

**University of Texas at San Antonio Archives and Special Collections**

**MS 317. Archives for Research on Women and Gender Oral History Project**

**Amy Freeman Lee Transcript, June 12, 1997**

**Tori Beckman-Wilson:** This is Tori Beckman-Wilson, I'm in the home of Doctor Amy Freeman Lee, it's June twelfth, nineteen ninety-seven, and we're going to be talking about San Antonio. So, you grew up here.

**Amy Freeman Lee:** Yes, I was born in San Antonio, Texas. But I did not live in the city for the first fifteen years of my life.

**TBW:** You didn't?

**AFL:** I lived in Seguin. I was born in Santa Rosa, my family had been going there for four generations, we're born there and we die there, that's the cycle. I tease the nuns all the time, I say I'll drop by, I don't see a bronze plaque up there yet that I was born there, but we're working on it. I lost my mother when I was four years old in the infamous flu epidemic. And my maternal Grandmother Freeman reared me. And while the family always had a hotel residency here, we just kept residencies in hotels here, the main house was in Seguin. So I grew up, by the time we moved back here, all the way back, closed the house in Seguin, I had not quite turned fifteen. The family were involved daily here, anyway, in different pursuits.

**TBW:** They would kind of commute, then.

**AFL:** Yes, they would commute.

**TBW:** So you went to school early on, in Seguin?

**AFL:** My grandmother taught me to read when I was about four years old. I mean, I couldn't read the Encyclopaedia Britannica, but I could read things like 'Sam has a cat,' so I was in school just before I was five. And in an interesting little country school, Jefferson Elementary School only had three

rooms, with two grades in each room. And so I went to school there, and then I went to what we now call middle school, which we called junior high, in those days. Then I went to Mary B. Erskine (sp?) High School. When I moved to San Antonio, I went to school at Saint Mary's Hall and graduated from Saint Mary's Hall.

**TBW:** O.K., a very good school, and still is, from what I understand.

**AFL:** Yes, going great guns.

**TBW:** And then after Saint Mary's, you went to college?

**AFL:** I went to the University of Texas, in Austin. Frankly, that was not my choice. It's a long story, let me see if I can telescope it. I really wanted to go east to college, I had my heart set on that. And when I finished my junior year at the University of Texas, nothing wrong with the University of Texas, but it didn't suit my concept of education. I didn't know the answer. I knew that there was something wrong, there's something more to education than memorizing irrelevant facts, and keeping them in your memory long enough to regurgitate them on exams and then erase them. And so, it wasn't satisfying to me. In addition to that, I made wonderful grades, but I had a very difficult time adjusting psychologically, for a number of reasons. I had never been away from home in my life. I had never gone anywhere without my grandmother. And so I had never really been in that kind of environment. There were only about five thousand students, but you see, to me that was, coming from a very small school, Saint Mary's Hall was very small, too. And living away from home, I lived in Scottish Rite dorm, I had never seen food like that, I had never seen people eat like that, I had never heard people talk like that. I wasn't accustomed to young ladies being dishabille in the dormitories. The whole thing was just not my cup of tea. So I called on Miss Coit, Miss Ruth Coit was headmistress of Saint Mary's Hall, and she asked me, and I told her my dilemma, and she said, "Would you be willing to go to Smith?" And I said, "Oh, I'd love to go." So she picked up the phone and she called the admissions office at Smith, Northampton, and the deal was that if I would take twelve college boards and repeat my

junior year, they would accept me. Well, I knew I couldn't pass math. That summer, it must have been the summer of thirty-four, yes, I got a math tutor and in those days, I was showing horses, which is another part of my life. And I'd get up at five o'clock in the morning and exercise the horses, and then I'd study with my math teacher and I did that until it was time to go to California to show the horses, I showed the horses all summer. I was exhausted, but anyway, when I got to San Francisco, of course, the horse shows moved up the Pacific coast—one place to another, kind of like a carnival life, in a way—I got the news that I had been accepted, and I was ecstatic. I even remember, I was in the Saint Francis Hotel in San Francisco, I can see it as if I was there now. I don't know why I didn't realize what my grandmother's reaction would be, I really don't know why. I think I was so delighted—she knew I was doing this, and I don't think she took it seriously. And so she told me then that I couldn't go. And I said, "Why not?" And she said, "Because I'm too old to move up there in the winter time." I said, "I didn't know you were going to college." She said, "You're not going without me." Now, let me tell you the psychological background for that. My mother was her only daughter, and my mother died when she was thirty-three. My grandmother never got over her death, so she lived the rest of her life totally focused on me, and worried to death that something would happen to me. She said, "You're going to go up there and you're going to get pneumonia." Anyway, I didn't get to go. So that was a very deep hurt, an overwhelming disappointment. And so then she said, "Well, I'll take you to New York for the season." I said, "I don't want to go to New York, I want to go to college." So we went to New York, and I think I made everybody miserable, that was my purpose and I think I accomplished it. You know, how when you're young and you're upset—not that you don't do that when you're old, but anyway. One day, I just wanted to be alone and be quiet and go somewhere where I could think. And I had a little Chevrolet roadster, I put the top down. My grandmother's home was over at seven-oh-three East Olmos. And I backed out of the driveway, came across Devine Road, down Hildebrand, and I don't know why, but I drove into the back yard of Incarnate Word College, I'd never

been in my life, but I knew it would be a safe place to be, on campus, I just needed to think, be alone and put myself together. And I pulled up back of the main building, that's where all the smoke stacks used to be, and I had the top down, as I said, and I heard a man's voice, which intrigued me. But I couldn't make out what he was saying. It was almost like the Pied Piper. I got out of the car, climbed the fire escape, walked into that room, there was one chair left, last chair in the back row, and I sat down. And I stayed ten years. Now, that was providential. That man's name was Doctor Raymond E. Roehl, R-o-e-h-l. He taught English. And he so enchanted me with the way he was teaching, it took me about six months, I won't say I ever mastered his vast vocabulary, but I never heard anybody talk with such fluency and such a wide vocabulary, and in addition, to teach from principle. I made up my mind that I was going to stay until I mastered it. Of course, I stayed, and then I assisted him for two years. So it was an extraordinary experience, it was not the way I planned my education. So my connection with Incarnate Word College really started in the fall of thirty-four and ran through nineteen ninety, May of nineteen ninety. That's a long time. So I went through the ranks there, I started as a student, then I was a teacher, then I was on the advisory board, then I was on the board, then I was chairman of the board for seventeen years. I have a lot of my life centered in that small liberal arts, what used to be a liberal arts Catholic college.

**TBW:** How would you describe it now?

**AFL:** Well, I'm going to be very frank about it. The direction that it has been taking the past several years is not the correct direction, as far as I'm concerned. I think I can summarize it by saying the current president, Louis Agnese, Junior and I, have a totally different philosophy of life and a totally different philosophy of education. You see, I think education, definitively, is the classic, traditional concept of education. It is a life-long process to help you understand a life-long love of learning, and to prepare you to be a human being before you learn how to make a living. So that when you decide whether you're going to be a doctor, lawyer, merchant or chief, you do it in a decent way, you do it

right, you give the best of yourself to it and you work hard and you have a right to make a good living at it, a good, honest living, so that you can live comfortably with your family, too. But you have to know also that you're here to serve and to share. I think the movement toward technology, the movement toward vocational training is really robbing the young people. I think that's dead wrong.

