provine did that, too. She wasn't a guest. Do you know who she is? No. OK. And it seems to me that [actress] Dyan Cannon was something to do with it, too. I went to Holy Rosary; she went to Holy Names. But I don't remember specifically, except I knew I knew her. But I don't know whether she was involved with the Sea Fair or with the television station. KING television station.

But, at any rate, we got involved with politics, too. In those days, Scoop Jackson was just coming up. Later, as a Las Vegan, twenty, thirty years later, I supported Scoop Jackson as a presidential candidate.

So it sounds like you were really quite involved and vocal.

Yeah. And I was head of what they called at the time, Junior Democrats. Young Democrats, you're old enough to vote. Junior Democrats, you weren't.

Was your family political?

Oh, very. When you grow up in Boston, it's God, Country, Family, Church, all the same thing. There's no difference. I mean, they have precinct meetings in the home, da da da. Everybody did the same thing. Everybody was Irish, Catholic, Democrat, from Boston. Anyhow, everybody, in my eyes, you understand. There may have been others, but I never met any of them.

We'd go to the Cape in the summertime. Recently my cousin Jimmy passed away. He was in a family cottage on the Cape right down the street from the Kennedy compound. So he used to send me all the articles and everything going on with the Kennedys. And he's see them at mass and so forth. There was a slight relationship there. My grandmother, Mini Ma Rodgers, had a sister who married Steve Fitzgerald, who is a cousin of Honey Fitzgerald who was the father of Rose who married Joseph, whom my grandfather, Patrick J. Healey, didn't like at all because Joseph was into the liquor business and Patrick J. Healey didn't approve of that.

Oh. He was a bootlegger, yes.

So he didn't approve of that at all. However, he played bridge with Honey Fitz. And I still have, in one of my various boxes that I didn't give to Jean Ford of stuff, bridge tallies and so forth with Honey Fitz's name on it. And so there's that relationship with the Fitzgeralds. ...So we knew the Kennedys from way back when, but didn't know they were going to become the first family of the United States of America.

So what kinds of political things as a teenager or as a young person were you involved with?

Well, mainly it was having these little meetings with the Junior Democrats. At that time, all I remember real precisely was an article I wrote on the Bricker Amendment, which was on national health. And I remember, they quoted me from the school paper to the local paper because I made a mistake, a dyslexic mistake, that everybody liked. I kept saying, oh no, I didn't mean to say that. But I said the Bricker Amendment was as American as huckleberry pie. And I meant Huckleberry Finn or apple pie. I got Huckleberry Finn and apple pie mixed up. But somebody liked it and it stuck. [Laughing]
So I got quoted. So I became a little more popular.

But, at any rate, I did some things, and then I went for a short time to the University of Washington, out to the theatre arts department there. My sister went to Seattle University, a Catholic university. I didn't. Everything was happening at once. My two professors, Al Wheeler and Bob Dinsborne, were accused of being Communists because they were gay, but I didn't know what gay meant. But I did know what Communist meant, and they weren't, but all of a sudden the theatre department closed down, there was a big flap, they got fired from the university, our whole [play] *Desire Under the Elms* never happened, even though I had a part. [Laughing]

So this is obviously during the McCarthy era.

Yeah.

And were you in general aware of what was going on?

Yeah. Yeah, I was, but I just knew that they weren't [Communists]. The thing is, I knew politically, Communists, all that stuff, I knew it was a big witch hunt, I knew it was horrible. I just didn't know what gay meant, because I was a Catholic high school graduate, you know. Huh? What do you mean? Oh, I know a lot of guys that like guys. They play football. I mean I don't know. [Laughing] But anyhow, I can remember being shocked when somebody finally explained it to me. Shocked! But I mean I didn't really care. I said, why does anybody care? And to this day I say the same thing, why does anybody care? I don't want to hear about it but why does anybody care?

I'll tell you one thing about Catholic school, at least the one I went to. I hear all these things about various religions, including my own, and I have my own complaints about various religions, including my own, but one thing for sure, we were never taught to mind other people's business. We were taught to mind our own and each other's in our

own [family], but we were not taught that the people down the street were any of our business. I'm glad I still profess that.

But anyhow, the Sea Fair was over, the university was over, my sister went off to the missions, my father was ill and my mother was taking care of my father, and I got married and moved to Santa Monica, California. Marilyn, my best friend from school, got married, moved to Southern California. Her husband left, my husband left. I had a nice little house on the beach in Santa Monica. She moved in. She still says I saved her life and her little boy's life. Her stories are really, really neat because she has me out to be some kind of a splendid person that took her in where she had no place to go. We shared [a home]. She did her part.

What year was this?

This is 1958. Funny story is that we opened up a dress shop together—so unique—and a little modeling agency, and both of us thought we were successful because the other one was so good. I look back now and I say, God, I was so dumb. I was so dumb, that when she got married, I closed up everything and just gave it away. I thought I couldn't do it by myself because I thought we were only any good because of her. She tells me now, Kerin, we were only good because of you. [So we both thought] the other one was carrying the ball.

So prior to you guys getting married, you'd opened up this business—

No, no, we are married and divorced by now. The husbands gone. Both stories not to be told because who cares? We're both alive and they're both dead, so what does that tell you?

But we bought this house on the beach in Santa Monica, on the cliff, next door to [actress] Gloria Swanson's getaway. Now I can't say we actually ever saw her but we did see the two guys that lived in the house. And her place had the domed top and so forth. But ours was a pretty little redwood house. And our fun story, in today's [market]—well, today's market isn't so much fun as it was like two years ago—we wait till there's a crowd of people when she comes to visit and I'll say, yeah, Marilyn, let's tell them how we dumped that piece of property in Santa Monica. We were so glad to dump that property in 1959, by gosh, we got twenty thousand dollars for that house. By God, we were really lucky we got rid of it. It's worth about like four million dollars [today]. [Laughing] Who'd of thunk it?

What was Santa Monica like then?

Well, it was lovely, and touristy. It's before it went downhill and now back uphill.

But, at any rate, I was fortunate to meet this gal Dorothy, who's still a friend of mine, who was the head of L.A. [Los Angeles] County Parks and Recreation, Social and Cultural Department. And she knew I had been in the theatre arts department and that I had done some television, so she hooked me up with a job with the Parks Department where I taught children's theatre and some other group activities, senior citizens exercise, because I had done a lot of that. Oh yeah, I made the TV commercials for [Vic Tanny Centers]. I was working at Vic Tanny Gyms, too. So, I was teaching theatre arts and seniors exercise and other things at Plummer Park in West Hollywood. And then sometimes I'd fill in for this John Angelo with the Shakespeare Festival players. And I didn't have his kind of talent for the Shakespeare but I did help in the department from

time to time. He still comes to visit me. Dorothy, I just finished rereading her Christmas card before they're put all away. So we've stayed friends all these years, too.

So I was doing all those different things and then Marilyn got married and went on, and so we got rid of the dress shop. It was doing very well, and the modeling. What we did was, it was on Santa Monica Boulevard and Lincoln, and it was an old house. I could sew and design and decorate, and she was an artist, and we fixed it up so cute. We had Capezios and muumuus and those kind of things. Along with that people would ask me, could I do a room in their house, and I said, well, yeah, I guess I could, and so it kind of was the beginning of my becoming an interior decorator.

Yeah, obviously you had an eye for design.

And she painted the walls with scenes and that was kind of the beginning of her becoming an artist. But we didn't know we were that. We thought we were selling clothes.

Right. Now, can I ask you something, and maybe this is just my ignorance, but I'm wondering, your perspective on the late Fifties, two single women opening a business, was it easy for you guys to open a business?

We didn't know it wasn't. We talk about it. I said, wasn't it funny, Marilyn, that we just did what we had to do? We thought it was fine and we just did it because we had to support our kids. It never occurred to us that we were being innovative, or that it was hard to do, or that everybody wasn't doing it. We never asked if anybody was doing it in Oklahoma or Phoenix. And it never occurred to us that it might be harder later. We were doing well and we thought everything we did next would be well, too. It took me thirty years before I realized, it's not always easy and you can't do everything well all the time.

But, I don't mean we were successful like Bill Gates [CEO of Microsoft], and I don't mean we were famous like [celebrity] Paris Hilton. But we did well and we supported our kids and we did it on our own, and we didn't know we couldn't. In other words, there's nothing we didn't even think about. We had to. So we just did. And it's different now, I think, even if you have to. I mean we got our business license in one day and stuff like that, and we painted it ourselves and we didn't have health codes coming in to see if the toilet flushed right.

So it was a very different way of going about setting up businesses.

Right. But anyhow, that went well. But I was afraid to continue it when she got married, so that we closed that, sold it for nothing, sold it for what we had into it. We didn't own the building, you understand, we rented the building. So, our stock and all that, we just broke even, divided it up, and off we went.

And so did you have money amassed that you could put into the business?

No, we started out with a few things, couple hundred here, couple hundred there. She was the in-store model for I. Magnin, so she walked around in clothes all day, and I worked at Plummer Park with the children's theatre. So we both had jobs, as well as the dress shop, and took turns.

And then as a side thing, I started and developed the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Senior Citizen Art Festival. I think it may still be going on. I'm not sure. But I started it as a project, a fundraiser for the senior citizen group. So that made the newspaper. So there are a bunch of various newspaper clippings including my name and so forth.

So when we were out of the shop, this lady contacted me, Mrs. McDougal, that said there was a store in Riverside, California that was interested in hiring me to upgrade their store from a little old lady store to a young, vibrant, kind of youthful [shop]. So they hired me, G.K. Christensen's in Riverside, and off I go, my daughter, my cat, and myself.

How old was your daughter at this time?

She was nine by then.

What's her name?

Lesli Jouskey.

The part I like the best about the John S. Park neighborhood of 2011 is that my daughter, Lesli, and I enjoy it more than we did 40 or so years ago. We used to take our bikes to Circle Park. Now we take Lesli's dog, Posset, to Circle Park. Of course, we can only go on the weekends, but I hope that'll change soon. Lesli came back to Las Vegas from Seattle after her husband, Rick, passed away a few years ago, and she lives here with me, her cat, Popcorn, and of course Posset. And it's a perfect neighborhood for walking the dog and saying hello to neighbors and watching the seasonal fireworks from the front yard. We can see them from the Stratosphere or from the country club. Lesli went to Crestwood Elementary, just down the hill, one neighborhood down, and John C. Fremont Junior High, one neighborhood over. And then she went to high school at Wasatch Academy in Utah. It's really wonderful for me having her back home with me here in my later years. We enjoy John S. Park neighborhood and our John S. Park home as much as we ever did together.

We go to Riverside (event), and I did some innovative things, changed the whole store around, threw everybody into a frenzy. People work harder when they're in a frenzy, especially when there's somebody new and young. I put on some fashion shows. I

used the staircase. I got the city to let us use the big auditorium of the city and I ran a thing called Wham-O-Rama, and I got all the high schools from all the local outside-of-Riverside areas to play their different groups, and I got the kids to model the clothes kind of go-go style, and it made *Women's Wear Daily* and stuff.

Oh, that sounds like it would've been a fantastic event.

Yeah, it was really good. I was the star for a while there. Well, but G.K. Christensen's was closing down the store and they called Mrs. McDougal and said, you know, we love Kerin. They gave me a car—they gave me a little blue Mustang—and they hooked me up with The Broadway Department Store in Las Vegas, Nevada.

So that's how you made it out to Las Vegas.

