Voices of OKLAHOMA

Don E. Pray

Although he "grew up in a garage," Don worked hard and achieved great success in his life while helping others along the way.

Chapter 01 –
Introduction

Announcer: Donald E. Pray reached many goals by graduating from Tulsa's Central High School in 1950, graduating from the University of Tulsa in 1955 with a degree in petroleum engineering, and graduating from the University of Oklahoma School of Law in 1963. The law library at the University of Oklahoma was named for him thanks to a gift from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation, honoring Don Pray's service to the foundation as its first Executive Director and then as a long time-time trustee. He was a founding partner at the Pray, Walker, Jackman, Williamson & Marler law firm. Don was one of the founding Trustees of the Grace and Franklin Bernsen Foundation and has also served as a Director or Trustee of St. John Medical Center, the University of Tulsa, Philbrook Art Museum, and the Tulsa Ballet Theatre. These major accomplishments by a man who "grew up in a garage". It has been written about Don that "his life has been rewarding, not because of what he has received, but because of what he has been able to encourage others to do." Now you can listen to Don's interesting life story on *VoicesofOklahoma.com*.

Chapter 02 – 8:56
Pray Family

John Erling: My name is John Erling. And today's date is June 5, 2014.
Don, state your full name, your date of birth, and your present age, please.

Don Pray: I am Donald Eugene Pray. I was born January 16, 1932. I am eighty-two years of age, as we meet here today. I was born in Morningside Hospital, which no longer exists. It's a building on North Cheyenne about six blocks north of Archer.

JE: I've never heard of anybody who's last name was Pray. What's the story behind that?

DP: The name "Pray," I'm not sure of its origins. My dad was one of seven children. He was born in Muskogee.

By the time that I was aware of any family relationships, his father had left his mother, and Beatrice Pray had been a Jackson. So I don't know the history of the Pray name at all. There was one other Pray family here in Tulsa, and he was the guy who started the Cord Automobile Rebuilding. But he was no relationship to our family.

JE: About your father, what was his name, and describe him a little bit?

DP: He was Clyde Elmer Pray. He and my mother, who was Ruth Frank, both graduated in 1925, from Tulsa Central High School. They both attended Phillips University in Enid. My father graduated with a degree in divinity and was an ordained minister of the Disciples of Christ Church.

He attempted to establish a ministry down in Lawton, Oklahoma. He was kind of a circuit rider, but back in the day, the Depression had hit and it was very difficult to sustain a family, trying to be a circuit-riding minister.

So he came back to Tulsa and got a job with Sunray DX, working in the refinery. And spent the rest of his life working in the refinery. His entire life he did shift work; he worked moving shifts. He would work three to eleven at night, and then the next week, he would work eleven until seven in the morning. And the following week then, he'd work seven until three. That's the kind of life he had his entire life.

I grew up having to adjust to those types of shifts, in a very small home.

JE: Then your mother's name?

DP: Ruth Annette Frank. She was raised by her grandparents as her mother died in childbirth with my mother. She had a Grandmother Frank, who lived at 1331 South Owasso, here in Tulsa. That's now the site of the Broken Arrow Expressway.

JE: Describe her personality and her raising you.

DP: Well, Mother was a very bright person. She was a would-be author. She wrote things for publication in later life. But she worked for a doctor S. C. Shepherd, during my years that I grew up.

She was the first president of the Tulsa County Medical and Dental Assistants Organization. So she was a very bright, aggressive person. She continued to learn throughout her life.

While I felt my father really didn't have any interest, much, in learning. He did his work at the plant and played a lot of golf. He was an excellent golfer. During his later years, he became a State Seniors Champ in golf.

But Mother, as I say, continued to do writing. She wrote short articles and sent them into magazines. And occasionally would get paid for them. In her later years, when she was at the Broadmoor Retirement Village, she wrote a weekly newspaper for them.

And prior to that time, as a member of Eastside Christian Church, she wrote a column in the church paper called *The Church Mouse*. I guess I got some of my interest in writing from her.

JE: I was going to ask you then, because you became accomplished as an attorney and all, did you draw from both of them, or mostly maybe from your mother.

DP: Mostly from my mother, because she was the one that challenged me to read. I loved reading from the very beginning. And I guess in my early days, I read a lot of *Reader's Digest* magazines to improve my vocabulary. And I just love books, love to read.