**TBW:** Robbing them of the classic liberal education?

**AFL:** Absolutely. I think you have to have a liberal arts background, you have to have a background in philosophy, and in history and in math and in science and in the languages and the fine arts. So that's what is going on.

**TBW:** Everything I see, I'm a newcomer to San Antonio, so I can't really say how, but I can see the commercials on television and they're all job directed.

**AFL:** Every bit of it. And recently, I had an experience, and this is in all the public high schools, almost all of them, when they have the work study? I'm not going to name the name of the school, but I understand this is typical. I did a luncheon address, it was a luncheon where they honor the employers. These are young people in high school, going half a day to academics and then they work. Now, I thought to myself, what do you really know at the end of the high school? What grasp of life and knowledge, not only knowledge, but the understanding of it, what are you really equipped to do? Now, don't misunderstand me, I'm not knocking working, everybody has to work to make a living in some way or another, you know, I tease my students and say, "Well, government in thirty-nine decided not to let people inherit a lot." I think that was right. Because most people with a lot of money don't know what to do with it, anyway. I said, you can marry it, but be sure you're in love with the person, that's the epoxy. But most people work and make it by the sweat of their brow, working. These youngsters gave me the impression that they thought academics was sort of a nuisance, something you have to go through to get a job. Now, there was a gentleman seated at the table where I was placed, and I took for granted that he was a teacher. And he said, "No, no, I'm one of the employers." And I said,

“What kind of business do you have?” He said, “Car wash.” Now, again, don’t misunderstand me, having a car wash is perfectly honest way to make a living, but is that the aim or the goal for our young people. So I feel very deeply about this. I mean, you can see all the new buildings you want to, all the physical manifestations that you want to, and all of the hoopla, all of the publicity, the public relations and the power plays, that hasn’t got one continental thing to do with education. Nothing. Nothing. There’s a marvelous book by Thomas Moore (sp?) called “{word?} of the Soul.” And there’s a paragraph in there that is very powerful. About how we have sold out to technology, nothing wrong with technology, but we just have to know not only how to use it, but why you want to use it and what you do with the information. You comprehend the information and what do you want to do with it? A lot of people have written about that, John Spadey (sp?), wonderful essayist. And there are many of us who are concerned, and I certainly am.

**TBW:** It seems like that’s the complete focus of education, now, I agree.

**AFL:** In most instances, rare exceptions, but in most instances, that’s it. Actually, I call it having buck fever, outside of the hunting season. Hunting season makes me even more upset, but that’s another story. That’s a long answer, I’m sorry I took so long to answer.

**TBW:** That’s perfectly fine. So you ended up at Incarnate Word College...

**AFL:** I stayed there. But, you see, there’s also something sort of mystical. Last Sunday, a week ago, the nuns at the Incarnate Word had their annual Jubilarium (sp?) Mass, and sister Margaret Patrice Slattery, who was president thirteen of the years I was in the chair there, celebrated her golden anniversary. They invited me down to speak at the Mass, so I did. And there’s something very moving when you see the elderly ones who’ve been nuns seventy-five years, sixty years, fifty years, people making the witness and having been born in their hospital. And then, grandmother Freeman’s home in Seguin was just across a very narrow lane from their convent, so I grew up in their shadow, as

you would say, my whole life. I could hear them reciting their evening prayers when I was a little girl. So my contact with them has been really life-long.

**TBW:** That must be a wonderful experience.

**AFL:** It is. It has been.

**TBW:** Now—I've got so many questions I want to ask you, I need to figure out which direction we want to go today. I didn't know, until Jill told me, that your father was the main force behind Freeman Coliseum. I didn't make the connection.

**AFL:** No. That's not true. Those two men were my uncles. My mother's brothers. They were more my grandmother's children. And, if I remember my eldest uncle's words correctly, and I think I do, his concept was he wanted San Antonio to have some central focus, something that would bring good things to the city. He also had a concern about agribusiness, about ranching and farming, among the other businesses my family was interested in, we always had farms and ranches. And they—no young people were going into that, and that worried him. So he decided that if he could build a really quality showcase for a livestock exposition, because it was indigenous, it was congruous to this whole area here, a lot of farms and a lot of ranches, and that's how that really started, and the chamber of commerce thought it was a really wonderful idea. He became the lifetime Chairman of the Board of the Livestock Exhibition, the eldest brother, Joe. And when he died, the second brother, Harry, stepped into that role and also became the lifetime Chairman of it. Now, I have to say this to be intellectually honest. I suppose that if my darling grandmother was here, she would say, "Why did you say that? Nobody asked you." But if I don't say it, I'll have ethical indigestion. I am totally opposed to anything that has to touch, that even touches the tangents of rodeo. I am not connected with that in any capacity, even though my family's name is on the building. Now, if it were a livestock exposition, it would have my support.

**TBW:** But to use animals for sport.

**AFL:** But to encourage young people to go into that, farming and ranching, to help them breed the quality and the breeds of the animals, wonderful. Proper care of the animals and all that. But all of my adult life, I have publicly fought rodeos. My uncles knew that. I always put everything out on the table. I've just done an article for the San Antonio paper on it. I won't live to see it, but someday rodeos will be illegal. Anybody who tells you that it is possible to engage in a rodeo without being brutal and cruel and violent is lying to you. They're either stupid or their lying. And I've challenged them all over the United States. I've been on the board of the Humane Society of the United States in Washington, I'm in my twenties, I'm just about to finish my twenty-sixth year.

**TBW:** How did you get involved in activism on behalf of animals? How did that come about?

**AFL:** Well, I've always loved animals. Not in contradistinction to people, but they're such a wonderful supplement to life. And living in a village has a lot of advantages. Grandmother was frequently very generous. I always had dogs, you can't live without a dog. Always had dogs, and in Seguin I had rabbits, I had a pet pig named Freddy and I had a pet lamb and I had banded chickens, what else, I had a pony and a horse and a donkey. And the price I had to pay for it was to learn about the animals and how to care for them. Want banded chickens? You're going to feed them and you're going to pick up the eggs every morning. That was the deal. That's one way to learn responsibility. So, I never could stand cruelty. It's just innate. I think it's innate with all children, it's just that we pervert them when they grow up, you know, say to little boys, "You gotta be a man, learn to kill deer and all that nonsense." And so it's like my breath, my metabolic rate, my heartbeat, and I know why many people don't care a lot, it hurts a lot to care. It's caused me a lot of suffering in my life, but I'd rather suffer and be fully alive than to not care and be walking among the unburied dead. So the specifics of the answer to your question is, I had never done this in my life. I've been doing—I don't like the word lecture, it sounds pompous—I've been making public oral presentations for years, and I'll tell you later how that happened, but to come to this point, I think it was about nineteen sixty-four, I can

look up the exact date, but it was circa that. I had given a talk here in San Antonio, I think it was the Federated Women's Clubs, and it was the first time I had ever incorporated into a public discussion the business about cruelty to animals. But there's always a flip side to everything, because you have to balance yourself, you have to learn to laugh, too. So there was some fun stories in this talk, then I learned through the Bexar County Humane Society, they were trying to decide to join the Humane Society of the United States or the American Humane Society. I thought, those are interesting groups, and I got some literature. And I was drawn to the Humane Society of the United States, because they were broader in their concepts. Now, what I did that I had never done before, is I had that tape copied, and I sent it to Washington with a letter. Got a very polite letter back, "Thanks so much for taking interest..." and so forth. About six or eight months after that, right out of the blue, I get a call from Washington office of HSUS, said, "This is Mel Morris (sp?) the interim president." I said, "Yes, Mister Morris." He said, "Would you consider coming to Newport Beach California to do the keynote address for the annual national conference of the Humane Society?" I almost fell off my chair. I said, "Yes, I would." And I did. Now, later on, when I got to know them better and they got to know me better, Pat Parks (sp?) was the vice president. Marvelous little man, little Irish gentleman with a wonderful sense of humor. They told me that what had happened was, when the tape came, they put it up on a shelf, never played it, never listened to it. Wrote me a very nice, polite official letter. Then they were planning this big national conference, and they couldn't focus on a keynote speaker. And so the president Mel Morris happened to say to Pat Parks, "Whatever happened to that tape from that woman in Texas?" Pat got it and they played it, and that's how I started my—it's been a love affair ever since. Isn't that interesting? I had never done anything like that before.