And off I come to Las Vegas. Just last week, I'm over at the market, the World Market [Center], at a seminar with Roger Thomas, the designer for Steve Wynn, and after the seminar is a cocktail party and Madeline [Capelle], the opera singer friend, and I are there, and in front of me in line for our wine spritzer is Ed [Edward] Doumani, that owned La Concha [Motel] and the El Morocco [Motel]. (You know they moved the La Concha down to the [Neon] Boneyard, the new Neon Museum.) And I said, Mr. Doumani, you wouldn't remember me, and I said, I've seen you a few times but too far across the room to say anything, but I'm the lady that came to the La Concha Hotel and never left. I was supposed to come for the weekend to do a seminar for The Broadway and I stayed. And he looked at me kind of [like], The Broadway, you stayed, da da da. I said, in 1966. Ohhh, says he. Well, his wife was obviously a wife that wasn't his wife at the time, because I said, it was way back then, and she said, oh, talk to him. It was like, she dismissed me posthaste. But nevertheless, I reminded him of [how] I came with my

daughter and my cat, to train the people. I was supposed to just come up and train people to train people.

So the store you were working for in Riverside was closing and they hooked you up with [The Broadway].

First, before they sent me here, I was three months down on Mission Road at The Broadway corporate offices to train me The Broadway way. But I mean I didn't have to fill that part in. But basically they got me all geared up to come up here and get their store opened.

So basically you weren't going to stay. You were just coming to do a temporary open, to do some training and seminars.

Yeah, living at a motel, with my daughter and my cat.

And how long were you supposed to be here for?

A couple of weeks. And then three months later, it was time to put my daughter in school. I had to do something. The summer was over. Maybe two months because it was August. August, September. By September, it's time to put the kids in school. So, then I had to take a cut but I stayed as training director then, for The Broadway, and it really needed that. We didn't have enough people here that had any experience in department store [work]. They didn't even know how to use the cash registers, how to count change properly, which people still don't. They'll say, here's your change, twelve dollars and sixteen cents. You don't do that. You say, that was nine dollars, ten dollars, fifteen dollars, twenty dollars. You count up from wherever you left off. Well, they don't do that now but I would correct them if I had the time.

Anyhow, but there was a lot to learn because everything was in the computer and nobody knew how to use computerized registers. We still had the tapes that everything was on that had to be reviewed. So I taught classes eight hours a day, five days a week [for training people] until I just couldn't stand it. So I transferred to the interior design department.

Now, just to fill in, meantime back in the shop in Santa Monica, I had become pretty proficient in draperies and things that I did. It wasn't what I was supposed to be doing but I did anyhow. So it was like fish to water for me to take over the [interior design department].

You'd already been doing it, unofficially.

Yeah. And I'd been doing it all my life in different ways. But I did then, at that time, sign up for different classes with different [organizations], interestingly, not at school, but King's Draperies, every night. Lesli can remember because I'd drag her there. Every night at 6:30 I went over to King's Draperies and for two hours, he taught me everything there is about fabric, draperies, how to make them, how to do swags, how to cut them, everything. I learned that. And then Mr. Christensen had an upholstery store and he taught me everything from what goes on the frame all the way up.

So I kind of learned all this stuff, that plus my own knowledge, and so I got pretty good in the design department and I kept that job for some time. I even wrote a couple of books called *Broadway Presents Zodecor*, like zodiac decorating. It was in keeping with the times.

Now I want to back up for just a minute, and I'm wondering what you were thinking when they said, go out to Las Vegas, because Las Vegas was still a small town but it had been around for a while at this point and the Strip was growing.

I didn't know that. I didn't know about girls or gambling.

Were you familiar with [Las Vegas]? I mean, did it have any kind of reputation?

Well, I can't say. During my time in Santa Monica, I spent a year in Reno [Nevada], almost a year, working with a self-help program that I was involved with. I wasn't getting any help; I was [working with the program]. And I took off a year and I worked with the program that later we started a program here, Focus. Have you ever heard of Focus [Youth] House? No.

Yes, actually I have.

OK, well, this was the beginning. It was the program that was the key focus of Focus House. But anyhow, I spent some time in Reno, so when they said Las Vegas, I pictured it was something [like Reno]. I knew there were casinos and people gambled. But, I didn't have a clear picture. I had no idea how hot it was. And I didn't stop and think about it. You see, I had a child to support, and it was a good job. And it was a job I knew I could do. So when you're alone and don't have any backup whatsoever, you have to take a job [that] you know there's no possibility you'd fail at. You can't take a chance doing something that maybe you wouldn't be good at, like you can later when you have [more resources]. I've done things I wasn't sure about, but I always had somebody behind me, just in case. But in this case I had to make sure, and I knew, there's no way I can fail, teaching people how to sell things in the fashion world and in design. You can't tell by looking at me, but I knew I could do the job. And I knew I could teach people,

because I'd been doing it all my life. It's part of my personality. So there was no question about that.

So I took the job, drove my little Mustang, with Mocha in the back seat and Lesli in the front seat. Mocha was the cat. We almost lost the cat in Barstow [California]. Stopped to let the cat out to go to the bathroom, and I think we had her on a leash or something. Something happened and she got away and there's that big, huge desert. Oh, Leslie to this day, I remember the tears, here, kitty, kitty, kitty, here, kitty, kitty, kitty. And here she finally comes back to the car. Just miraculous. Anyhow, that was a big scare.

What did you think of Las Vegas?

When I first pulled into town I said, where's the town? We came in [by] Las Vegas Boulevard. The freeway wasn't there yet, so it's the Las Vegas Boulevard that was there. You come past the Hacienda [Hotel and Casino] and stuff. But before the Hacienda, it [the sign] said, Welcome to Las Vegas. I said, where is it? Well, how could they possibly have a department store here? And even the way I got to where The Broadway was, The Broadway was being built on this end and then Sirius (sic) was on the other end, and it was empty in between.

Of the Downtown area? Or of the north and south of the Strip?

No, no. You don't know where The Broadway was, then?

Where was it?

Oh, Macy's is there now. The Boulevard Mall. Oh, there were no other stores anyplace. And at that time there wasn't much [out in that area]. So I came Las Vegas Boulevard to Tropicana [Road], and Tropicana to Paradise [Road], and I was still looking for where the

businesses and the houses [were]. There were some houses here and there, and the University [of Nevada, Las Vegas, UNLV] had two buildings on it. And I'm thinking, this store is going to fail. They have no idea what they're doing. It's not possible there's enough people here to support a department store.

Well, at any rate, we opened, I guess it must have been November because the elections are in November [1966], aren't they? But maybe it was the primary. Anyhow, we opened. I had already met [State Senate Secretary] Leola Armstrong and [State Assemblywoman] Flora Dungan when I was in Reno working on that project, because the project I was working on was lobbying. I was a lobbyist. So I knew these women. So I called Leola and Flora and told them, I'm in town, I'm taking a job at The Broadway. They said, oh great, there's a party tonight at Leola Armstrong's house for the election. And it was Grant Sawyer, but he lost. It was when he lost his election. [Note: Grant Sawyer served as Governor of Nevada from 1959-1966.] And, too, I guess, Paul Laxalt, I can't remember. But anyhow, everybody that I know now, my friends, were all there. I mean, practically. That was the beginning of my political life.

Now you guys arrived in what month?

August [1966]. But anyhow, opening night of The Broadway was election night, and I went to this party at Leola's house. There's about ten schools named after people that were there that night. Mabel Hoggard was there. Bernice Moulton. (Is there a school named after here? Maybe not.) Grant Sawyer. Of course Bryn Armstrong was then editor of the [*Las Vegas Sun*] newspaper [1963-1977], and Leola was secretary of the state Senate. And she stayed on even after Sawyer. She was there through [Mike] O'Callaghan [Governor of Nevada, 1971-1978]. Anyhow, she was there twenty-six years. Flora

Dungan, who became my best friend. [Community leader and legislator] Eileen Brookman and George [Brookman]. And they were all there.

So how did you end up in this particular area, the John S. Park area?

OK, so then, the house that I first bought was down on Houston [Avenue] in the Crestwood area. And it was a triplex. You know there's a few of them there on Houston. My backdoor neighbor was Harley Harmon, who was the street behind me. And the gal, oh, what's her name, that runs Richard Bryan's office, I forget her name now. Anyhow, that was on Houston, and I got the triplex.

And then, I got married to Paolo Scianna, and then we were together for some time. At any rate, we knew we wanted to buy a house. I was the bicycle lady at the time, which I'll tell you about bike paths some other time. Anyhow, we're out riding our bikes and we used to go down to what is now the state building where Cashman Field is, but it was a park then. We'd take our bikes. Flora had her bike. I used to make homemade bread with alfalfa, tuna fish, homemade bread. ([City Planner] Steve Evans still talks about those great sandwiches I used to make.) And we'd go down to the park on our bicycles. And one day [in 1974] I saw this lady [Mrs. Claire Barry], putting up a sign, "For Sale," out in the front yard here. And I said, that's the house I want.

Were bikes a common way to get around?

No. But a little later, yes. I became, then, after that, the bike lady and became involved with some people. Phyllis Foley was one of them and Tom Graham from the city was another one. And we developed Bike Plan 72, I believe it was called, which won a national award.

Tell me about that plan.

It was a bypass plan throughout the city, not just the one out to Red Rock. It was

throughout the city. And it could have been funded because it won a national award except it had to be matching funds from the city and the county. And this is Las Vegas. What more can I say? Don't want to insult anybody.

They didn't see the future at that point.

No.

Okay. Tell me about Phyllis Foley. Is this part of the Foley family?

Yes. And she was on that committee. Other than working on the bike paths with her, I didn't become close with the Foleys, although now I'm friendlier with them. But Flora and I always went to Huntridge Circle Park on our bikes as our first stop. In those days I used to like to bake bread. And I'd bake the homemade bread with the alfalfa sprouts and the avocado and the white cheddar cheese. And off we'd go on our bikes to Circle Park. She usually brought the -- we didn't know about bottled water and things like that. We just had water. We just had our little cups of water. We'd stop at Circle Park and then we'd go to our precinct, wherever we were going to go to campaign.

Now, at Circle Park is where you would have lunch or --

Yeah. We'd stop there and eat. Sometimes over at the one that's now the Grant Sawyer Building. That was a park, too. We'd stop there. It never bothered us that there was somebody in a sleeping bag under a tree.

So did you have a lot of homeless people even at that time?

There were some. There were some. But there were places for them to go then because where the Grant Sawyer building is now on Washington was a big park, not near any homes. It was industrial and then a cemetery and so forth. And there were restrooms people could use. And the homeless people at the time didn't have a violent reputation. I'm pretty sure they still don't. I think it's in people's mind's eye. I'm pretty sure the people that are doing home invasions and stealing your hubcaps aren't the homeless people. Well, and not only that, I also think that because we now don't give as much money to mental institutions...

Well, we couldn't really get it, but if we sold the triplex, we would have enough money for the down payment and we were going to work it out. And by then, my interior design [business] was doing very well. I had good clients. I was political, I was a designer, my income was good, and my husband worked for the power company [and] he had income. So, we put our earnest money down on the house. She [the owner] always thought we'd never get it, get the money together. She thought she was going to get to keep this money. She was one of those little ladies that thought she'd pulled a fast one. She told us later. She never expected that we'd come through.

Believe it or not, as I live and breathe, we were about to close on the triplex, which I didn't really want to do because it was [rental] income. The next day, we had to come up with the money. We were going to get their [the buyers'] money, and put it on this. Maybe it was two days, but right away. And I'm down at Binion's, and I win a keno ticket. [Laughing] For nine thousand dollars. And we needed ten [thousand dollars] for the down payment. So we come and we give Mrs. Barry her ten thousand dollars, and we got to keep the triplex. We didn't close on that. The other people found something else and nobody was hurt. Which was nice, because when I got divorced, he got to keep that [the triplex], I got to keep this [house], nobody had to sell anything, nobody had to move. God blessed me.

Mrs. Barry, on the other hand, wasn't as blessed. She forgot to tell [the] Social Security [Administration] that her blind husband had died in this house. And we'd get mail. Now she moved to a trailer park on Tropicana, 372 Tropicana. They used to be real cute, up there. They just recently tore them all down. But anyhow, so, she cheated. She continued to get his checks. They came here for a while, and I used to say, I didn't know

people got blind checks after the blind person was dead. You know. But, I didn't think too much about it. We carried it over to Mrs. Barry a couple of times, her mail. But we did figure out, she never told anybody, and we wondered why there was no death certificate. Nobody knew he was dead except some of the neighbors told me that they saw him dead in the house. She had a little wake here and some of the neighbors came. So, whatever it is, she didn't file all the papers that made the Social Security know.