JE: Did you have brothers or sister?

DP: I'm an only child.

JE: Describe to us the first house that you would remember living in, in Tulsa.

DP: Well, the very first house I can remember was a small house just off of Admiral and Lewis. And it was on the grounds of St. Francis Church. From time to time, I used to wander over into the school at St. Francis and the sisters would call my home and tell my mother that I was there, would they please come get me? [both chuckle]

From there, we moved into quarters at my great grandmother's house at 1331 South Owasso. We lived in the servants' quarters. It was a one-room arrangement, with only a bathroom and a hot plate.

The next house I remember, we moved down to Brookside on 36th Place and lived in a duplex there. And I don't remember much about that accept that Brookside was highly underdeveloped at that time. It consisted of a drugstore, a market, a Safeway store, and a Crawford's Drugstore.

JE: So this would have been about what time? In 19 . . . ?

DP: This would have been, it was during the time that I was at the end of my first grade and I had gone into Eliot School.

JE: So we're talking '41, '42, somewhere in there?

DP: Yeah, probably 1940.

JE: Okay.

DP: Because I remember 1941. My father had acquired two lots at 37th Place and Norfolk. And he proceeded to build a house. He had plans to build a larger home on these two lots, but in order to proceed, he built a garage that was twenty feet by twenty feet and had garage doors on one side and an entry door on the other. And we actually lived in that house. It was divided into two rooms; each room being ten feet by twenty feet.

I lived in the kitchen side of that house, which had a table and chairs and an army bunk. That was my room—I lived across from the bathroom.

The other side of the house was a bedroom for my folks and a living room combined.

JE: You referred to your grandmother, talk about your grandmother and, I think it would be, Great Aunt Ruby, because you talk about their living conditions and the icebox. And I think it would be good to hear about that.

DP: It was my Great Grandmother Frank. She was from England and she had married a Jewish man, who I think was French, thus the name Frank. They lived in what I considered to be a mansion. [laughs] It was really a two-bedroom home with lovely furnishings. And my Aunt Ruby, who was my great aunt, was secretary of Public Service Company of Oklahoma. She had a very high-placed job and was extremely well thought of as a business lady.

They had things such as a record player, which was an old Philco radio and record player. I loved to go over there and play records. And they had something called View-Master, which was something you'd look through and it would give you in-depth vision, because it was two pictures that you would see at the same time.

One of the things that I particularly remember about my grandmother's house was that they still had an icebox, which was literally cooled by ice. And they used to have a card that they would put in the window, as ice was delivered on the street. On the card, it would say: 50, 20, 100, and I don't remember what the fourth side was, but the side that you would turn up would tell them how much ice they wanted to have delivered on any given day.

And, of course, back in the day, milk was also delivered directly to your door. I do remember having the icebox and chipping ice off when you wanted some kind of cool drink.

JE: As a kid, did you go out to the iceman when he would come and he might give kids ice?

DP: Well, you had chips of ice that as he would chip off a block of ice he would also have a few pieces of ice that would stay on the truck. And you could pick it up. And have to clean some of the wood from the floor off of it.

JE: [laughing]

Chapter 03 – 2:57
December 7, 1941

John Erling: You mentioned 1941. Let's talk about December 7, 1941. Do you recall that day?

Don Pray: Yes. December 7, 1941, was a day of infamy for our entire country, according to President Roosevelt. And I remember going to school and talking with the children. And we thought that we would handle those Japs in no time at all.

How wrong we were.

JE: And you were about ten years old then?

DP: I was about ten years old then.

JE: Right.

DP: We thought that that was going to be a very short-lived war. As it turned out, my father wanted to get into service but he was too old to be drafted. And they wouldn't accept him just as a volunteer. So he went to Enid and took flying lessons to where he was able to become a pilot. Then he was of interest to the air force. And he did enlist in the air force.

We moved to Illinois, for him to be stationed at Scott Air Force Base and take his first Air Force training. I was entering the sixth grade at that time. And we lived in a little town east of St. Louis, called Lebanon, Illinois. I had my dog, Buster, along with us at the time. We lived there for almost a year.