**TBW:** What possessed you to do that?

**AFL:** I wanted them to get to know me, and I wasn't in Washington and I had no plans to go to Washington. And I thought if they could hear me—I wanted them to get my philosophy, that's really the specific answer, where I stood on this issue.

**TBW:** Now isn't that kind of an unusual stance for this area of the country? It seems to me that hunting is very big here.

**AFL:** I'm an atypical Texan. I'm not unique, I may be somewhat rare, but the point of view is growing against hunting. Have you noticed, oh, you haven't been down here long. In hunting season, everybody had a dead deer on the hood of the car. You don't see anybody doing that anymore. You don't. If you're hungry, and you have to feed yourself and you have to feed your family, you go out and you kill a deer and you eat the meat. But to go out and kill things for fun is, in my opinion, is being sick, psychologically ill. And another thing that annoys me to death is those people who go out and kill and then give the meat to charity. That sort of cleanses their conscience about it. What is pleasant—they call it a sport. So I say, "Oh, is it really a sport? Which would you rather be, the man with the rifle and the scope or the deer? Want to play?" I say, "Let me tell you about sport, you want to play sport, I'll tell you what. We're going to have a team of six people on each side. And one's going to be the hunter and one the hunted. But they're all armed. And they're all the same age and they're all the same quality of marksmanship. Now that's a sport. Want to play that game?"

**TBW:** No takers on that, I bet.

**AFL:** You're right, no takers on that, no. And there are no takers on debating about the rodeo, either.

**TBW:** No. And again, that's another very established sport activity.

**AFL:** Well, it's just about, I understand, to be accepted as the official sport of Texas. I wrote a letter against it, I had HSUS write a letter against it. You see, that's an embarrassment. That is saying the thing we enjoy most is brutal and cruel and violent and that's Texas. I don't think that's Texas, but that's going to be the image that it gives us. I don't know, it's on the governor's desk, I don't know if

he's signed it or not, but it flew through the senate and the house. Texas house, needless to say. I made a careful note of the name of the gentleman who introduced the bill, and I'm going to campaign against him next time. But anyway, that's what makes horse racing. Where were we? [laughs]

**TBW:** We're everywhere, but that's alright. Once you graduated, you went on for more education after the undergraduate.

**AFL:** Now, I think and I will tell you this, I am still going to school, in a very unusual way, and I'm serious about it. My classmates range in age from two to fifteen. I've been studying with them sixteen and a half years. I chair a marvelous school in Houston called the Wilhelm Scole (sp?), Scole is, perhaps you know, the Greek word for lifetime love of learning. I had never been around little children in my life until I was sixty-five years old. Never. Not because I didn't want to, I never had any children, I was the only child, the only grandchild, very small family, they're all gone. I'm so grateful God didn't let me die this time without having that experience, because it changed my whole life. And again, that experience came about from a talk I gave. So much of my life has had a focal point and it opened all kinds of doors, it's like rays of the sun. I went to Houston to give a keynote address for the annual national conference of Women's Symphony Leagues, that's all the great support groups. And as I came down off the platform—because I'm passionate about music, that's what I really wanted to do with my life, is be a musician. I mean, again, I'm serious. That means more to me than anything, almost. Not more than the humane movement, but as a pleasure. And I studied four instruments and the voice and I have all the qualifications to be a great musician, except talent. I am totally devoid of musical talent. I'm a great listener, but that's it. As I came down off the platform, a lady came rushing up to me and introduced herself. “Oh, Doctor Lee, I've got a school, you've got to come talk, we've got the same philosophy...” she was very excited. I said, “Oh, I'm very sorry, but I can't come now.” And I couldn't, I had to come back to San Antonio right away. But six months after that, Sister Margaret Patrice Slattery and I had a business appointment for the college in Houston. No, excuse me.

About six months after that I went back to Houston to give another talk for the Houston Arts Council, and this lady, again, was in the audience. What I didn't know then was that she never takes off time in the middle of her school day. This is her school, that she created, founded and is the director of. And she came rushing up to me again and she said, "Do you remember me? I'm the person who has the school." And I said, "Oh, yes, of course." And she handed me a little book. Haiku poetry written by the children. And again she invited me and again I couldn't come. Now, I go back to Houston with Sister Margaret and I write her in advance, and I don't get an answer. I thought, 'Well, she probably thinks, you know, that you're so precious, forget it.' So after that, I had a letter from her about how sorry she was that she missed me, she was in New York on business for the school. Finally got there, but school was out. Weren't any children. It was summer time. I walked into this room, and there are reproductions of the great paintings of the world on every inch of the walls. Interspersed with aphorisms from the great thinkers of the world. And I thought, 'What an extraordinary ambience.' And I said, "Do the children know all about these things?" "Oh, yes," she said. I said, "I've got to come back when the children are here." I went back again and took Sister Margaret with me. We went to the classes with the children. So on the way home, I said to Sister Margaret, "Did I see what I told you I saw." She said, "Oh, yes." It's an extraordinary school. It's intercultural, interlingual, during the course of the school—it's in its thirtieth year—they've had children from twenty countries, nine different religions, all in harmony. So it's been a great learning experience. I'm still going. I just had my annual, once a year I have about twenty-five students, four faculty members and Doctor Wilhelm, and maybe three or four parents, and they come as my guests for three days. And we do the town. They just left. I'm dead. [laughs] But it's so great. And what I've learned from them, it's amazing. I'll tell you one symbolic story about that. After about, maybe not quite a year I've been going down there, Doctor Wilhelm took me to lunch one day I didn't know what we were going to talk about, the weather, but I didn't know. Sometime in the meal she said, "Why don't you respond to the

children?” And I said, “What are you talking about?” She said, “They come up to you, hold your hands, wrap themselves around you and tell you they love you, and you stand there and say, ‘Thank you, I’m so grateful.’” And I said, “Well, I am grateful.” “No, no, that’s not what you say to children,” she said. “If you love the children, why don’t you tell them that?” And I said, “Oh, I was brought up you don’t show your emotions like that in public.” She said, “Try it.” It was hard for me. So I started trying it, and it did sort of open up all kinds of things in my life. After that, now I get up in the morning and the first man I see walking around the street, I say, “Good morning, I’m loving you.” It frightens them a little bit, but it gets their attention. So that’s how that started.

**TBW:** How wonderful though, to be connected with something like that. She founded it, Doctor Wilhelm did? Is it a private school?

**AFL:** Private, not elitist. I don’t think there are more than maybe two children in the whole school who do not have both parents working. And the school stays open until five thirty until every child is picked up. Classes don’t run until five thirty, but it’s manned until five thirty.