So, shortly after that, Mrs. Barry married this ninety-six-year-old fellow in the trailer over there. (She was seventy-two-or-three.) And she had kids and he had kids. And her idea was he was old, he was going to die, then she'd get his money, and her dead husband's money that she wasn't supposed to get, and leave it to her kids. She told us that was her plan.

Well, at some point, Social Security caught up with her (it was in the newspaper), and filed charges or something to collect all that, and she had to pay all that money back, plus a fine, from years of collecting his checks every month. But she owned some businesses and this and that and the other thing. But, still she had the guy and some businesses, some rental property in L.A. and so forth, so she still thought life was going well for her, until one day somebody calls us and tells us, Mrs. Barry died. Well, she died first, so he got all of hers, and a few days later he died, and so his kids got it. Now had they both not been greedy, they could've made out a will and everybody got something. But because of her conniving, it all went to his kids. Now I'm sorry for her heirs because that's too bad, but that's what happens.

But anyhow, that's the story about the lady who sold us this house, Mrs. Claire Barry.

And they'd been living here prior to you guys.

Yeah.

And you bought it in what year?

Seventy-four [1974]. However, the builder of this house showed up a couple of years later, whose name was Paul Huffey. (Dorothy Huffey writes a column for the *Las Vegas Sun*. That's his daughter-in-law.) So Mr. Huffey shows up. He's about ninety-eight when he comes to my house one day, and he said before he died he wanted to see the house. He built this house with his hands. It's built on railroad ties, in the basement. He was a civil engineer and had worked in Iraq and places, Afghanistan, before they were popular, or unpopular, as the case may be. And he was a salty old cuss. But I loved the visit. We sat down and we had a long, wonderful visit, and he told me about the Immpys in the house next door, across the road.

Now Old Man Imppy owned a little motel [Imppy's Desert Villa] on the corner of Tropicana. Across the street was the Tropicana [Hotel and Casino]. And Sammy Davis Jr. and those different people, Count Basie, played at the Tropicana, but they couldn't stay at the Tropicana Hotel because they were black. Many of them went to the Moulin Rouge [Hotel and Casino] but many of them went to Imppy's. Imppy's was a motel. Swimming pool, motel, you know, long buildings. Old Man Imppy. But the black people could stay there.

And so anyhow, Mr. Imppy was also a character, evidently. So in the forties when Mr. Imppy started building his house, and Mr. Huffey had already built this [house], Huffey had put in the water line and the sewer line all by himself from Franklin [Avenue] on up, which you do. Even as we speak, if you're the first one in the

neighborhood that puts in the line, you pay it. You don't dig it yourself but you pay it. And other people can join in and they don't have to pay so much. That's the way it goes. So he had put it in, and he felt like it was his. And I have an old water meter still out back there, a dry-hole well and all that.

Anyhow, so now he sees that Mr. Immpy is digging out and going to tap into the water line and sewer line, and Mr. Huffey didn't like it. (This story was told to me by Mrs. Immpy when she apologized for never having spoken to me for twenty years, a few years ago. And after her husband died, she told me why she was never allowed to speak to me.) And, at any rate, Mr. Huffey got so furious that he picked up his shovel that he was working on the yard with and beat the heck out of Mr. Immpy for trying to cut into the water line and evidently it went to court and it was a big thing, and nobody spoke to each other for the rest of their whole life.

Or the people that lived in this house, apparently.

Or anybody. I was the Devil that moved in here because I was in the house that the Devil [had lived in]. This was the Devil's house and that was it. So I used to wave to her and she'd smile. And then I heard that Mr. Immpy died and I went over there with something, probably a loaf of bread (I've been baking bread all my life), something like that. (Oh, I have a funny bread story that's just last year, but anyhow.) She said, you know, I've never spoken to you and I really apologize but my husband would've been so upset. And I said, gee, why? Did I ever [do anything]? I thought maybe I hit his car accidentally. I don't know what I did. She said no, and then she told me the story about the shovel and the water. And she said, I just didn't want to upset my husband by talking to you. And, from then on, we had a few words once in a while outside, nothing much. And then either



Top: Kerin's John S. Park Home (1992).

Above: Lesli Jouskey, Kerin's daughter.



Rare snow storm dusts the house in the 1990s.



Top: A rare desert snow storm dusts Kerin's neighborhood.

Above: Kerin hosts her TV show, *The People Speak* (Channel 5). Guests were assemblyman Keith Ashworth and Richard Bryan. (1982)

she died or went to a [nursing] home, and then her kids moved in there, and then now other people own that house.

Describe the house.

Well, when I bought it, it had that wonderful rock roof. And a few of them still have it. I had to have the house reroofed and they refused to do it that way even though from what I understand it was quite an inventive idea that cooled the house in the summer and heated it in the winter. The white rocks were porous. They're a type of white lava rock. And some people say it was attributed to Frank Lloyd Wright. Who knows? But nevertheless, he did design some of these cottages in this area.

So it's a three-bedroom house. The living room is large. There's no real dining room. It's a dinette-sized dining room. But the living room is so large that I was able to actually divide it in two sections, two sitting sections. And when I have company -- I have a little travel club that I belong to. And I have visitors come from all over the world. And so I usually serve them breakfast right there in front of the fireplace, or in the summer, no fire. And then there's a couple of seating areas. And I just love this big spacious living room. And I like having a separate entry. Other than that, the hallway is a little wider. He built it by hand. And it's on railroad ties. Underneath my house are railroad ties I'm sure from Oakey where the railroad was going in. He was a civil engineer, Mr. Huffey, and had built bridges in Afghanistan and Iraq. He told me where. I might have the countries wrong. But he built the bridges and he built the house and he built a couple other houses here in John S. Park. All of the houses he built have basements and oil burners. You see the radiators?

Yes.

That's water, steam heat. I don't use the system anymore because it became a little costly and I don't run the heat that often. So I use the air conditioner, multipurpose. But whomever buys this house after I pass through probably would put a solar unit on the house and go back to using the water burner in the basement.

Ooh, that would be great.

Yeah. Wouldn't it? It's all set. In other words, they wouldn't have to do much except get the solar unit. The boiler is still down there.

Oh, wow. So there's a patio. Do I see a patio here?

Yeah.

Was that there?

Yeah, that was there. My yard is narrower if you were to look at the -- ooh, I even have pictures someplace. Mrs. Meyers -- now, Mrs. Meyers' house -- and I spoke about her in another interview. Her lot is much deeper because there was an easement there for a long time and the easement went to her side of the property. She's a grand lady. So my property is relatively narrow. There's still a cover for the well back there for when it was Mary Dutton Springs and so forth. Anyhow, I just love the house even though I haven't been able to do as much to it as I used to.

Describe what this neighborhood was like when you first got here.

Well, interestingly enough, the houses haven't changed a bit. Well, Tom's across the street has, but basically [the houses have not changed]. But the complexion has changed. This was a very Mormon-Catholic-Jewish neighborhood. We had the Mormon church, over on Eighth [Street], the [Seventh] Ward, stake, whatever. (I think it's called stake.) We had Bishop Gorman [High] School and [a Catholic] church, St. Anne's. And then we had the Jewish temple [Temple Beth Sholom] on Oakey [Boulevard] and Seventeenth [Street]. And it was a very white complexion. And it was never expensive but it was always somewhat refined. Nice neighborhood.

What did people do? What types of jobs did they [have]?

Well, a lot of people worked at the [Nevada] Test Site [NTS]. There were a lot of engineers and people that that worked out at the Test Site.

And this is 1974 when you guys came here, to this house.

Yeah. Yeah. People were still working at the Test Site still then. And a lot of government people. Two doors up was Mrs. Bowman, who was the City Clerk forever. She had the job where you go get your marriage license and so forth. And then, Betty, that I said would be a very good interview for you, but you'd have to have your whole day. She doesn't stop talking, but she's got interesting stuff. Then, John across the street. Tom lives in that house now. It's just a little, tiny purple house. And he was the head of the room service department at the [Las Vegas] Hilton [Hotel and Casino]. They had just opened. It was just brand-new, the Hilton. Catty-corner from me was Dr. Jones, the cancer doctor, a very big Mormon family, and his wife and kids, and they were always going off to missions and things, and we even went over a couple of times.

We'd love to talk with him, too.

I'm sure you would. Interestingly enough, since they're gone, I'm not ashamed to tell this story. They're not going to get mad at me. By '76 or '78 we were involved in the ERA [Equal Rights Amendment], and I had my ERA signs out, and I was with Harriet, going door to door. [Note: According to James W. Hulse in *The Silver State: Nevada's Heritage Reinterpreted* (University of Nevada Press, Reno, 2004, p. 301), the Nevada legislature debated and declined to ratify the ERA in 1973, 1975, and 1977. When the question was submitted to the people, they voted against the ERA by 2 to 1.] We were involved in all kinds of heavy [issues]. And we had the League of Women Voters and the Women's Caucus. And [women's rights activist] Maya Miller and [correspondent] Myram Borders and all my friends that I was talking about earlier, we were all part of this. Flora [Dungan] had died the year before [1973].

So I had a burglary during that time, and when I went over to tell them, you know, they broke in in the daytime and you should be careful, he [Dr. Jones] said, well, I don't think it would happen to us. You had that burglary because God's not on your side, because of that sign, and you brought the Devil into your house. I was flabbergasted. So, he and I never exchanged words after that, not that I was mean or anything, I still spoke to his wife and everything. But we had been over there and watched the movies of the missions and all kinds of stuff. I was just flabbergasted that he would think such a thing.

Anyhow, down the street further was Berkeley Bunker, who had been a United States Senator. Now Berkeley Bunker and Jack Schofield [former State Assemblyman and Senator] always came to the precinct meetings, against me. You know, I was the liberal and they weren't. We were all Democrats. Now we still had precinct meetings at people's homes then, so I guess by '76 or whenever, whatever it was, because Berkeley was still alive, and all of a sudden Berkeley is saying, I vote for Kerin to be the delegate to the [Democratic] convention. I always had the votes, I always went anyhow, but they [usually opposed me]. So in this one year, all of a sudden Berkeley is touting me. He said, yeah, he said, I know you're going to protect that Medicare. We have to have that Medicare. You got to be there and fight for our Medicare. And I thought to myself, oh yeah, now that you're going to need it. [Laughing] Sure didn't want it when you had to pay for it but now that you're going to need it. But that's all right. It doesn't matter. We were all that way in many ways. All of us at some time or other is against something until we need it and then we're for it. So it's OK.

So were there a lot of political activities in this neighborhood?

Activity going on all the time. Oh yeah. This was always political. Don't forget, the Greenspuns were down the street. They were political. Bob [Robert L.] Forbuss. When everybody else had ten people tops at their precinct meeting, I always had about thirty. Dr. Cameron. Mr. Adams, Brent and Bruce Adams' father. Oh, Chuck Minker. There's a basketball stadium [Chuck Minker Sports Complex] named after Chuck Minker. Nancy Harkess. Mrs. Harkess. The Von Tobels down the street. And those that weren't political were active in other ways. Mrs. Charlotte Richards (I call her Little White Charlotte), the chapel lady [owner of the Little White Wedding Chapel], you know, she became world-famous, she's down the street here. Those people who weren't active politically were active socially, like Myron and Shirley Leavitt. He was a judge. They weren't really political, but as a judge he still had to have a campaign. But she was the March of Dimes [representative] forever. She did March of Dimes.