And my first experience with living in an integrated school room was in Lebanon, where we had a couple of black boys, which was a first for me. They were quite a bit older. In the sixth grade, they were probably fifteen or sixteen years old. It was quite an experience to learn to get along in a classroom with these older boys.

JE: Maybe that helped form opinions for the rest of your life.

DP: Yes, it probably influenced me. I later learned that not all of the blacks were having such a struggled to maintain their role in school as these two did.

JE: Other members of your family, did they get into the war experience as a result of December 7?

DP: Well, the only one in my dad's family that did was a younger brother named Johnny, who spent his entire life as a military person.

JE: How long—did your father see combat, as he flew?

DP: Uh, my dad, subsequently after he left Scott Air Force Base, we moved, at the end of my sixth grade year, to Texas. He was stationed at an air force base just outside of Paris, Texas. And we lived in a small town called Reno, Texas. It was probably ten miles east of Paris and consisted of two stores, which were also gasoline stations. We lived in a small home that had a water tank outside the house. They caught water in the gutters and would go into the cistern. So we didn't have in-house plumbing, we had water that we drank out of the cistern. We also had an outhouse. So that was my first experience at living like that.

Chapter 04 – 6:35
Movies, Radio

John Erling: Let's bring you back to Tulsa then, in the first elementary school you went to here.

Don Pray: I was in Elliot School from the last half of the first grade up throughout the fifth grade. Had an amazing group of classmates there, people like Burt Holmes and Jim Lewis,

who later became the president of Flintco Construction. Burt's father was a well-known insurance man.

JE: Dan P. Holmes?

DP: Dan P. Holmes, who always came on the radio and says, "I want to talk about Highway 33."

JE: Right.

DP: Burt was a dear friend throughout that time and has continued to be my friend until today.

JE: You talk about you went to school at Whittier Elementary.

DP: Yes.

JE: When did that happen?

DP: That was my kindergarten and first grade, I was there.

JE: All right. Did you go to movies? And what kind of movies would you see?

DP: Yes, I lived on Xanthus, and I would walk down on Admiral to Admiral and Lewis to go to the Circle Theater, because they had serial movies every Saturday.

JE: Remember some of the movies you might have seen or stars?

DP: Well, *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*, was one of the serials. And then later I remember a serial about a black panther. You know, it amazes me that we had the freedom to walk down there and nobody ever thought anything about it. It was probably six or seven blocks away. And as I was growing up there, there used to be a streetcar line down 1st Street that you could go downtown on.

I would go down on Saturday mornings. My mother would work and I would meet her at Kress's and have lunch there in the basement of Kress's, which had a nice lunch counter. I always looked forward to buying a toy at the toy counter there in Kress's.

JE: I would imagine going back to Eliot and Whittier, there must be some teachers' names that you remember to this day.

DP: I don't at Whittier. At Eliot I certainly remember a woman that kind of influenced my life—Rebecca Cookert, who was a wonderful teacher. She taught my homeroom and taught science and geography.

I got in a little bit of trouble because I was moving into the sixth grade. I wanted Mrs. Cookert to also be teaching that class. I began a campaign to get Mrs. Cookert promoted to teaching the sixth grade.

And my principal called me in and let me know that wasn't appropriate for students to be involved in the selection of the teacher. [both laughing] It's interesting, Mr. Jester, who was our principal, had also been a principal when my father was in school at Boroughs Elementary School on the west side of Tulsa.

JE: You talked about the Brockman Dairy Farm.

DP: Yes, the Brockman Dairy Farm was located at 37th and Peoria, and it stretched down to about 39th and Peoria. They raised dairy cattle. None of the development that there

is now was there at the time. There was a DX service station at the corner of 37th and Peoria and Brockman Farm was immediately behind that. And we lived right across the street. There were cattle grazing right across the street from my house, all the way down to 39th.

And at 39th and Norfolk was a radio station with a steel tower. That doesn't exist today but the radio station building, the brown brick building, still exists back in among the houses. It was KMOE. I used to wander down there from time to time and talk with the radio engineers. And they taught me Morse Code as I was growing up.

JE: Where you a boy scout?

DP: I was a boy scout, Troop 23, at First Christian Church. I never retained Eagle Scout's status but I was a Life Scout and went to summer camp with the boy scouts at Camp Garland for four or five years. That was the highlight of my summer as I was growing up, was to get to go to Camp Garland.