**TBW:** What is the focus of this school?

**AFL:** To build, I’m quoting Doctor Wilhelm, to build global renaissance human beings. [end of side one] [beginning of side two] You know, when you ask a question, it triggers so many tangents, I should try to focus more on the direct question.

**TBW:** Please don’t. Because everything you talk about makes me think of other things. So you just started being involved in that school when?

**AFL:** Sixteen and a half years.

**TBW:** O.K.

**AFL:** You see, the reason I’m so taken with it is, it was like finding the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. I always had a concept of what I thought education was really all about. And when I saw it functioning there—I take no credit for it at all, I had nothing to do with it, I just observed it—but I

recognized it and then stayed to see the proof of the pudding. You see, the proof of the pudding is not my enthusiasm about this school, the proof is what happens to the children when they leave that school. So Doctor Wilhelm had a hundred of them checked by Doctor Mauro (sp?) from the University of Texas Health Science Center, Houston. And it was fabulous, where they are, what they turned out to be. We've got composers, we've got doctors. I'll give you one example. It's not extreme, it may be somewhat rare, but not extraordinary at that school. I happened to be there the day this young lady came in, I think she was ten or eleven when she came in. Tall and thin, a young black child. Very shy, hardly a word she said. She had just graduated from Wellesley on scholarship, she has addressed UNESCO, she has been sent to Africa on a fellowship where she had an internship in law, and she is now about to graduate in international law from New York University. That's the background, you see. One of the young men who was at that school at the beginning until he was too old to keep going there, he just had his first symphony performed this season at Kennedy Center. So the system works, that's what I'm trying to say. And the lesson is so simple. I spent my whole life at the wrong end of the stick, at the university level teaching. What happens in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, years one, two and three, grades one, two and three, that's it. That's it. Psychiatrists are now telling us, and people in brain research, by the age of five, it's all set. And by the age of ten, if you haven't corrected anything, you're going to live with it. So elementary school, is where—next time I come around and be reincarnated, I'm going to be an elementary school teacher. Teaching music.

**TBW:** So you think that would have been a good choice, as well. What did you teach in college?

**AFL:** Well, I'm a painter. Whether I'm an artist, only posterity can determine that. I've never taught studio painting, I've always taught art appreciation, because I'm really passionate about that. And when I say art appreciation, I mean more than painting. I mean architecture, so forth. I taught that. I've taught classes in ethics, whether it has to do with legal ethics or medical ethics, because I've felt very deeply about that all of my life. I've taught classes in humane education. I've taught in the

philosophy department, in comparative cultures. I taught at Incarnate Word, Trinity, Our Lady of the Lake and the San Antonio Art Institute. Somebody said to me, "You didn't keep a job very long." But one thing would open up to another, teaching sometimes two places at one time. I loved it. And I hope that the speaking engagements I have, I look at that as a form of education. I hope it is. Not in a boring and deadly way, but to impart information in a persuasive way, in a way that helps people to look at themselves and the world.

**TBW:** And you're still speaking?

**AFL:** Oh, yes. I did ten talks in May and two since then. And one next week. So, I had an interesting experience here lately, Isaac Stern was in town to perform, and I've known Isaac for years. His new wife, we were visiting before they left, and she's also involved in music, but in the administrative end of it. And she said, you know, a lot of people come up to Isaac and say, "How do you really feel when you play a concert and everybody jumps to their feet and is screaming and applauding and carrying on?" She said, "I can tell you how he feels. He's praying that he's going to get that flight on time to get to that next concert and remember what he's going to play there and play it well." I thought, 'That's symbolic.' That speaks for me, too. You always hope the next job is going to go well. Even if you, well, I can't speak for anybody else, but I know for myself, we're just instruments. The minute you think you're doing it, you're in trouble. We tell the children, that's the bad case of the me-me's. Very bad egomania, we don't have that. I gave the talk, I killed the bear. I always, I don't announce this on public platforms, this is very private, but I feel deeply about it, but I always pray before I speak. That the spirit will move through me, because if not, it's going to be a bomb, it's going to be awful. So you don't do it yourself. One night, Doctor Wilhelm had a marvelous dinner party, everybody was a musician there, except me. There was, let's see if I can remember some of the names. Milton Catence (sp?) was there, the great conductor and violist, Sir Neville Mariner (sp?) the great conductor from England, and he had some Irish tenor who was on tour with him, Delgado from

Argentina, Daniel Pollack (sp?) from California and Mister Simons (sp?) from the Sheperd School of Music at Rice. And they all started talking about their experiences, Marilyn Wilhelm said she wishes she would have taped it. The point I'm trying to make is they all said, "When you are the soloist, and you walk out on that stage and sit down at that grand piano, and you've got a hundred and ten musicians in back of you and a conductor and four or five thousand people out there, you don't dare forget that the only time the danger of forgetting the music happens when you suddenly realize, 'Oh my God, I'm playing.' If you get immersed and become the music, you won't forget." That's the best example I've ever heard. You become the words, that are not yours, anyway.

**TBW:** So you're not self-conscious about the act of speaking?

**AFL:** No. Writers will tell you, and I know for myself, I've always written poetry all my life, I go back and read some poems I wrote years ago and I'll tell you frankly, as God is my witness, I don't remember any of those words. They're just as unfamiliar to me as if I were reading the poetry of somebody I don't even know. Not always, but most of the time, but that means it's really beyond us all. In higher hands as Doctor Wilhelm says.

**TBW:** I was curious about your writing. Was that the kind of thing you felt like you were missing at UT? You mentioned that you thought the education was not...

**AFL:** No. What I thought I was missing at UT. Well, I can tell it to you, in a narrative form. In the old days, you used to go down to the main building at UT, get your grades. They came in a long, narrow, rectangular little tablet with a brown cover. And my darling life-long friend, we're still friends, we're celebrating our sixty-first year of friendship this year. She was Mary Blanche (last name?) from Robstown. She's now Mrs. Edward Gavin, and they live in Santa Fe. And everybody called her MB, and we were getting, packing clothes, getting ready to come home for the summer and I was looking at this little—and I said to her, "You know, MB, I really feel intellectually dishonest." She said, "What are you talking about? You never have cheated." I said, "Look here. Physics, I don't know anything

about physics, I really don't. I don't even know what physics is. I made this grade because my lab partner was a physics major, and she locked me up in a room until I memorized everything, then I ran down and took the exam. I don't know anything about geology, I really don't." I was saying to her, "There has to be more to education than this, there has to be." None of the subjects were related, Spanish two, French three, geology one, yes, so what about it? And I just, as I told you before, I didn't know the answer, but I knew there had to be more than that. They didn't teach by principle and they didn't teach by interrelationship of the subjects.

**TBW:** And that's what a classic liberal education offers.

**AFL:** And today, we use the phrase, 'multi.' Everything is 'multi.' That separates us, it should be intercultural, not multicultural. In multicultural, you're saying my roots are deeper than yours and bigger than yours, and my roots are more colorful than yours. That isn't what we're saying. We're saying in intercultural is, everybody has a dance that they do, every country and culture has a national dance, and it's different, but we all dance. That's the umbrella. And that's what is still missing in most colleges and universities, it still is. And the more you specialize, the more disparate you get away from the core.

**TBW:** I just had a class with Doctor Schott, who's head of the Center for the Study of Women and Gender and the core question of the class was is there an American identity? Do you think there is? Do you think with all the diverse groups of people in this country and the way we identify ourselves, do we have a common identity?