Now, three doors up from me, one time I was doing March of Dimes for Shirley, and I go to this door. It's Ben Seidelman. (Now, Betty could tell you more about Ben.) I'd say, it's Kerin from down the street for March of Dimes. Oh yeah. And they'd write the check out, put it through the door, open about this much, say, here it is, here it is, and close the door. And I thought, you know, I've been here maybe ten years by then, or eight, and I've never seen any human being. Well, it turns out the Seidelmans were on the [Gaming Control Board] Black Book. He was a bagman, took money to Chicago for the people who are. (I won't use the M-word.) But he took money in little paper bags. Kind of guy.

And they live just down the street here?

Yeah, three doors [down], next to Mrs. Bowman, the City Clerk. [Laughing]

Well, Nancy Lamb, who was married to [State Senator] Floyd Lamb, she was down here on Griffith [Avenue]. She's got great stories, too.

Now, I didn't know the following people when I lived here, but over on Franklin and Ninth [Street] was Maisie Ronnow was Maisie Gibson of the Gibson family. She married Garland Ronnow, who also was from the neighborhood. The Ronnow family and Edward W. Clark started the power company that is still our power company in the early 20s. He had a generator. Leland, cousin Leland had a generator. That was Garland's family. She married him.

Jim Gibson became a senator, and he and his brothers and family owned PEPCON, the big company out in Henderson [Nevada] that blew up and so forth [in the 1980s]. And now, Jim Gibson, Jr. is Mayor of Henderson. Well, Maisie Gibson Ronnow is one of my dear, dear, wonderful friends. But she grew up as Maisie Gibson over on Ninth and Franklin, and she's older than I am, so she knows a lot of stories. She's driven me around and told me who lived in what house and so forth. And she married Ronnow (her husband's brother or cousin is the C.C. Ronnow School) and the Ronnows owned that Superior Tire, which was right next door to the Union Plaza [Hotel and Casino], where the [Greyhound] bus station is now. It was the tire store that everybody went to. But her father, the Gibson family, started Nevada Power Company. Or maybe that was her grandfather, but anyhow, they were the founders and owners, and Nevada Power Company has continued to be privately owned since. It's to this day a privately-owned company. It's not a public utility. It's not like the [Southern Nevada] Water District, which is publicly owned. [Note: Nevada Power is now a subsidiary of NV Energy, Inc., a publicly-traded company.] And PEPCON has since moved most of their operation. They

call themselves American Pacific. But they still do the plutonium and all that for the space [program]. [Note: PEPCON Systems is a division of American Pacific Corporation. AMPAC does have divisions that deal with the space program. However, PEPCON Systems manufactures other products. See <http://www.pepconsystems.com/>] She's the one that tells me everything about the space programs. Now unfortunately, the space people don't believe in global warming and certain things, so there are subjects that she and I don't discuss at all. However, she taught me everything you ever had to know about WD-40, one of the most remarkable products on the market. You have no idea how many things it will do. It was developed for the space program but I mean it will do everything from fix your broken lock to open your window. It's fabulous. And Maisie is just wonderful and I'll see her tomorrow. So she was in this neighborhood but I didn't know her then.

There were other people that moved in later, like Bob Stupak, and like Mrs. Hart. Have you met Mrs. Hart?

I haven't, no.

Well, she's in the neighborhood and she's done a lot of stuff. You know which house it is, that long, funny Hart house, on Sixth [Street] and Park Paseo. But before it was the Hart house, it was three houses, and one guy hooked two of them together, and his name was—he went to prison. Everybody thought he was friends with Elvis Presley, but he wasn't. He just knew him. He was the Candy Man, and what was his name? Well, he was a pedophile anyhow and I forget his name and it's just as well. I wouldn't want to put it on tape. But, the night he was headed for prison, he disappeared. Very obese guy. And we all decided he headed for India or something like that, got out of town. And his

attorney at the time was a dear, dear, wonderful friend, Harry [W.] Claiborne. I always thought Harry probably helped him out of town, thinking he'd be murdered in jail, and he probably would've been. But, he wasn't even the worst kind of pedophile, because he hired mothers with children. I mean he didn't kidnap people off the street. I don't mean there's a good kind. His name might come to me. But anyhow, he had that house.

And then, oh, then, later that same life, Sonny King, who was the opening act for Jimmy Durante for years, lived over on Sixth there, in that house that they've just remodeled sixteen times and it's adorable. [The house is] between here and Franklin. Real, real cute house. They keep changing it and you keep looking [and saying], oh, what are you doing to it now?

And then, you know, behind me is Mrs. [Ann] Meyers. She's lovely. I just love her. And she's got her own stories. She was, I think, for a long time the only woman 100 percent owner of a casino and hotel. She had the Queen of Hearts and the Nevada Club [Hotel], downtown. The male owners gave her a bad time. She had a rough time, but she hung on. Now later there was the gal [Jeanne Hood] that was the CEO at the Four Queens [Hotel and Casino], but I don't think she was the out-and-out owner. There had been some other owners. What's her name that's Thalia Dondero's good girlfriend, she's still alive. But at any rate, but I do believe that Ann Meyers, at least for Downtown, was the only woman owner that did it on her own with no backing from anybody else. Now they weren't the glamorous places, but poor people have to have places to go, too. I give her all kinds of credit. Now she's finally sold all of them, I guess. She's almost my age and she's off square-dancing around the world. She likes to folk-dance. She's a remarkable gal. She lives right behind me.

Next to her is an artist whom I've never met, but Steve tells me it's a famous artist but not for our art colony, for someplace else. Around the world but not here.

And Frank Schreck, the big-time attorney, he lived up the street. He and Colleen were very dear friends.

And of course, Gary Gray, and Chris lived across the street from me, but they're on Fifteenth [Street] now. I told Chris yesterday you were coming today, so you know her. And I work for Gary, too. It's not a big job but I do proofreading, and of course he would never admit that there's any need for proofreading, but I do it anyhow. I think he just lets me do it to be polite. Not editing, although I try. I like to edit, but he lets me know that that's not my job. But I just love Chris and Gary and I've known Gary forty years. He was one of the original group I'm talking about, way back then. Chris came later. So Gary's a part of my whole Las Vegas life here, and we're good friends still.

And another person that pops to mind that was part of that original group was Milan Brown III. His son just had a big fundraiser. His son is Chief Justice in the Municipal Court, Bert Brown. But Bert Brown's grandfather was Milan Brown Senior, who was in the Nevada State Senate for the longest of any senator ever, I think twenty-seven years, and the next longest would've been Floyd Lamb, which was twenty-six years, and the next longest I think would be, who's there now, what's his name? He pulls all the strings. Everybody uses his name all the time. Anyhow. Doesn't matter. His name doesn't come to mind because he's a Republican.

Anyhow, then, during all this time when I was doing all those things, part of Leola and Eileen and Flora and I and how we met Steve Evans, we're all involved with a project that was a spin-off from the project I was working on in the Nevada Legislature in



Gov. Grant Sawyer, Virginia Catt, Kerin Rodgers, Gov. Mike O'Callaghan, and Didi Carson (National Committee Woman).



Above: Kerin with Gov. Mike O'Callaghan and Renee Diamond.



Left: Gov. O'Callaghan aides – Jan Smith, Harriett Trudell, and Kerin.



Above: Mayor Ron Lurie and Patty Jackson at the 1975 Cyclathon.

Below: Kerin attends 1975 inaugural of President Jimmy Carter.



'60, which was called Focus Youth House. Steve was one of our youth counselors. Flora was the one that brought it to Nevada...

So where was this located?

The Murray Petersen Focus house was on 2020 Goldring, behind UMC hospital. There's a doctors' building there now. And because of the efforts of Lloyd and Edythe Katz and Myrna Williams and myself and others, the Petersens donated the property and the house in their family's name to Focus to have our youth programs there. It was successful. We had runaway kids. We had kids in trouble. We had what was called -- that's when Jean Ford got involved -- disposable kids with no alternatives. Jean and I did a humanities grant program called Disposable Kids with No Alternatives. We co-chaired that and did a booklet on it. At that time there was financial strife of a different kind than we're having today and people would move away and just leave their young kids. If they were 14 and 15, they were old enough to take care of themselves. Well, of course, they weren't. And they'd end up in some kind of trouble and we'd get them at Focus.

So about what year or what period of time is this at Focus?

Well, from '68 through 70s. It wasn't started when I first got here.

So the late 60s, early 70s.

Yeah. And then I don't think we closed until the 80s. I didn't stay with the program after a certain time. It became more of an institutional program and it was not institutional in the early stages. But in any event, it was needed and meaningful.

Did you get involved at all with the welfare rights movement?

Well, sure. Harriet Trudell entered my life in 1969 or '70, then. Of course, she was hooked up -- I don't know the dates really -- but with Ruby Duncan and the program.

Exactly.

Of course, I marched. I was over The Cove many times. I didn't do anything like Harriet and some of those wonderful, wonderful -- it brings tears to my eyes, really. And Ruby, there she is on my wall. You know, Ruby Duncan and Mahlon Brown Junior and I were

the only commissioners appointed by President Jimmy Carter to the state of Nevada, not for the same commission. Ruby was on welfare mission.

... And all of the people I've mentioned to you in any other terms, Grant Sawyer, everybody, at some time was on the board. Myrna Williams [Nevada Assemblywoman, Clark County Commissioner] was one of us. Myrna, Flora, Kerin, Steve Evans, other big shots that you don't know them anymore. Oh, well, but you know Jack Lehman, who he is. [State District Court Judge] I worked the program. Some of them supported it and went to fundraisers and were supportive but weren't hanging around, but I went over with kids. People that are now in their fifties come up to me [and say], I can remember when you had us all in gowns and we made bread. It was kind of an innovative program. Too bad they don't have programs for the kids like that now. I understand Bob Bellis was involved in some youth activity program, but done today's style, which is different than we did.

So Steve and I have known each other since he was a kid and I was a lady, and now he's not a kid anymore and I'm still just a young lady. And his father, of course, I knew separately from Steve, from the political arena, because Blackie Evans was not only the head of the AFL-CIO [American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations], he was also the chairman of SSI for the governor. SSI has now been replaced by workers' comp [workmen's compensation] and it's private but it used to be run by the state. Workers' comp

was a state project. Now it's a horrible thing, the way they do it now, but anyhow, we lost it. When we lost [Mike] O'Callaghan, we lost a lot of good things.

But, anyhow, so now I support the sons and daughters of some of the people I was friends with, Ralph Denton's [civil rights lawyer and Clark County Commissioner] son [District Court Judge] Mark Denton and Milan's son Bert Brown, and I could mention others. Eileen Brookman and George, their daughter Debbie has some emotional problems of her own but I still talk to her once a week or so. And some of my friends are still alive. Harriet Trudell, I'm friendly with her daughter Cindy, too.

I think that's a wonderful tradition, though, to bake bread or something and bring it to the neighbors. I mean, is that something that's pretty common?

Well, I think so, in a small neighborhood. Not necessarily in small communities, but small neighborhoods. In Belmont, Massachusetts, neighbors were always bringing little things like that. And they were all professional. I lived in a professional neighborhood. It was not a suburb. It was part of the city of Boston. I mean it was a [small] town [near Boston]. I like a sense of community and I think most of my neighbors would say I'm a good neighbor. I don't do any neighborhood things [now] because we have some newer kinds of neighbors that don't really like a neighbor like me. They turned me in because I had two garage sales in a six-month period of time or something. I went to a neighborhood meeting and one of the neighbors said something about my yard was a mess and I thought, well, yeah, it is. It used to be pretty. I can't do it myself anymore. My daughter's husband died and now she's here to help me. But I'm not as interested in

knowing them [the neighbors] as I was back when I knew them. Some of the new kind of neighbors, I'm not interested in having them know me that well.

When did this [start to happen]? Because it sounds like, you know, in the mid-seventies when you got here [things were different].

Everything was fine until like 2000.

OK, because it seems like people used to know their neighbors, used to be friendly.

Now the ones that I still know [are OK], but the new ones coming in are of a different generation of people.

So it's changed. How are they different than the previous folks that have lived here?