JE: Then there was this driven-in barbeque place on Peoria.

DP: Yes there was. It was on the east side of the Brockman Dairy Farm. Of course, we didn't have air-conditioning back in the day. And I would open my windows and have a fan at my bedside, and I could hear the live music playing at the barbeque. It was probably about 38th Street and Peoria.

JE: Did you listen to radio much?

DP: I listened to radio a lot. I had a radio right at my bedside and would listen to all the serials in the afternoon. *Captain Midnight*, *Jack Armstrong, the All-American Boy*, *Fibber McGee and Molly*, *The Lone Ranger*.

JE: To listen to that and your imagination going had to be a fun time for you.

DP: It was wonderful. I used to listen on Saturday morning to something called *Let's Pretend*. It was a story for young children. It was the precursor to *Mr. Rogers in His Neighborhood*.

JE: Then you finished your elementary at Eliot, you said.

DP: I went through the fifth grade at Eliot and then went to Lebanon, Illinois, where I completed the sixth grade.

JE: Okay. How do you come back to Tulsa?

DP: I came back to Tulsa in a very circuitous way. My father was moved from Lebanon to Paris, Texas. From there we moved to Brownwood, Texas, a little town outside of Brownwood called Bangs. Was there for maybe two weeks. And then we moved to Lafayette, Louisiana, and I enrolled in a school called University of Louisiana at Lafayette. And I was in teachers' training school for about six to eight weeks, until my father was transferred back to Brownwood, Texas. From there he was transferred overseas and I came home to Horace Mann Junior High, in the second half of the seventh grade.

JE: Was that a good experience for you?

DP: It was trying. Everybody in Texas, as you move from school to school, they wanted to try you out and see what you're worth. They considered me a Yankee because I came from north of Texas.

JE: [laughing]

DP: And, uh, they didn't abide Yankees very well in Texas.

JE: But did you do things like have a paper route?

DP: I had a paper route the whole time I was growing up back in Tulsa. As soon as we moved back into Brookside—

Chapter 05 – 9:35
Tulsa in the Fifties

Don Pray: When my father went overseas, he was sent to the China-Burma area. I stayed at my grandmother's house for approximately a year, until the renters moved out of our Brookside home and we moved back in.

When I went back down there then I started a paper route in Brookside, which I kept throughout the rest of junior high and high school years. Of course, Brookside was growing rapidly, apartments were being built, there were a number of apartments built between 38th and 41st, east of Peoria. I was the first paper boy to serve those apartments as they were being built.

John Erling: Is your father coming home from the service in here?

DP: Yes, he came home from the service, probably in 1946. He spent several years over in Burma, flying these little one-engine planes. They were originally called liaison pilots but they didn't end up being artillery spotters. The development of the artillery was such that they didn't have to have airplane spotters, so they used them as ambulance planes. And they would fly into very tight situations and load up a wounded veteran and take him back out to a hospital.

JE: Another fun experience for you was the horse that you got, that first horse.

DP: Yes. My first horse was a roping pony named Joe. He was a beautiful sorrel horse. Because Brookside had not developed we still had wide open fields to the west of our house between Norfolk and the river. There was only one home and that was the home of Jack McCloud, one of my very first boyhood friends.

Joe, we would just stake him out in the field to the west of us and he would graze out there. Uh, loved having a horse, I always loved animals.

JE: You probably could deliver newspapers with him.

DP: I absolutely did.

JE: [laughs]

DP: I had a paper route at one time, up at 26th Place and Peoria, in a very high class neighborhood. And I think they were startled one time when I rode Joe up there and delivered my route from horseback.

JE: How about sports? Was that important for you?

DP: Sports was probably the most important thing in my life. I began to play softball for the paper station, which was called Station 13. Had a team that played against other paper stations.

JE: Paper stations? What do you mean?

DP: Well, the city is divided up into various stations where the papers would be delivered to the station and the paperboys would pick them up and put them into paper bags and ride their bicycles in routes all over the city. Station 13 was a station, which was at 35th and Peoria. And the papers were delivered into the driveway of a filling station and dropped off there. And the boys would go pick up their bundles of papers, fold them up, load them into their sacks and take off on bicycles to be delivered.

Mine was mostly a morning route.

JE: The boys who delivered papers played softball for that team?