**AFL:** We could, but we don't. If you were to challenge me and say, "What is the central leitmotif of the school in Houston?" It's to get the children to understand that we are each other. We are all one, there's only one human family, it has a lot of branches. If they grasp that when they are two, three, four and five years old, you're going to get rid of the prejudice, you're going to get rid of the hatred, you're going to get rid of the jealousy and retribution, it's not going to be perfect, though. I'm sad to have to

say this, but my opinion is, no, we don't have mastered that in this country. And I think at the moment, let me say that in the past we've come closer than we are at the moment. We are now extremely divisive, and that division is growing, and that's sad. One of the reasons its growing is because of economic picture. Affluence is growing on one end of the stick and poverty is growing by leaps and bounds on the other. And the more disparate that becomes, the more dangerous that becomes to the democracy. Yes.

**TBW:** It was fascinating to debate that all semester.

**AFL:** Last week I did a talk, my third year, for a group called the Hugh O'Brien (sp?) Youth Foundation. Hugh O'Brien started in Los Angeles, and it's only for high school sophomores, from private, parochial and public schools. They're hand-picked, not only for academic achievement, but community service, for character and so forth. And I always have an open forum after I speak, that's the best part of the program, the exchange. Let me tell you, there were three hundred of them. The overwhelming concern that they had has to do with ethnic and racial prejudice, they never got off that subject. And it's growing. This is my third year, but it was paramount this year, there was no getting away from it. There were questions like—and remember, these are sophomores—"How do you learn to hate the act and not the doer?" "How do you learn to be wise?" "How do you learn not to be prejudiced?" That was the scene. That's what was on their minds, right across the group. Black, Latin Americans, everybody.

**TBW:** How has that kind of thinking, or those types of acts changed over the years in San Antonio? Has racial harmony, for lack of a better word, improved or stayed stable in your opinion?

**AFL:** I have to say this for San Antonio. When the real violence was rampant nationally, San Antonio really did a better job than most cities. I'm not saying there isn't prejudice, there's always prejudice. But we didn't have the violence. We didn't have the destruction and we didn't have the murders, racial murders that other cities did. We are fortunate in that by geography, we are tri-racial here. So close to

Mexico, we've always had many Latin Americans. So close to the deep South, we've always had a lot of black people and a lot of Anglos. So I salute us on that, we're certainly not perfect. I think we're better, getting better and I'm objective enough to know that if I were on the other side of the fence, if I were black, Latin American or Oriental, I wouldn't think we're moving fast enough. But it's better. You see, I can remember—I'll give you one story, to symbolize it. Many years ago, there was a marvelous bookstore in town, called the Rosengren Bookstore, a cultural institution of the Southwest. Joyce (sp?) Rosengren is one of the dearest friends I ever had, she's a marvelous lady. She called me one day, and she said, "Dorothy Maynard (sp?) is coming town." Now Dorothy Maynard, in those days, was the leading soprano at the Metropolitan. She was black. About the only other black singer in those days was Marian Anderson. She said, "I'm having a dinner party for her, and I want you to come." I said, "Oh, I'd love to come." She said, "I want to ask another favor of you." I said, "What's that?" She said, "That afternoon, Miss Maynard would like to see San Antonio." I said, "No problem." I pick up Miss Maynard and take her, you know, to the Governor's Palace, the Alamo and all that, and about four o'clock in the afternoon, she had to have powder room facilities. It struck me that I only had two choices. I could only take her to my house, or the house of our hostess. Since the house of our hostess was nearer, that's where we went. Now, that same night at eight o'clock, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people went down and filled up that Municipal Auditorium to hear her sing. She got a standing ovation. Cheering, clapping, demanding encores. Do you know what I thought to myself? Wonder what it would be like not to be able to use the bathroom at four in the afternoon and at eight fifteen at night or eight thirty have that same city stand and tell you what a great musician you are? That stuck with me. Dorothy Maynard and I remain friends. That stuck with me. That was the symbolic act there. Painful, terribly painful. Now, my grandmother always, remember mama was from the deep south, from New Orleans, she always brought me up never to be prejudiced about anybody because of their race, because of their ethnicity, because of their religion. I give her

that. She did not associate with people of other races, it wasn't done in those days. But never, never, never to have the thought. And another great lesson I learned in that, I worked with Quakers for ten years.

**TBW:** Where was that?

**AFL:** Right here.

**TBW:** In what capacity?

**AFL:** Well, about early spring, I guess it was, I heard that there was going to be an institute of international relations in Austin. And I thought, 'Oh, international relations, I don't really know anything about international relations, that would be interesting.' I went up there and I heard—I didn't know very much about the Quakers, American Friends Service Committee, which is the guild of the Quakers. And I was so impressed by the people who came from all over the world, speakers from Yugoslavia, from Germany, from Russia, from China, from India. I went backstage after it was all over, and I talked to the director, Arthur Sanders (sp?) and I introduced myself and said I was from San Antonio. "How can I bring this to San Antonio?" And he said, "Are you serious?" And that sort of offended me, but he didn't know it. I said, "I don't ask questions frivolously." He said, "Well, you have to raise fifteen hundred dollars." Now, imagine, this is, imagine the vintage of this. Fifteen hundred dollars. I said, "Wow, fifteen hundred dollars."

**TBW:** When was this?

**AFL:** Oh, it would have been back in the forties. Fifteen hundred bucks. I said, "How much time do I have to raise it?" He told me. I came back and I talked to my very dear friend, the late Missus Richardson Hamilton, Lucy Hamilton, and the two of us gathered a few friends together and we were able to raise fifteen hundred dollars. And we brought that institute here for ten years, every year. Now this was the fascinating thing about it. Quakers do not hold meetings unless everybody eats together and everybody is housed together. Well, if you think that was easy to do in San Antonio in those days,

wrong. The one restaurant that would take us was Hong Fong, across from the Witte Museum. I ate about three meals there before I found out that the waiter didn't understand English. I never got what I ordered, but if you haven't had chop suey for breakfast, you haven't lived. But you had to go to places like Saint Mary's Hall, we met at Saint David's Episcopal, we managed. We met at the museum, the Witte Museum. I learned so much from those people. I tell you, frankly, I felt that I was a much better person the ten years I worked with them, because they're a small group in the world and they really live their faith. They're born pacifists, during wartime they volunteer for front line ambulance duty, it isn't that they don't serve their countries. And they have such dignity. In the days when nobody could get into Russia, or any of the communist countries, our government sent Quakers and they went and were accepted. They have enormous influence on international relations all over the world.

**TBW:** Was it just the sheer numbers of the group that made it hard to find places to meet? Or was there a problem because of their race?