Well, they really want things only their way. Like this whole neighborhood association and you can only have your trash can out on [a certain day]. A little too much mind-your-business. I mean, I call 911 for many people for fires or break-ins or something. That's a different story. I'll never call 911 from my own phone again. It goes against you. That's a whole different story. Shouldn't be published, but when you're through, I'll tell you.

Yeah, I'm curious about that.

Yeah. If you call 911 for your neighborhood, several times, and then some friend wants to come and visit and their husband says, well, call the police department and see what kind of a house she lives in, the police will say, well, I don't know, she had nine phone calls to the police department last year. And you say, well, yeah, one, there was an accident on Oakey, and then somebody was crawling out of his window, and her trees were on fire. You know, you think you're doing a service and all of a sudden, somebody's not going to visit you because the police department says [you had so many

calls]. They don't say they were all mercy calls; they just said you had nine calls. So I'm careful now about what I report.

Now, meanwhile, election night, we all met over there at Dino's. I went and I was friendly to my neighbors. And then, the night of the first debate, one of the new kind of neighbors down on Park Paseo, on Eighth, had a little party and I went. But I'm not getting as chummy. I'm not going to neighborhood meetings and I'm sure not going to go to the police meetings anymore. I went to one of the Tuesday night police meetings, and I stood up and I tried to talk about the 911 calls and they cut me off, and I told them about, I called one night because some people were graffiti-ing the wall between Mrs. Meyers' [house] and mine, and they were throwing bottles onto my side yard there, and I called 911 and I got bawled out real big [and they asked me], well, are you in imminent danger, and I said, well, I don't know, probably not. Well, how dare I call 911? (It was before 311.) And I said, well, they're out there and I don't know if they're dangerous or not. They must be gang members. They're doing graffiti and stuff. They put a man on the phone [who said], well, they're just probably kids having fun, and I said, well, maybe so, and he said, why don't you just go out and shoo them off? I said, it's 1:30 in the morning, I'm an old lady, I'm a seventy-year-old lady, you want me to go out and shoo off people that have things in their hands that could be cell phones but they could be guns? And he said, well, I don't think so. Well, it happens. What do you mean you don't think so? I read it in the paper every day about some neighborhood, somebody getting shot. Well anyhow, they threatened to charge me fifty dollars if I called 911 again for something so silly as graffiti. I don't think graffiti is silly at 1:30 in the morning. And then, in the morning I would find condoms on the sidewalk and beer bottles. That's not silly. That's

the first step to danger. And you don't know whether they're going to beat up somebody or something when they're a little bit, you know, out of hand, kids. Now maybe they were just teenagers but even just teenagers do some things.

So I don't go to those kind of meetings where I just aggravate myself and don't do any good for anybody.

So tell me about the police meetings. Are those something that happen on a regular basis?

They're part of the neighborhood. First Tuesday.

And where do they take place?

Everyplace. All over town. You call the police department and ask them about the First Tuesdays. Ours is usually over at John C. Fremont [Middle School]. It used to be down on Saint Louis [Avenue] when there was a police station there but now that's something else.

And are those meetings generally well attended?

Yeah. Everybody goes. Well, a hundred people. That's good. Betty goes all the time. And people talk about things going on in the neighborhood and who's doing what. But I'm not complaining about anybody and let them just not complain about me. I have my complaints. There's one kid that lives down the street here someplace that drives his car so fast up and down the street late at night, and probably goes down your street, too.

Yeah, I mean I think some of these big wide streets without the speed bumps are the ones that everybody goes down.

But I don't care. Just funny things, you know. When that little girl Carla Rodriguez went missing, you don't remember but it's been five or six years now. And I had seen her

every day with her mother. And now they're talking about the mother shouldn't have let her walk to school alone. She didn't. She always walked her across Oakey, and then let her walk the rest of the way alone. Sooner or later, you have to let your kids go. And I had a really strong feeling about people that lived in the house that Mrs. Bowman used to live in, three doors down. I know that she [Carla] used to go in their back yard and sit on swings. And I just had such a sick feeling about their house. And I think I called somebody, a cop on the beat, I tried to say, did anybody look in the back yards and basements of the houses on my block? And he said, oh, those people sold her. Those Mexicans, they're always selling their kids. This was a policeman. Have you ever heard anything outrageous like that from a policeman? I said, first of all, of all families that love their children, it seems like the Mexican people are very family-oriented. Extremely. And I was just appalled. So I just decided that I didn't really know anything, except I did know this little girl was very cared for by her mother. I saw them. See, I have a little wall, kind of, and the kids always like to walk on it. It's only a foot off the ground but for some reason [they like to walk on it]. So, I would always get to know the kids coming to school. I didn't know their names, but I saw this lady with that girl and some other kids, all the time, walking from Oakey down about as far as here and then I think she'd let them go over to John S. Park [Elementary School] from there on, at a certain point. But anyhow.

Did your daughter go to John S. Park?

No, she went to John C. Fremont. She went to Crestwood [Elementary School]. And then she went to private school in Utah. But she went to Valley [High School] for a short time. She doesn't claim that, though.

How was it to raise a child here?

Well, my opinion and hers don't match at all. I thought it was fine and I thought I was doing fine. She doesn't think so. She wishes she had grown up in Seattle where I had been living. She doesn't have good feelings about her young days in Las Vegas at all. But I was busy working and I thought everything was fine. I have to tell you, that's where my shallow side comes in, as I told you about Marilyn and I. We didn't know what we didn't know because we were too busy doing what we were doing, which is a way of putting your head in the sand, too. Because you're so busy doing things, [you think], oh, she's OK and now we're going to do this and now we're going to do that and you never stop [to ask], how do you feel about this? Do you really like this? It was, OK, do better in school. I wasn't paying as much attention as they do now. And everybody wasn't a soccer mom. We were all working. There was no soccer moms. If you belonged to the PTA [Parent Teacher Association] or the Girl Scouts or whatever, which I didn't do either one of those things, but even if you did, it wasn't a full-time involvement, except for Thalia Dondero, it was for her. She was full-time Girl Scouts, PTA, all of that. That's all she did up until the time that her kids were grown up enough that she ran for the Assembly [and then the County Commission]. But mostly, you know, I know now I didn't spend the time with my daughter in her young years that people do now, and I wish I had, but that's that. But she's with me now, and she likes to talk about it and I don't because I don't want to feel guilty for what we didn't do. But it was a different time. When we were at the La Concha, she was home with the cat, reading and drawing, with the maids bringing her Coca Colas and French fries, while I was at work.

How long were you guys at the La Concha?

A long time. Till she was in school. Anyhow, more than weeks. I was always going to be going back to Riverside.

But none the worse for wear. We didn't have seatbelts. There were things we didn't do and nothing really went wrong.

Well, sure, I always think, boy, just in twenty years, what a difference, you know, how different things are.

Well, yeah, I mean I see that silly little actress-singer with her baby on her lap, driving, and it was wrong and everything else, but we always did that. We didn't think it was wrong. The only difference is, she knows better and we didn't.

Well, and you hear people now telling stories of how they were little kids and you had the big family station wagons and you didn't have seatbelts.

Everybody piled in and we were in the rumble seat, standing up, waving at people driving down Fremont Street.

No, it's a different time now. It's a very different time now.

But I will say Lesli does remember, with her girlfriends, going down Fremont Street.

That was the big thing to do on Friday and Saturday night. I mean she has fonder memories than she thinks she has, because when we remind her of something she'll say, oh, we went out to the lake that time and we all did this and now we were out at the lake, and then yet, when she wraps it up, it doesn't compare with her happy days in Seattle, with her husband. But I think part of that is because her husband has died and they were happy together, and the remorse from losing her husband still is [there]. It's only been a year and a half. I think maybe later on, she'll think more kindly of her young days in Las Vegas. I hope so.

Did you do Helldorado?

Well, we went to it. We're not cowboys at all. But we went. Saint Patrick's Day parade, we always went. Not involved, but went.

Those were big events, at the time.

Yeah. We had good events. Never went to games and stuff like that. Never were [UNLV] Rebel [fans]. I'm an arts person. And she had by then friends and boyfriends.

Did you guys ever do much on the Strip, go to any of the shows on the Strip?

Well, although some. I mean in the end we've both seen a lot. She's never seen Siegfried and Roy. Some. Some. We missed the Scintas.

I guess I'm just wondering how much you did with the Strip.

Back in those days, never. Never. I was putting on shows. I produced some shows. I had a nightclub for a short time and before that, when I first got to town—oh, one of the groups I had at Wham-O-Rama, when I did the big band thing in Riverside, was the West Coast Pop Art Experimental Band, and I brought them here and booked them—I was at The Broadway but I did this thing—in a club that was called, I think it was called Pussycats or something. It was out there on the Strip. It was a nightclub, one of the early nightclubs not in a hotel kind of thing. So I did some of that. I continued to do some entertainment things and then later, when I had the club, we produced shows and stuff in the club. And then some of those performers would be in a show in one of the hotels or something. Michael Darrin Dancers did shows with me in places like that.

But the big shows, I've probably seen more than she, but not as much. I've seen way more at Artemus [W.] Ham [Concert] Hall than I've ever seen on the Strip. I saw every concert, everything that Charles Vanda ever brought [the Charles Vanda Master



Senator Edward Kennedy
and Kerin in 1980.

AK
An Evening With
Senator Kennedy and Family

Wednesday, May 14, 1980
6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.
840 Rancho Circle Las Vegas Nevada
Admit One



Senator Harry Reid give Kerin a hug in 1997.

Below, Kerin meets President Bill Clinton in 2000.





Mrs. Kerin Rodgers
1500 S. Seventh Street
LAS VEGAS, N.V. 89104

17th May, 1993

Dear Mrs. Rodgers,

Queen Anne and I would to express our warmest appreciation for everything you did to make our recent visit to Las Vegas so memorable and enjoyable. Without you and the Host Committee the stay would not have been possible and we are grateful for all your kindness.

We know that your advice and collaboration behind the scenes contributed in a big way to the success of our stay and we were particularly impressed by your organization of the Gala Dinner which ran very smoothly.

Once again, Queen Anne and I thank you for your kindness and interest in Romania and our activities.

With best regards.

Yours sincerely,

Michele Anne

Their Majesties The King and Queen of Romania

Romanian Queen Anne and King Michele visit in 1993. Photo above is of Kerin, far left, and the queen.

Series], every orchestra. Now, we'd do some of that stuff, like Frank Sinatra did a big fundraiser at the Aladdin [Hotel and Casino] Performing Arts Center, with [his daughter] Nancy [Sinatra]. And Bill Hernstadt got us tickets and we all went. And I can remember Leslie saying, Nancy Sinatra should change her name. And I said, what, Leslie, what do you mean by that? She says, well, she shouldn't sing and claim to be a Sinatra and embarrass her father like that. She says she doesn't remember that, but it did happen. I remember it. Did you know that Nancy Sinatra was the one that sang "For Your Eyes Only" in the James Bond movie? When I saw that, I thought the only thing she ever did was "Your Boots Were Made for Walking." [Note: The title song "For Your Eyes Only," in the film by the same name, was performed by Sheena Easton.]

So, you mentioned a little while ago that you've been involved with some of the arts stuff that has gone on in Las Vegas.

Well, not the ones going on now. I would be considered in the arts more than in the sports or social or anything. I was on the board of the [John F.] Kennedy Center [for the] Performing Arts [in] Washington [D.C.] for a time, appointed [in 1979] by President Jimmy Carter. [Kerin was appointed a commissioner on the White House commission on the performing arts at the Kennedy Center.] And I was the one from Nevada—there were other people from other states—that promoted and got through programs like the [funds for the] Handicap Theatre coming to Nevada. I was responsible for funds coming from the Kennedy Center to Nevada for different projects, the Black Box Theatre, the Handicap Theatre, [Las Vegas] Children's Theatre, Brian Strom over there at Reed Whipple [Cultural Center]. He's still there. I often wonder if he knew I was the one that got some of his funding but it doesn't matter. And so forth. And I had the TV show all

those years, and so I interviewed many of the people. Although I did society things and that kind of thing, I also promoted the arts. I think I was the first show [where] Vasili Sulich promoted the Nevada Ballet Theatre. I was the first show that Charles Vanda talked about the new Vanda [Master Series]. It still continues. He's dead but we still have the Charles Vanda series of concerts and so forth at Artemus Ham Hall and what have you.