DP: Yes, I was the pitcher and Jack McCloud, my neighbor, was my catcher. And we used to work out a lot practicing pitching and catching. We played against teams usually much better than we were. I was not a great pitcher but I was satisfactory.

We did okay until we went up against a team that had a fellow named Shelby Metcalf who was absolutely one of the best pitchers in the city. Shelby later became a collage basketball star and coached at Texas A&M. It was always a fun thing to go up against somebody as qualified as Shelby was.

JE: On to high school, which high school?

DP: Went to Tulsa Central High, began to play football, went out for football there. One of my junior high school teachers was a fellow named Leon Fichman, who had played for the Detroit Lions. He was my homeroom teacher in the ninth grade and he knew that I wanted to play football. So he took some of his spare time—because he coached at Central too—and helped several us, including Jack McCloud, get some of the fundamentals of football and how to play line.

Leon was a lineman. He probably was six-four, 250, 260 pounds, and was just a terrific football player.

JE: Central High, that would have been the class of that you graduated.

DP: The nifty class of '50 from Central High. I played football all three years. The first two years I was not good enough to make the varsity team. I played what they called B Squad, or Junior Varsity. And I played guard.

Among my classmates were John Eagleton, Eddie Nacarude, John Pollack, Bob Montgomery, Thomason Keenan, Tom Sisson, Joe Seibert, all of whom remain friends to this very day. Playing football together, you become a very close-knit organization.

When I was a senior, my first game to start was against Will Rogers High School, which was our big rival. I was very excited to begin playing against Rogers. And we won that game seven to nothing.

That year, our team went on to be undefeated, except we lost one game to Muskogee. And the Muskogee Roughers were the state champions and they had three future All-Americans playing for them. Max Boydston, Kurt Burris, Buddy Burris, and a back by the name of Treadway, who became a star at the University of Arkansas. Boydston and the Burris boys became All-Americans with the University of Oklahoma.

JE: What position did you play?

DP: I played right guard, and John Eagleton played left guard. We were very small. John Eagleton probably weighed 145 pounds. I weighed around 160 pounds. So we were playing against much bigger people. And, of course, teams today, you couldn't even get on a team today weighing that kind of weight.

JE: Socially then at Central, where would you go in town and everybody would gather?

DP: Well, by that time I had bought my first car. I had a 1935 Ford with a rumble seat. I began dating my future wife in the eighth grade, Margaret Morrow. Her nickname was Butch. And that's how she's known to her classmates, even today.

Butch and I would go to the Quaker Drug, which was at 18th and Main Street. And that was the big hangout for all the high-schoolers back then. We went to movies together.

There were neighborhood theaters back in the day. The Plaza Theater was at 15th and Peoria. There was a Tower Theater at 11th and Denver. Later on, there was a Will Rogers Theater out east on 11th Street. And the Delman was at 15th Street and Lewis. Movies were one of our main sources of entertainment.

JE: How about the stores downtown where you would shop for clothes and such?

DP: Yes, there was Brown Duncan's, at the corner of 4th and Main Street. It had a wonderful restaurant on the second floor, which I remember their lemon chess pie they were famous for. There was a Seidenbach's down on Main Street between 5th and 6th. And there was a Vandevers on the corner of 5th and Boston. You used to be able to get awfully nice clothes downtown. There was a men's store at 5th and Boston. Sam Brenner's had custom-made suits and sport coats. Of course, I wasn't able to afford that back in the day.

There was a store on 6th Street between Main and Boston called Babyland. While I was in junior high I worked there for some three or four months. I worked mailing packages and mopping the floors and cleaning the plate glass windows on the front.

Later, I worked at Sears, which was about a ten-story building where the One Oak Building now is downtown. And I worked on the tenth floor in the warehouse, putting together bicycles and tricycles and toys of that nature.

JE: In the '50s, in the treatment of blacks in Tulsa, did you see signs posted that blacks were not invited or could not use restrooms?

DP: Well, what you mostly saw was things like fountains that would say: Whites only. I never experienced integrated schools except in Lebanon, Illinois. There were no blacks in Central High School. They all went to Booker T. Washington.

JE: Did you play them in football?

DP: No, back in that day, Booker T. was in their own league. And I don't know who they played. We played teams like Muskogee, Okmulgee, Oklahoma City Central, and Bartlesville in our league.