**AFL:** It was a problem because of race, absolutely.

**TBW:** Because they didn't mind, and anybody could join.

**AFL:** No, you couldn't have an African, somebody from Africa and an Indian from India. No, no. That was absolutely verboten. You couldn't walk into any restaurant with these people. Nobody would serve us. So it was a marvelous experience, it was a wonderful experience. As you know, they don't have, well, there's two types of Quakers. The Hixite (sp?) Quakers, that's the original English Quakers, that's the ones I worked with. Then there's the Kansas City Meeting, which is a fundamentalist group that Nixon belonged to. Every time he would talk about being a Quaker, it would upset me because he didn't specify that he wasn't a Hixite Quaker. That's different. But the way they have the courage to stand and they know how to handle violence. I've seen them do it. And their dignity. I had a summer home in Algonquit Maine for thirty three years, I used to go up there and paint, it's just seventy-two miles north of Boston. Once in a while, Missus Hamilton and I would go to

Quaker meeting in Boston and we went to what was called the Softstall (?), that's because the Softstall family worshipped there. And one Sunday we went—first they have a business meeting, and then they have the meditation, because there's no speaking. Well, if you're moved, if the spirit moves you to speak, then speak, but you will find it unwise to be moved too often. You'd better have something significant to say. The clerk of the meeting, the clerk of the meeting was a little woman who weighed about eighty pounds, had little, her hair done up with a little hat on top of it like the Helen Hopinson (sp?) girls, kind of the typical New England lady. And she announced that on Monday we were to assemble—this was going to be a protest, you see—we were to assemble on the capital steps and line up. And she said, "I would remind you all that no one speaks, if there are any questions, you refer them to the clerk." And she said, "Of course, needless to say, I have notified the police where we will be and at what time so we will be ready to be arrested." And one night, there was a visitor, a Quaker visitor from London. And Paul French, who for a long time was an editorial writer for the San Antonio Light newspaper was a Quaker. And I had a dinner party for him. Here come the man from London who had never seen the London ballet and they were dancing here. So I took him off to the ballet. During the course of the dinner conversation, Paul asked this gentleman did he ever know somebody. I don't remember the name. But the man said, "Oh, indeed. Splendid fellow. You know, we met in jail." He said, "Just a charming man." Of course, they were both picked up, I suppose, for pacifist protest or something of that kind, and they edited a newspaper while they were in jail, you know how the British are, charming man, met him in jail. So you learned a lot from them. I did.

**TBW:** There's a long tradition of that group in this country.

**AFL:** I found meditation very difficult. I'm not sure I ever mastered it. It's very hard when you come from the Western civilization. To still the mind, very difficult. You keep going over the grocery list and the letters you haven't written and it goes on.

**TBW:** I can imagine. I've never made a serious attempt.

**AFL:** Well, it's not easy.

**TBW:** Well, that's an amazing story about how you got involved with them, and you stayed involved for ten years.

**AFL:** Yes. And we would have continued to bring it, to bring the institute of international relations, but the central office in Philadelphia changed the focus to working with high school students, and they didn't do that program anymore, that's why we stopped. And it made an impact on this community. No doubt in my mind about it.

**TBW:** So you've been involved in a number of different organizations and institutions that have really had a deep and lasting effect on this city.

**AFL:** Somebody said to me recently, "How would you characterize your life?" I said, "Well, there's an old Oriental saying, 'Old rock runs down many hills gathers much moss.'" You know, if you live a long time, you get connected with a lot of things, if you care. If you spend the time.

**TBW:** Yes, if you take the time to get involved. That is the thing that has been the underlying theme of the lives of everyone I've talked to, and it's extremely inspiring. Your parents were obviously involved in the community.

**AFL:** Well, my grandmother who reared me, she ran a very tight ship. Archetypal French matriarch. Always said, "Mama, the government made a big mistake. They should have made you chief of the military, you could have run it in your sleep." No, but she always stressed personal responsibility, she always stressed serving. We were all trained for service. She really did.

**TBW:** It must have been a strong influence. I've noticed that the immediately family surrounding everybody I've interviewed was very oriented toward community service.

**AFL:** Sure. And that's probably why the children are in such trouble now, we don't have families. They don't have any families, they don't have any guidance. If you grow up in the street, what do you expect? What would I have been like if I had grown up in the street? You see? People like us should

turn out well, look at all the breaks we've had. Family who cared about us, who nourished us and guided us, provided the educational opportunities. What do you want for a nickel? You'd better turn out to be alright.

**TBW:** Was your grandmother involved in any organizations?

**AFL:** No, my grandmother was a typical Victorian lady of her era. She was a family person, she did not engage in organization—well, she would do things like in Seguin, she had little clubs and they would have charity benefits and that kind of thing. But she was not a joiner in that sense of the word. She lived a very quiet life, a very, almost reclusive after my mother died. That affected her enormously.

**TBW:** And how about the rest of your family? Were they...

**AFL:** Well, the rest of the family, the men, were always engaged in civic affairs. I think my two uncles, their main charitable thrust, as nearly as I can analyze it, were for children, for the elderly and for health problems.

**TBW:** And what kinds of things did they do?

**AFL:** Well, there's a floor in the Santa Rosa Children's Hospital with my grandmother's name on it, and my family gave the building that the Heart Association—they moved out of that and have another building now. My uncle Harry, the younger of the two, he lived to be ninety-six and worked actively on the ranch through his ninety-fourth year. I had to find all of this out from other people. My family never talked about what they gave. My uncle equipped the EMS with all those ambulances, some kind of extraordinary technical device about heart monitoring, that kind of thing. My uncle Harry was very involved in Boysville, very involved in—he was, both my uncle Harry also served as chairman of the board of the Robert D. Green Hospital, that's the city public hospital. They gave a lot of scholarships to help students—privately of course, they didn't publicize that kind of thing. And they were also,

anything that had to do with helping the city to develop, they were always interested in that. Economic opportunities and that kind of thing.

**TBW:** How many generations does your family go back in this area?

**AFL:** Great-grandmother, grandmother, mother, myself—four. Four that I know of, yes. And my great-grandmother lived to be eighty-seven. I was fifteen when she died, I knew her well. We were very close friends. Great-grandmother was an intellectual.

**TBW:** Where was she from?

**AFL:** She was always preparing—New Orleans. That branch all came from down there. I started to tell you, how I started quote public speaking closed quote, great-grandmother was also tiny. French matriarch, too. And she drank about twenty cups of chicory coffee, demitasse cups, and by her four-poster bed—gee, I can see it as though she is right there—she had a marble-topped table and had a copper samovar, and boy that samovar was going all day. You could smell this wonderful fragrance of this chicory coffee. And those days, ladies were at home at a certain designated time [end of tape one] [beginning of tape two] But great-grandmother had a small, narrow living room. And at the far end of it, it had two white columns, all white columns that had a tapestry draped. So the ladies would visit, they would sit around the living room and they would all visit, and everybody with the hats and gloves and the whole thing. Great-grandmother would serve the chicory coffee and the petit-fours and everything. Then around four-thirty, she would rap on her cane, her cane on the floor three or four times, and the tapestry drapes would fly open and I would be standing there ready to recite. I mean, all gussied up with a big bow in my hair, because every Friday after school, I had to memorize a piece for great-grandmother. Now, they were all pieces—great-grandmother liked patriotic pieces, like “Ring Grandfather, Ring for Liberty,” or “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death.” Can you imagine anything more boring for those ladies have to sit through these recitations, and different every Sunday. Of course, they would applaud, being polite. And I’ve always said, “I feel in love with applause when I

was four years old, and have been enjoying it ever since.” That’s how I started public speaking, that’s really how I started. You see, in those days, when the family asked you to do something, you did it. It never occurred to me to tell great-grandmother I wasn’t going to do that. Whoever heard of such a thing? I mean, you just did it. You know, she just adored me. She used to let me jump on her feather bed, get on top of it and jump as high as I could and everything. So those are memories, you know, that you never ever forget.

**TBW:** I love that reciting. Did she pick the pieces?

**AFL:** Of course, my great-grandmother would suggest something, my grandmother would find something. And then, don’t forget in those days, see, my grandmother had definite ideas about how to rear children, especially young ladies. In addition to my school work, I had to study music and painting and dancing and what we used to call elocution in those days, which we now call speech. So a lot of those speeches came from the text for the elocution lesson.