How did you get that involved in the arts to be appointed to that?

Well, my whole history was in the arts. I keep leaving that part out. I mentioned Wham-O-Rama that I did in Riverside. And I mentioned in another interview how I ran the children's theater and sometimes pinch hit for Kennedy at plumber park in California. I worked for the parks department in California. I majored in theater arts.

You know, Las Vegas has long had this reputation of not really being a town for the arts or supportive of the arts, but it sounds, from what you're saying, that there has always been some support.

Well, there's some support, but not good enough. Not enough money, even at the university. And in the end, they let Vasili Sulich just go. The best thing that ever happened to the university arts was the Nevada Ballet Theatre, and they let him go with kind of a kiss and goodbye. And Nancy Houssels stayed involved, but it's not really the thing it used to be. We all got dressed up and went to the ballet.

There's never been enough money for the arts, as compared to, let's say, Boston, where you can raise funds for the arts, and even Seattle. One of the finest, what's his name, Schultz [Gerard Schwarz], one of the finest orchestra leaders in the country is with the Seattle [Symphony] Orchestra. And I was used to that. As I say, in Boston it's all part of one thing. And then with my sister at the Boston Conservatory and everything, I grew up with the arts, from painting to music, ballet, Gilbert and Sullivan. It was all part of my life all my life. And yeah, I'm not really a performer of any kind myself. My friends are. And I've always had a couple of opera singers as friends: Peter Buegel. Madeline Capelle. In Seattle, my girlfriend Rita McSherry. I just talked to her last week. Opera singer. Peter Bugel was wonderful, wonderful. He now lives in Nashville [Tennessee] but wonderful to this city, and the Peter Bugel Singers and productions he put on, a little Mozart production he did out at West Charleston. It's a library now.

So what do you think about the development of the First Friday and the development of the galleries and the [Arts] District?

That's lovely. I have mixed feelings about what they want and see as good for the neighborhood. Like Steve [Evans] thinks it would be the worst thing in the world. He's very involved with First Friday and the Arts District and Cindy Funkhouser [owner of the Funk House] and so forth. I'm not involved with any of them. I think it's nice. I've been to some of it, you know, but I'm not involved as a part of anything. I was not against tearing down all that stuff and building a sports center, that they wanted to do. I'm not against that. They thought it would hurt the Arts District. I don't think it would at all. But maybe I don't know. I'm not on the Planning Committee like they are to know. But I think, anything that got rid of all that old tattoo parlors and furniture for much, much less

and stuff, I think, if those people could get bought out, and they'd be happy, that having a nice couple of buildings and an arena and all that kind of thing would be nice.

Do you think it would bring people to the Downtown area and enhance the District?

Well, yes, it would. Yes. I mean look at what the World Market building has done. It's just wonderful and as a designer I'm there quite a bit. I was there last week to see Roger Thomas. And even though I'm retired and I don't do much design, I still do a little bit of stuff here and there, and I still go to stuff and keep myself up to date. I don't walk well enough anymore to do all the buildings, but I'm over there. I think it's been a wonderful thing. However, that brain building [the Lou Ruvo Brain Institute], I won't say a thing. You drive down Bonneville to Government Center and look at the building that says Larry Ruvo Brain Center. [Larry Ruvo is the son of Lou Ruvo, who died of Alzheimer's disease in 1994. The institute, built by Larry Ruvo, is named for his father.]

I don't think I've seen it. I haven't been down there in a little while.

Oh, you would know if you'd seen it. You'd know. And then say, ohhh. It's the Alzheimer's center, it's going to be. [Frank] Gehry, famous architect and everything. Mm mm mm. Maybe I'm from the wrong generation, or wrong planet.

At any rate, is that enough for today?

Yeah, yeah, we've been talking for a couple of hours now, so I definitely appreciate it. I guess I just want to wrap up with one question, and I would like to, at some point, talk with you again.

I didn't tell you anything about my nightclub, so I'll do that some other time.

I know. You have such a rich history here and I would love to touch base with you about some other folks that you think would be good to talk to. I'm getting together a roundtable.

We talked a little bit about this but I guess I wanted to recap, is, since you've been here, what are some of the most significant changes, if any, to this neighborhood, to the area, that you've seen or witnessed?

Well, with the advent of homelessness that happened during the Ronald Reagan years [1981-1989]. There was not much homelessness. There were people that we called vagrants, but they had a place to go and a place to live. Maybe they lived in the twenty-dollar hotel, which would now be the hundred-dollar-a-week hotel or something like that. It's both become sorrowful and also a little bit [dangerous]. I mean I never would've worried walking up to White Cross Drug at twelve o'clock because I ran out of cigarettes. I wouldn't do that now. Of course I couldn't walk there now but what I mean is I wouldn't suggest it to anybody now, because desperate people sometimes do desperate things. I'm not saying terrible things, but grab a purse or this kind of thing. Homeless people are desperate. There's no such thing as somebody that wants to be homeless. There might be somebody that doesn't do enough to help themselves not to be, but nobody wants to be. I was very shocked and upset when the homeless people lived kind of on the railroad tracks behind those buildings, that the owners didn't really care, and they were out of everybody's way and they kind of had their own little homeless village with the boxes and this and that, and it was pathetic, but at least it was a place they could park their shopping basket and light their Bunsen burner. And then we cleaned that all up and fenced it off. Our mayor did that. I like our mayor [Oscar Goodman], he does a lot of

nice things, but he doesn't know the first thing about homelessness. Nothing. And I think he thinks that they could help themselves. I'm here to tell you, you can't. You can't. I've been through it with people that I know, and especially if you ever committed a crime and you're also homeless, you can't even get a job, even if you could get a job, because they're not going to hire you, et cetera. And especially when there's ten people for every job, they're not going to take the one that's got a record, and has no place to live, and didn't smell good, even though they would've smelled good if they had a place to live, and so forth. That's been a big change. It's pathetic.

And it's impacted this area?

Yeah. Well, especially, you know, if this area includes Las Vegas Boulevard to Downtown.

Yeah, by this area I mean Charleston to Saint Louis to Vegas to Maryland

[Parkway].

It sure does. And the ethnic mix is much more ethnic mix, but I like that just fine. Way more Latinos. I like that just fine. I don't like anybody of any mix that has six cars in their driveway and two on cement things and they're working on them and you know they're using their driveway to do repairs. Even though I sympathize with the need to work, I just don't think you can do it outside if you don't have a garage. I don't care if people work at home, but you got to at least have a garage or something because it's not right to have cars on your grass and mattresses in the side yard and this and stuff. It drags down the neighborhood.

But no worse than closing a park, which also destroys the neighborhood. And a handwritten sign that says "Park Closed." It's not even a nice sign. It's a graffiti sign, "Park Closed."

You're talking about Circle Park?

Yeah, my Circle Park. Kerin Rodgers' Park. [Laughing] Yeah, that's outrageous. That hurts the neighborhood. And that's done by the city. So, the city hurt the neighborhood as much as some of these people that are breaking ordinances or what have you. And it's all because they don't want some homeless person sleeping there. Who cares, is my opinion. Say, if you're going to sleep here, you can't go to sleep before ten o'clock at night and you have to be out of here by five in the morning. That would be what I would say. And if so much as spit on the ground, if you can't use the restroom or if you use the tree instead, then we're going to arrest you. But no, they closed the park, so nobody can ever go there, including me, and you.

And is that a park that was well used by the neighborhood for a long time?

Well, yes, for years, ever since I've been here, that's where we used to take my homemade bread and tuna fish and alfalfa sprout sandwiches. Flora and I would sit under the tree over there and figure out how we're going to get the ERA or how are we going to get the law school. She had another plan. She wanted all University of Nevada students to have to take Bill Fiero's riverboat trip down the Colorado River so that they would know where they were. She took it a couple of times. When she was on the Board of Regents, she said, if they graduate from this university, if you ask them anything about where they went to school, they don't know anything about the terrain, you know, anything. And she thought that should be a requirement for graduation. And obviously if somebody was

handicapped or this or that they [would be accommodated]. But, yeah, it's a short history, and get credits, you know.

Anyhow, we used to go to that park all the time. My daughter and her friends used to go to that park to meet their boyfriends and girlfriends and it was kind of a pickup park for the high school kids. Not bad pickup, you know, just, you meet people. Hanging out. Kids meet kids. You're supposed to. People didn't like it then either but that's what kids are supposed to do. They're supposed to meet each other, they grow up, they get married, then they have kids and they meet each other. [Laughing]

Do you know, are there plans of what they're going to do with it? Are they going to reopen it?

I have no idea. I think half of the people would like to see them asphalt it over. See, I was on that park committee. Actually, I inspired Ben Contine. Ben Contine was living here at my house, and I used to talk to him about it all the time, Betty and I. Betty and I know we're the ones that got the thing going, but Ben did the meetings and all that, and he gets all the credit. We were just kind of [pushing it along], you know, boy, I wish somebody would do something about that park. Because neither one of us were up to actually doing it. So, I went to all the meetings and all that. We had a couple of fights. One of the guys in the neighborhood really was even concerned about the homeless people even back then, and I remember saying at a meeting and having everybody just glare at me, are they less citizens than we are? Are they? I have no idea. Is somebody more of a citizen or less of a citizen? I'm asking you, actually. What do you think?

You're asking me? No. I think everybody is all citizens.

Yeah, aren't they? So the fact that I paid more taxes than they did, does that mean I get more rights at the park than they do?

I mean, we'd live in a really skewed society if we based everything on that.

So I don't understand how we can even [do this]. We can regulate people's behavior in the park. I don't know how you can regulate who gets to go to the park.

Well, I think the bottom line is that closing the park doesn't particularly solve the problem.

It didn't solve the problem. Of course it didn't. Now, here's another funny one. Did you know that [the] Fremont Street [Experience] was a city park? Gets park money. But you can't take your dog down there and play Frisbee.

Actually I didn't know that was getting city park money, or considered to be a city park.

Yeah. And county park money, too. So it gets supported as a park, but you can't go there and play Frisbee, or you can't take your guitar out and start playing just for the fun of it.

But you could [at Circle Park]. I went to a couple of little concerts over at Circle Park.

My friend Donna that lived in the house that the big lady that got the bread bought [laughing], her boyfriend set up the band one day. He had a band and he wanted to practice and they paid to get to use the electricity, to plug it in. There's a little platform over there. We all sat in the grass and listened to some band music.

Yeah, I went to several things in the park.

Yeah, and then there was the thing that the artists did. Yeah, I went to all of them. I didn't miss any park things after we reopened it.

Well, it was just such a good community gathering.

And I got to see people. I got to introduce this one to that, you know. Well, anyhow, that's the worst thing that's happened to our neighborhood, is closing that park. Forget about the fact that there are some mean-spirited people around.

So you moved into John S. Park in 1974. Am I right?

Yes.

And today is, wow, 2011. Compare the neighborhood in 1974 with today.

Well, that's interesting because they're all of a sudden almost the same again. It's run almost full circle.

Tell me about the whole evolution.

It was a lovely, lovely neighborhood. I've mentioned the names of many of the people who lived in it. But other people -- Carol Hassel down the street, lovely lady. Charlotte Richards, Little White Chapel down the street. Behind me was Jerry Mack and his wife. Jerry Mack, Thomas and Mack, Valley Bank. The Greenspuns were over here and the Gaughans were over there and the Von Tobels were across the street here. So I loved it. I found the neighborhood on my bike and I wanted this house. I told the story earlier about finding the house.

I didn't notice it at first, but it did start to go downhill. Tenth and Ninth between Charleston and -- actually, my own actual corner hasn't changed.