**TBW:** Was that typical across the board, or is that a tradition of the south, would you say?

**AFL:** It was typical across the board in the south and part of the south west. The idea was not to make a public figure, the idea was to make you charming, to make you a well-rounded, cultivated young lady. Now, by the time mama found out that I was serious about music, about painting, about dancing and about speaking, it was too late to stop me. That is not what she had in mind at all. I’d always say, “Don’t blame me, this was your idea.” You see, for women to take public stands, per se, was not acceptable. And to do it on controversial issues? See, I’ve always admired my grandmother because no matter how old she was, she was always having to adjust to my lifestyle. For example, I had a marvelous friend in San Antonio, the late Missus Sidney Berkowitz, Rosalie Berkowitz, who was an accomplished artist. And her real forte was she really understood the life and times of the black people in the south, and she painted about them. And one Christmas, she gave me a lithograph, and the lithograph’s subject was a head portrait of her cook’s nephew, a very handsome young black gentleman.

And signed it for me, it was a presentation lithograph. And I hung it above my bed, in my bedroom. And my grandmother came in my bedroom one day and suddenly turned and said, "What is that?" I said, "Isn't that fabulous, Rosalie gave it to me for Christmas." My grandmother said, "Well, it's probably a very fine work of art, but it has to come down." I said, "What are you talking about?" She said, "I'm not going to have pictures of men in this bedroom, and particularly a black man. That is not correct." So I said, "Just sit down a minute and we'll talk about it." I said, "You have to understand in art, anything that is not illegal or immoral that is well-handled is a proper subject for art." She not only left it up, but a couple of weeks after that—mama belonged to a little card club, twelve ladies, total age of about nine thousand. And they played a racy game called Five Hundred that preceded auction bridge. And they would come upstairs and leave their coats and wraps in my bedroom suite. And as they came up the steps, I heard my grandmother talking to some of them in my bedroom, and she would say, "Isn't that a marvelous portrait? One of Amy's artist friends gave it to her. And, of course, as we all know, in art, anything that is well-done is acceptable." See? She grasped it and she ran with it. Remember the generation. For that generation from the deep south to come that far, and she didn't just verbalize it, she accepted it, she did it. See? So we learn from each other.

**TBW:** I just cannot stop seeing a picture of a young girl behind a tapestry reciting these patriotic things. It's wonderful. It doesn't sound like it would be anything that would harm anybody to learn and recite and speak in front of groups now, we get no chance to do that now.

**AFL:** Absolutely. You hear young vaudeville people say, "I was born in a trunk, I was in my parents' show when I was a baby."

**TBW:** When did you start speaking on behalf of anything that might have—that drew you out in public, and how did you family feel about that?

**AFL:** Well, I really started speaking as an adult in public in the forties. But I don't think my grandmother objected so much to that, but she was not happy about having my picture in the paper or

anything of that kind. She thought that was somewhat vulgar. Didn't know where that picture would wind up, or someone who was deranged might see your picture and all that. That worried her. But I think she accepted the other. My two uncles were very conservative, politically speaking. I never have been, I'm still not. So we were always at crossed swords on that. And I never influenced me, it never influenced my thinking, that's what I believed and I had the courage to stand on it, publicly and otherwise. But sometimes that led to some, what shall I say, rough spots in the functioning of the family. And my grandmother sort of—the interesting thing was she never took an active interest in politics. But the day Franklin Delano Roosevelt died, I even remember where we were. We were parked in a car—we had gone to attend something—we were parked in a car in front of Laurel Heights Pharmacy, and I had gone in to get my grandmother a Coca-Cola, and while I was in there, I heard the announcement on the radio. When I came to the car and told her, and she just burst into tears. She just loved him. But she never engaged in politics, ever.

**TBW:** Even after women got the vote? She just didn't want to get involved?

**AFL:** No. It was not a habit. It was too late, not her lifestyle. Just didn't get involved.

**TBW:** I'm just curious about this for my own information, how much of a time lag was there between a radio announcement, say of his being stricken, and his death?

**AFL:** Yes, there was some time. Yes. Remember, that he had the stroke and the daughter summoned the woman he had been in love with for years, so she could see him one more time. She did, and then Eleanor Roosevelt came. That created a schism between her and her daughter for years, but they patched it up. But it hurt Eleanor Roosevelt very much. So yes, there was some time.

**TBW:** So were active political participants in your family mostly Republican, then?

**AFL:** No, they were all Democrats. They lived Democrats and they died Democrats. And I used to challenge them and say—that infuriated them—“Why aren't you intellectually honest? You're

philosophically Republican. Why don't you get out of the Democratic Party?" "Nobody in this family has ever been a Republican as far as I can remember." See? That sound familiar?

**TBW:** So they voted Democratic even though...

**AFL:** I don't think they voted a straight Democratic ticket all the time, no. Most of the time, but not all the time. But they were super conservative. I used to say, "You're both one hundred and eighty degrees right of Atilla the Hun." I think they often wondered what went wrong with me, they couldn't figure it out.

**TBW:** Can you tell me about your further education?

**AFL:** Well, it never did end, really. I wrote a long dissertation on the process of reading, the technical process of reading, the psychological results of it, and I'm laughing about it, because I had it in my hands recently, and it's the dullest thing you ever saw. As most dissertations are. You know, today, another thing that's really alarming to me, you can do a dissertation on—I have a friend, a brilliant educator, all her life. Her doctor's dissertation was editing a little-known Elizabethan play. There were only three extant copies of it, one in the Huntington in Los Angeles, one in the National Archives in Washington and one in the Library of London. But when I read it, what it said was, 'On page sixty-three, line four, in the California edition is a comma, but this comma does not exist...' and I thought, 'Yes, and what about it?' I know a young lady who did her master's thesis on interviewing the women who worked as prostitutes in the Chicken Ranch, and she gave it to me to read. It was really upsetting to me, I didn't finish it. Why would anybody—a sociological study—come on, what do they talk about? We've gotten so far off of what education is really all about, and it's just—you can get a doctorate building birdcages.

**TBW:** And it's gotten so specialized.

**AFL:** Highly specialized. So now, what's the old saying? We're going to know more and more and more about less and less and less, until we know everything about absolutely nothing. I was hanging an

exhibition of mine in Fort Worth. And there was a plaque on the outside of the building, Surgeon for the Left Hand. So I went in and told the group, "Don't hurt your right hand here. We'll be in trouble because nobody knows how to fix it." I don't know, maybe he was used to prizefighting, I don't know. By the way, this doesn't have anything to do with what we're talking about, except it's a symbol of the times. Have you seen the morning paper? Have you noticed the front page picture? Well, just look at it when you go home. I think it is totally unacceptable. It is brash, it is vulgar...

**TBW:** Oh, Oscar de la Hoya. Or was that sports? No, it was the front page.

**AFL:** It was the front page. Take a good look at it?

**TBW:** Oh, yes, now I remember. With the gold underwear sort of thing.

**AFL:** Yes, with the trousers open. This is disgusting, absolutely disgusting. What do you think the young people, do they think that's a role model? We don't need to be looking at him or anybody else in that condition. And if you can't box with your shorts correctly placed, then box in private. Do you see all the young people in the background, screaming and yelling and going on? That is unacceptable, and it's disgusting.