You're in the core almost.

Yeah. So nothing changed. But Oakey changed and Charleston's changed. And Franklin, the other side of Franklin had changed.

But about right after we did Circle Park, and redid it before they closed it, but after we did it -- and, again, laurels to Chris Giunchigliani and Myrna Williams and others. I was on the committee. A fellow named Ben Contine ran the committee. We did a heck of a good job and got the funding. Just about when the park started being lovely, people started buying in. The people that watch House and Garden, Channel 55, they started doing their house that style. Instead of keeping them kind of -- I've been in many of them -- keeping

them kind of original like I sort of have, they're doing them with bright turquoise walls and more chrome and more -- not dated looking and started redoing their homes.

And as much as I don't like desert landscaping, many of them have done a beautiful job with it. I love turf. But I'm not in a position to talk because even my turf is dead because the water bill has gotten too high. So I water it a little bit. But everybody had turf then and it was a very green neighborhood. It's always had good mature trees. I had the most beautiful tree in the neighborhood and then I had some people prune it two years ago and now it's a stick. But it was a sycamore tree that covered almost all of my house. It was beautiful. Anyhow, my sycamore tree is gone and I guess I'll have to cut it down.

But back to the neighborhood, the people across the street, he was the catering manager at the Hilton. He had a little purple house. Tom, who is a school vice principal, has rebuilt that house across the street and added all the -- oh, it's magnificent. It's just beautiful.

Kitty-corner across the street did their yard in desert landscaping, but beautiful. And Tom has a cactus garden, lovely. Mrs. Meyers, then, bought the Mack house.

So my actual corner of the neighborhood hasn't changed much. But the whole neighborhood, it first went down and people were worried about the Mexican mix. And I always said, you know, the more the mix, the better a neighborhood usually. You don't want all one kind of person in a neighborhood. Now we have the Latino. There's no bad feelings with anybody that I know of. We have the Latinos. We have a gay community. We have an arts community. We have the old people that are still here. We have the young yuppies that want to live near downtown because they're lawyers or work in the legal field or something.

Kerin's television show:

It was about the late 70s when -- it was before I went to work for Governor O'Callaghan -- when I met through politics Judith and Bill Hernstadt, who own Channel 5. Judith talked to me like you do. She was really a great interviewer herself. She got me to tell her about my radio show in Boston and then the television show in Seattle, which I always forget to mention, "Tony Lease's Lease on Life," and then other radio and performing arts things

that I did in California, sporadic, here and there. She said, well, they needed somebody out at the station to do a community service program. Bill Hernstadt had been doing it, but he wanted to run for state senate, which he did. And he won and served. And I saw him yesterday for dinner. He was in from Singapore. So the name of the show was originally "Spotlight," and by the time I took it over it was called "The People Speak." I did 417 shows.

Tell me about them.

They were on community service, but I stretched it. As the years went by and people were less interested for the kids on the Westside and more interested in what's going on on the Strip, I stretched the role pretty far. But I always made sure I did something meaningful for the community in each show. They were on Sunday night. And then in the middle of the night every time they ran out of comedy capers, they'd run "The People Speak." You might remember it because there's a little boy on the bicycle in the beginning, driving through like the Westside. And the music by Mike Corda.

I didn't come here until 1992.

Oh, well, then you wouldn't have seen it. Anyhow, I did a lot of shows. I couple of the memorable ones is I did an hour-long special called "Nevadans at the Inaugural." After we all got back from the inauguration of President Carter, the first inauguration of Carter -- well, the only one now, but I thought there was going to be another one. Who knew? Anyhow, so I did this special. Howard Cannon and Grant Sawyer and Joy Hammond and Sally Denton, whose books are loaded up in there -- I have every single one of her books and her father's books in that basket -- Sally Denton and Renee Diamond's children and Renee and Myrna Williams and Harriet Trudell, I had them on the show. Virginia Mallin, who later lost her life -- oh, interesting story.

That name is the only one that I haven't recognized today.

Virginia Mallin was a democratic woman activist, beautiful lady, and she was married to Stan Mallin. And I'll tell you that later, but I'll get back to "Nevadans at the Inaugural." So we all came back for the -- well, Bill Hernstadt had given me a minicam -- it was a movie and everything -- to take pictures of the inaugural and Bob Fest was going to be

sworn in that same time at the United States Capital. It's not at the capital. Where do they swear in the lawyers? Supreme Court. Anyhow, and I had all this on minicam. And we get to the White House for a special breakfast, and some guy says, Oh, let me see that, some other guest from some other state, and opened up the thing and ruined everything. Fortunately, I took snapshots of everything going on at the inaugural. So I did the whole show with interviews with the people and still photographs of everything going on. Oh, Eileen O'Neal was another one, a wonderful lady before your time, but a wonderful democratic lady.

Anyhow, the show, "Nevadans of the Inaugural," stayed on my -- they were all on reel-to-reel up until about ten years ago up at Channel 5. And then Channel 5 sold so many times. I called Chuck Shrum, who's still out there, and he kindly put all my reel-to-reels that hadn't been thrown out on cassette.

Oh, wonderful.

They couldn't make me copies, however. So I went to Channel 10 and I said you can have copies of all these cassettes if you'll make me a copy. They made me two copies. They kept a set. I brought a set up to the Nevada State Museum. Dennis McBride wasn't there yet, but Beverly Carlito was. I gave her a set and I kept a set.

Now, later this same life, about two years ago, Jimmy Carter was honored over here at the Rio hotel and they wanted something to play in the background. It was the annual Jefferson Jackson Day Dinner. Myrna Williams bought me a ticket. What did they play in the background of everything they were talking about is Kerin Rodgers' "The People Speak" show that I did in 1977.

So what was the format of your show?

Well, it was a talk show. Once in a while they'd call it "The Person Speaks." You don't want that one, then. I said, well, that's because she would say -- I'm going to mention her name. It was Thalia Dondero. It's okay.

Thalia, don't be mad at me, but it was you. It was I think one of your early interviews.

I said, well now, Thalia, you've been just elected to county commission. It's just wonderful. I know you're full of ideas for the county. And she said yes. And I said, wow, gee, we only

have 27 more minutes. But she warmed up and she's a wonderful -- Thalia also a close-by neighbor for many years, right over here on Bonita, 808 Bonita or something close to that. And then she moved over to the other side of Sahara.

At any rate, I mentioned Sally Denton was one of the members on that particular taping. Now, Sally's brother Mark lived over here on Eighth and Park Paseo. He married Alice, who's now a young attorney herself. And Mark is now a judge, district court judge. The Dentons became friends early on and still are.

I was out to see Ralph and Sara a week or so ago. It's always just wonderful. He loves chatty stories. So I always have a few to share, and so does he. And they're just the grandest people. I think they're the finest example, they and perhaps Pat and Herman van Betten, are the two finest examples of real liberal Democrat leaders that pull no punches and never waiver from their commitment.

Maya Miller, Harriett Trudell and other recollections:

I dug out some things the other day when I knew you were coming to remind myself of names of people that have impressed me. And Maya's office was in John S. Park. It was on the corner. Her campaign office was on the corner of Tenth and Charleston.

Okay. So now, all I know about her was when she lived up north.

Oh, no. She ran for office here....

But Maya and Harriet I would say were best friends. Maya -- for United States Senate, September 11th, 1974. What a race it was. The Dentons were involved. Do you see where I put -- oh, thank you. Now, what does she say here? "I want to tell you how grateful I am for your help." Blah, blah, blah. "Maya Miller's imagination and energetic campaign was surely better than anything her opponent produced." Anyhow, I can run you a copy of this if you want.

I would love a copy of this.

But she was the grandest of all. And she was an inspiration for Harriet and all of us.

When we went to the convention, the next convention after this, she was the chairman of the delegation at the convention. I'm sure Harriet probably told that story in her interview, how none of the men thought she would ever -- all the big-shot elected officials knew they were going to be, whether it was -- actually, I guess it was Jim Santini. He was sure he was going to run the delegation. Well, I had already been chairman of the charter committee for the Democratic Party. Myrna and Renee and I, really, and many others involved in all the meetings throughout the state -- but I was the chairman -- developed the delegates' election rules, affirmative action, and the charter of the state of Nevada in which we encompassed all democrats. In other words, just because you're an elected official, you didn't get preferable treatment. And thus, our delegation was a real sampling of the democrats in Nevada from all over. We traveled the state encouraging participating. We had what we called full participation. And Barbara Makowski and Terry Sanford and those were the national people we were working with. Anyhow, Maya became the chairman of the delegation and it was a wonderful convention. Wasn't that, then, the convention that nominated Jimmy Carter? It had to have been.

Probably because '74.

Yeah, it had to have been. And funny thing is I went as a Kennedy delegate. No. I started as a Brown delegate. Then I became a Kennedy delegate. And then when the convention was over, the first thing that happened when I picked up my phone was a call from a guy named -- it'll come to me -- from the White House, would I run the Carter campaign? And I -- Would I; would I? That's what I say; some of my vocations or jobs haven't really paid, but they've been as important as anything I ever got paid for.

Oh, definitely.

And I did manage to put together a campaign where I got the -- and I shouldn't say I, I, I. There were so many helpful others. There couldn't have been anybody -- Karamanos was running at the time. Harriet was running Karamanos' campaign. Oh, my goodness. They're from Boulder City and Henderson, wonderful. Laura Kelley Smith. There couldn't have been anybody more wonderful than Laura Kelley Smith. It's not that I forget her name; it's that I'm getting older and sometimes things just slip right through.

You don't have to apologize.

But anyway, lots of help on that campaign. And we got somebody to give us a headquarters. I knew that I wouldn't make Nevada a hundred percent for Carter. I never thought the country would vote for the clown. I just knew that Carter would be re-elected. So this is the second campaign. So I've got my dates a little bit mixed up. This was Carter '79-80.

Okay, good.

Okay. All right. At any rate, so that wasn't the same years as my campaign. But it was the same years of Maya at the convention. All right.

Yes. Where she had the delegation.

Yes. So I had it a tiny bit mixed up there. But we started out with a projection of 17 percent for the state of Nevada and we ended up with 37 percent, which wasn't horrible.

Oh, that's good for Nevada.

And we got people that you'd never think would contribute. But because of-- Zach Taylor. Does that name sound familiar? He was very helpful to Ruby. He got her The Cove. He was the president of the bank. He contributed. He got people like Sam Boyd to contribute and Union Plaza -- what was his name? Anyhow, we got some big contributions that we didn't expect to get for the Carter campaign and we had a wonderful campaign. And that was the 80s. Again, I'm leaving out some important names, but anyhow.

It's okay. We can always go back. This doesn't have to be exactly chronological order.

All right. Now, before all that, Harriet left to go to work for Harry Reid in Washington and recommended that I take over her job at Governor Mike O'Callaghan's office here as administrative assistant. The year is on the wall there. So we can figure that year. Anyhow, '77 or something like that, '76. I can remember Chris Schaller, who was the big shot in Mike O'Callaghan's office in Reno and had been the big shot for Grant Sawyer, for many other governors.

And say that name again.

Chris Schaller. Very important name. Grant Sawyer. He worked for all of them. He was a brilliant speech writer and thinker and so forth, but he had other funny habits. Smoked

like this all the time and liked to take this string.

But anyhow, so I had to pick him up at the airport. And I had just gotten myself my first new car in my whole life. I had a design job with Carl Thomas at the Bingo Palace that made me quite a bit of money and I bought myself a Volvo, a new car. So I go to the airport. Now, half of the day I'm designing the Bingo Palace and decorating the Bingo Palace and the other half of the day I'm doing politics. And I pick up Chris Schaller at the airport, playing Mozart in my Volvo. He says, well, you know what I'm here for, don't you? And I said, well, you're considering me for the job in Governor O'Callaghan's office. Oh, knock it off, I'm not considering you. You got the job. I just want to know how much trouble you're going to be. So he said I guess anybody that drives a Volvo and plays Beethoven, he said, can't be all that bad. And I thought I don't think this is the right time to tell him it's Mozart. Just leave it alone. It'll be okay.

So I get the job. And Harriet went on to Washington. Of course, she's got a wonderful history of what she did in Washington. She is the savior of women's rights for Nevada, period. Period. Maya Miller maybe got the ball rolling. But women's rights, Harriet Trudell, it's all one word. Anyhow, I enjoyed my stay in governor's office.

My then friend Dee Coakley, one of her books is over there, Dee Coakley had become one of my early-on friends to Leola Armstrong and that crowd. She was the editor of the Sunday Sun supplement in the Greenspun Sun. She was later author of a book called The Day the MGM Grand Hotel Burned, which because it got all bought up and somehow disappeared from the shelves made her mad and she moved out of town. She died last year. But every time I did something interesting and I would let her know -- not every time I did something; many times -- good old Dee Coakley, such a wonderful writer and editor, she would then do an article. So some of them I've saved.

Oh, you framed the articles. That is great.

But she did one on -- when I was on the Kennedy Centers, my claim to fame was I was the one that said everybody in Nevada and probably all out west think the Kennedy Center is a theater for rich Washingtonians and until we start funding the Black Box Theater and the handicap theater and other programs like that. And Senator Paul Simon -- not Paul Simon

the musician, Paul Simon the bow tie -- he was part of that project and Roger Stevens, who was the chairman of the Kennedy Center. Anyhow, during that time we got funding for the states and Dee Coakley wrote an article about that.

Here's the other articles about Women's Democratic Club people. I think that's Wanda that passed away. Renee Diamond's up here and so forth. That was another Dee Coakley. Oh, this is when I left office in the governor's office.

Oh, this is a beautiful picture.

And Dee Coakley did that article. Oh, I didn't know this broke.

A short time after Jimmy Carter lost the election some people came to me and told me they were losing their nightclub and would I take it over? I said yeah. I was at loose ends. I didn't have a design job. I didn't get to go to Washington for Jimmy Carter. So it was a show bar. Our opening night or near our opening night we did a tribute to Jubilee, Donn Arden's Jubilee. The dancers used to come to this place all the time. It was an after-hours kind of club. And so we decorated the place with stars with the names of all the dancers from Jubilee and Lido and Tropicana and so forth. Then we got the managers of the shows to agree to have this big party. Zack Taylor loaned us his Airstream for a dressing room out behind the club. The kids from the Lido wore the costumes from the kids from the Stardust. And the boys wore the girls and the girls wore the boys. . . And it was kind of a spoof on "Victor Victoria" kind of show. It was so much fun. People will still remember it. Lots of famous people.

Great. So what was the name of this bar? You said a show bar.

It was a show bar. It was called The Gypsy. It's different now. It's still there, but it's just different. It was mainly for the nightclub people that worked in the clubs and went out afterward. I did that for a couple of years. I had a bar manager that knew way more than I did about any of that operation. But we did do shows. And I did know how to get publicity and produce shows. That part I was good at. Running the bar itself, I had other people do that. Anyhow, it was short lived in my life, but I still remember it. There are people that's all they remember about me at all. Matter of fact, it's shocking.

That's great. You told me that you were a writer of letters to the editor.

Oh. Well, not as much anymore. I used to. But I did do one recently for Bob Coffin that was in the paper. That's the only reason -- I used to a lot. Or, I didn't have to. For some reason, even when I was president of Women's Democratic Club or the Cyclothon, for some reason I've always had a knack for getting good publicity for things. I didn't ever major in any of that. But that's been a good knack of mine. I have to say that if I were doing it, it was going to be in the paper. But Bob Coffin had -- now, Steve ran for that office and I wanted Steve Evans to win. But Bob Coffin is a long-time friend. Mary Hausch is a delightful, wonderful person. As I said I just had dinner with Bob Coffin and Senator Hernstadt last night. We all got together because Senator Hernstadt was in town from Singapore.

*But anyhow, after the primary Bob was our candidate and we were all working hard for him. He had a lady opponent that inferred that he was soft on pedophilia and that he wanted prostitutes running around near playgrounds. She said it like that. I was at the debate where they asked them on those two subjects. What he said about pedophilia -- she recommended that anybody hanging around a park or males hanging around a park should be picked up and profiled. And he said this is America. We have a Constitution. We can't run people through the system just because they're near a park. And he's right. **Yes, of course.***

Now, obviously, we have to be diligent and careful and all of the other things. But she twisted that into making it so disgusting. And she did the same on prostitution. He said his door is always open to people who have discussions. However, prostitution is illegal in Clark County; it will remain to be so. She turned it into he wants to open his door to talk about prostitution.

Thunderbird Hotel and Chris Karamanos

Chris Karamanos. At first, it was just going to be to decorate the casino and coffee shops at his all new Thunderbird hotel. But then Barbara Carlisle, his CEO, liked me and said, well, there's not enough full-time for the decorating; you want to do also the public relations and so forth, marketing? So I became marketing director and interior designer

for the all new Thunderbird hotel, which is now the Aruba, not the old Thunderbird.

So the Aruba, which is almost downtown?

Yeah.

So tell me about working at the Thunderbird. What was that like? Now, we're talking about, what, the 80s now?

Yeah, we're into '86. I had finished decorating Bill Hernstadt's at the Regency Towers. I did the best job I ever did in my life at his place because I had a budget and time. And he had gone to Singapore to spend some time so I could tear the place apart. By the time he came back, he had his new wife, Jureen, who I had dinner with last night.

Wonderful.

At any rate, they have a family and they live in Singapore now. But anyhow, it was '86 or so. I was through with the Regency Towers. Chris had me do the hotel. I met Barbara Carlisle and I started doing the marketing. Chris was a very interesting guy and he did a lot of political stuff. He had already served on the board of regents for Mike O'Callaghan. His best buddy was Bob Stupak. Strange combination. I have a lot of interesting stories about Chris. But mainly, he gave me an opportunity to continue decorating and also do the marketing. I should say he along with Barbara, who still is my dear friend. His death came as a big shock to all of us. And to me it's still a mystery how he died.

So tell me about that.

Well, he had gone to Mesquite that day. And the story goes he took his own life. I'm not ready to accept that. So I don't accept that.

How long ago are we talking about?

That was 1989. So then after that Bob Stupak I guess bought the property. They were very good friends.

The Thunderbird property?

Yeah. And then he has since sold it to whoever has it now, but anyway.

Did Bob Stupak run the Thunderbird for a while?

No. No. Never did. Well, I don't know. I went back in there one day sometime after Chris was gone and Bob owned it. And I guess he was running it, or his people. They had taken

down all my -- this was all pictures of Marilyn Monroe. Remember that song, "Look What They've Done to My Song?"

Yes.

Well, I said look what they've done to my song, and I said I'm never coming back in here again. So I'm not sure what they did. I haven't been in there since. But through Chris we did a lot of fundraisers for Jimmy Bilbray and Richard Bryan. So I was always involved in also his off-the-job projects and fundraisers, projects like that. And Chris Karamanos was a very community-spirited guy. I guess he had his dark side. I didn't see that. People tell me stories about him. I said, well, I didn't see that.

It's like Carl Thomas. I saw a great innovative guy with vision in Carl Thomas. I was with him the day he said what do you think about building a casino on the other side of the freeway? He said it's going to be a bowling alley. I said why not a keno parlor? It became both for a while.

But anyhow, Karamanos, too, was one of those guys who was a visionary really. Stupak, with all that can be said about him, certainly was a visionary. I mean the building that you see around the world is the Stratosphere Tower, which I still call the Stupak Tower, Bob Stupak. The carnie was always in him, though.

I hope this isn't a story that I should be ashamed to tell. I fell down and hurt myself very badly, just before Chris passed away, at the Thunderbird. I broke my neck and severely injured my back. I've had surgeries and so forth for it. Well, after a neck surgery and one back surgery, I was on a walker and a neck brace, but there was a symphony fundraiser and I was determined to go to it. I got myself all dressed up in my Carole Little special and off I went, thinking I looked like a million bucks in spite of the walker and the brace. And then I had a scar, you know. Bob had just started dating Phyllis McGuire. She was part of the symphony fundraising project and so forth. I get out of the elevator at the top of the Desert Inn Country Club behind the Desert Inn hotel. And he doesn't say, well, hi, Kerin, or how you doing? He looks at me and he points his finger at my neck and he says, how much you get? Is that funny?



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THUNDERBIRD
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LAS VEGAS



Thunderbird Hotel and Casino – Interior design
by Russ Angione and Kerin Scianna Rodgers.

The “all new” Thunderbird Hotel in 1987 was
operated by Chris Karamanos, former
University Regent and restaurant owner. The
property was located at Las Vegas Boulevard
and Park Paseo , which backs up to the John S.
Park neighborhood.

2011 it is now the location of the Aruba Hotel.



MAYA MILLER FOR U.S. SENATE

September 11, 1974

Dear Kerin,

I want to tell you how grateful I am to you for your help in my campaign for the United States Senate. While we did not win, we have succeeded in awakening many of Nevada's politicians to some new political realities -- including the importance and impact of the issues we championed. Your contribution as a volunteer was invaluable in making that happen.

We also presented the "seasoned political observers" of Nevada with a puzzle to solve: How did an obvious "ten percenter" in February end up with 37 percent of the vote? The experts are at a loss to explain that extra 27 percent. And you had a strong hand in accomplishing that, too.

I want to tell you that I have no intention of turning to personal pursuits now that the campaign is over. If I had won the election and gone to the United States Senate, I would have worked for such measures as tax reform, campaign spending reform, welfare reform; for budget reallocations to housing, health care, and other basic human needs, for price control, minimum wage, utility rate regulation. I still intend to work for these goals as a private citizen.

I hope the Democratic Party can be important in my plans to pursue those goals. I have believed in the party because I believe its intent is to be the "party of the people." Yet, there is a question in the minds of many, including Democrats themselves, as to whether the Democratic Party really is addressing itself to the hard issues of the people, and whether it is prepared now to try to bring into the center of its councils those minorities and women whose basic living concerns have been so cruelly neglected by government these past several years. I believe it is time to find out, and I hope I will be able to continue to call on your active support in that effort.

The fine quality of the campaign has brought from many old-timers as well as from the newly-involved some warming appreciation:

"Maya Miller's imaginative, energetic campaign was surely better than anything her opponents produced."

CARSON CITY
6185 Franktown Road 89701

RENO
195 S. Wells 89502
329-8665

LAS VEGAS
818 E. Charleston 89104
382-5521



"...the work, the calibre, the sense of your campaign have all been an inspiration to many of us who have an image of how the future political scene must be."

"...hardy Democratic challenger Maya Miller... articulate, forceful, warm..."

"Your fighting spirit, your forthright stand on issues, and your imaginative campaign inspires us all."

A few of us are now working at the cleanup -- closing the offices, writing the thank-yous, seeking help to retire the debt of some \$20,000.

You who have helped us should know that financing our campaign was a different operation than most. The political establishment placed its bets elsewhere. We raised our money from known and unknown friends in and out of Nevada who shared our concerns -- over 3,000 individual contributions from fifty states: 94% of them in amounts under \$100.00; 72% under \$25.00; less than 1% of \$1,000.00 or over; none over \$3,000.00. The process of money raising used up too much of our time, money and energy. But, that was important, too. Those of us who want to have a place in the political system need to face up to the fiscal part of that effort. We raised a respectable amount, and we are paying our bills.

This letter is going to a group of you, around a thousand, who did solid work for the campaign -- telephoned, canvassed, walked precincts, introduced us to your constituencies at parties and meetings, looked up numbers, and rounded up voters. Some of you worked seven long months. Many of you had never worked in political campaigns before. All of it was good. It was hard. It was happy.

I thank you all.

Please keep in touch.

Warmly,

Maya

Thanks, Kevin & co -

Love to be chem, you on -

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