**TBW:** Well, it is. It's indicative of the general loosening...

**AFL:** Yes. Dishabille. Now everything goes. Why bother to dress at all? And some of the things you see in public, you can't tell whether people have been to a rodeo, opera, picnic or been in bed, sleeping. The clothes, or the few that they have on. You see, that is not superficial. How you dress tells how you feel about yourself. You don't have to have on a designer gown, you don't have to have on a custom-made suit, but by George, you can put yourself together. I'm delighted that they're going to have uniforms. There are certain things that are unacceptable in the Northside school district.

**TBW:** So that has changed dramatically, I imagine.

**AFL:** And they let it go too long, too far.

**TBW:** I was thinking about that the other day about gloves. I saw a little girl with gloves on. And it just caught my eye, and I thought, well, how silly, just thirty years ago, that was not unusual.

**AFL:** Well, it never went out. I can hear mama saying, "Amy Bernice, where are your gloves?" I thought, 'Oh, I forgot, I'll go get them.'

**TBW:** And I wore gloves to church when I was very young, I remember that. And it gives you a whole different feeling. I think that's a very good example.

**AFL:** All the children at the school, that makes everybody uniform. You don't have to worry that somebody else has a more expensive skirt than you have or whatever. Everybody's got the same. And they, you can see the bodies straighten up, they look good and they know it. They feel good.

**TBW:** So you agree with the Northside decision? There were some of those things that were really quite vague. No unusual hairstyles.

**AFL:** Well, that means no Native American cuts with the spikes and the colors and all that.

**TBW:** Yes, those are definitely unusual...

**AFL:** No body piercing except for the traditional earrings.

**TBW:** Is that for everybody, or is that only for girls?

**AFL:** Well, I guess that if the boys want to do it, too, I guess that's acceptable. I wouldn't accept it.

**TBW:** Even in the last twenty years. I never wore shorts to school. We couldn't even wear jeans to school, and I'm only thirty-five.

**AFL:** Well, now, you know, in college they come to class in their flip-flops, their short-shorts, the vees, the body tops where your nude from the waist to the bustline. I didn't accept that in my classroom. No. I don't, I wouldn't, I didn't. I would say, "There's a grave mistake here. This isn't a picnic. This isn't a beach party. This is a classroom, and if you don't respect this institution, this discipline and yourself better than that, something's gone very wrong in your life." I said, "I'll count

you present, but I will not accept your presence dressed like that.” “We’ll sue you.” I said, “Well, sue me.”

**TBW:** And that came up, that did come up? Are you still teaching?

**AFL:** No, not formally, not by being in a specified place at a specified time, I hope I’m still teaching when I speak, but I’m not connected to any institution at this point.

**TBW:** What made you decide to end that part of your career, the formal instruction?

**AFL:** When I became chairman of the board of the college, you really try not to mix administration and trusteeship. That’s a very, very tight line. Administration resents that terribly, overstepping—in other words, you try to micromanage, and that just isn’t done. I’ve been invited when I was chair, and still am, to teach isolated classes once in a while, and I accept, but not to do that formal, I stopped that cycle.

**TBW:** Do you miss it?

**AFL:** Yes, and I would miss it more if I didn’t have such a heavy lecture schedule and such a wide variety of audiences. My life has—I always tell my students, “Don’t live such a tight life.” I called it, I called it by several names, but I really call it psychological glaucoma. You know, when you have physical glaucoma, you lose your peripheral vision, you only have tubular vision. And I said, “Prepare yourself. Learn as much as you can, understand as much as you can. You never know what’s going to come your way, be prepared so you’re ready to go into it.” Like there were two tangents in my life, both started about fifteen years ago, and I never dreamed I would be connected with either one of those disciplines, law and architecture. And they both came from talks I gave. And from that, I have fifteen years of service to the state bar. I started on the local grievance committee, then the grievance oversight committee then the lawyer discipline commission. It was fabulous. And I met so many marvelous attorneys, you only hear about the bums, you know, and brilliant and caring. Texas attorneys want to clean house, and they’re working on it. They got a long way to go, but they’re

working on it. And I learned so much, working with attorneys of that caliber on the different commissions. And the same with architecture. I gave a talk for their annual state meeting and when Boone Powell, from O'Neil Ford's office called me, I said, "Gosh, you know I'm not an architect." He said, "That's why we asked you. We don't want to hear anything about architecture, we're sick of it." And from that I became a public member of the Texas Chapter of the American Institute of Architecture, worked with them for fifteen years. I just gave a keynote address for their annual conference. Met marvelous architects. See, I have this great, almost worshipful feeling about architecture, because I tell them, "Architects have to know everything, that's why you fail so often." They do. You got to build a barn, you got to build a cathedral, got to build a swimming pool, got to build a hospital, got to build a school, got to build a concert hall. You have to know about all these things. It's sort of the apogee of all the arts.

**TBW:** Yes, it incorporates almost everything.

**AFL:** Put together. You see, I'm so grateful because I never dreamed—I never sought it, I never—I hope I was ready for it. When they invited me, I went into it and I just loved it.

**TBW:** I've always been fascinated by architecture. There are so many things it encompasses.

**AFL:** Yes. So those are the two branches of my life that never occurred to me. I tell my students, "You have to be ready."

**TBW:** And open.

**AFL:** And open. Absolutely.

**TBW:** There's a lot of fear that 'I can't.' And that doesn't seem to be much a part of your way of thinking. I'm afraid to do that, I might not succeed.

**AFL:** No. No. I once had a—she's still a darling friend—in show biz, say to me once, "The reason I never made it big because I never had the courage to attempt failure." I thought that was a profound statement. In the real significant sense of that word, really profound.

**TBW:** It's very risky.

**AFL:** Yes. It's like when I've had juried shows in painting, I've always told all my students and all my friends, "If you enter competition voluntarily, and being rejected makes you want to kill yourself, don't do it." What is a juried show? What is it all about? It just means that particular painting in the context of those works, in the view of that particular group of judges is so and so. And the proof of it is, you get rejected from one show and you send it to another and you win a prize. But it does give you an opportunity to sort of, like if you know who the jurors are—you may not know them personally, but admire them—how they feel about your work, it gives you an insight, see, into your work.

**TBW:** That's a tough thing to do though, to step back from the immediate feeling of rejection and understand it.

**AFL:** You learn that way. Doctor Wilhelm always tells her students, "You learn from your mistakes." So once she said a little girl came up to her and said, "Doctor Wilhelm, I made two mistakes, so I'm getting ahead." She said she had to re-explain that one. But that's the way you want to feel about that. This business of this terrible pressure artists put themselves under, the agony they go through—see, competition, and this is a radical statement, and I know it is and I mean it to be, because it goes to the root of the matter. Competition brings the worst out in most people. I learned that showing horses. I've had people want to kill you for a tin cup. Oh, yes. See, if I were young and vigorous, I wouldn't go back to showing horses for a thousand dollars a day tax free. Nor would I take anything for what I learned when I did show horses. You have to learn why the best horse doesn't necessarily win, and you have to learn about what people are willing to do to win. You have to learn all that not to become disillusioned. But I wouldn't go back to it. The best thing you can do with a horse is to pick a good one, stay home and take care of it and enjoy riding. That's it. Same way competition, it doesn't make any difference what field you're in. People think that if we didn't have competition, prices would be sky high. I say, "Yes, because we're not ethically mature yet." If you do what you're doing because

you want to win and outdo somebody else, you've missed the whole point. You should be doing the right thing because it's the right thing to do. You see? I feel deeply about that.

**TBW:** I'm sorry, but I have a luncheon appointment at twelve-thirty that I think I'm just barely going to make.

**AFL:** Alright, well, you do what you have to do.