JE: Athletics were important in your life. You said your father was a good golfer. Did you take up golf?

DP: I didn't until I was probably in college. He just never spent the time with me to teach me golf. I went to watching him play from time to time, but I didn't play while I was growing up. Wish I had.

Chapter 06 – 4:33
Grew Up in a Garage

John Erling: Was there an interest academically beginning to develop as you were in high school, before you graduated?

Don Pray: I always liked school. I didn't have a great deal of problems in school. I was able to pretty much do all the work that I needed to do without even having to take work home. I typically, because I played football, had a study hall and would do most of my homework there.

I remember vividly there was a teacher who influenced me greatly named Athald Larsen. She taught history and I just loved the course and loved learning from her.

There was also a speech teacher by the name of Isabelle Ronan. She was very famous for some of the people that had gone through her—who's the famous reporter, *The Rest of the Story*?

JE: Paul Harvey.

DP: Paul Harvey was a graduate of Tulsa Central and had been a pupil of Isabelle Ronan's. Tony Randall was also a student of Isabelle—

JE: Now these—both were older than you, weren't they?

DP: Yes they were.

JE: And they graduated before you did.

DP: Yes they were. I remember one of the things that Isabelle taught me, one of the things we always said: A word is dead, some say, when it is said, but I say, it just begins to live, that day. [both laughing]

JE: That's cute. You seem to be a worker bee, beyond being a paper boy, some other jobs before you went off to college?

DP: Yes, if I was going to have spending money I had to develop my own spending money. My parents struggled financially and the house that my father had planned to build never got built. It was somewhat embarrassing to me to grow up in a garage, like I did. So I didn't have a lot of friends over to the house.

JE: Hmm (thoughtful sound). How about fireworks? I think you were involved in a fireworks job?

DP: Yes, I always loved fireworks. I used to order fireworks from Spencer Fireworks, that advertised in comic books and magazines. I would order an assortment of fireworks every year to shoot off on the fourth of July. And we would have a family get-together at the house. Because we were one block outside the city limits, so we could set off fireworks. And I always enjoyed those displays.

Eventually, I had my own fireworks stand up on Peoria, just south of 37th Street. Thirty-seventh was the city limits at that time. In fact, the bus lines turned around at 36th and Peoria because there was not much of town south of 36th Street.

JE: Wasn't there a farmers market, as we call them today?

DP: The farmers market was between Peoria and Lewis, north of Admiral. There used to be fixed buildings that were like a block long and there three or four of those in that area. And all of the farmers would have stalls and come in and bring their fresh produce.

I remember going up there and buying ears of corn and fresh tomatoes and potatoes. It was quite an experience. I know they're trying to start farmers markets on Cherry Street and in Jenks today, but there's nothing like what we used to have, where all the people would go to one place.

JE: About cars again, your first car again was?

DP: It was '35 black Ford with a rumble seat. The windshields would crank out and the back window would roll down so that you would have air blowing through the car in the hot summertime.

JE: What was your next car?

DP: Next car was a 1940 Chevy Coupe, just a one-seater. And I made the mistake of trying to paint it myself with a paintbrush. [both laughing] And I painted it a bilious blue, it was just awful. But once painted, it stayed that way as long as I had it.

JE: People comment on it? [laughing]

DP: Oh, yeah, the blue monster, it was called. But I had that until I prepared to get married. And I sold that car and started delivering another paper route in a really exclusive area, between 26th and 31st, east of Lewis. That's where all the big homes were. That's where the Warren family lived and people who are really wealthy live in that area.

I threw that for a period of six months or so while I was in college, and earned enough money to buy a 1950 Ford four-door sedan. And that's the car I had when I got married.

Chapter 07 – 6:43
University of Tulsa

John Erling: Okay, college, you went where to college?

Don Pray: I went to the University of Tulsa. I really didn't know if I was going to college or not. And I took a test to determine whether or not I was college material, and I did well enough that I got a partial scholarship to the University of Tulsa. The scholarship was for $150, which paid one half of my tuition for a full year.

You know, it's just amazing to me to look back and remember that college tuition for the University of Tulsa was only like $300 for a full year. That seems impossible in this day and age.

JE: And then we'll fast-forward real quick and then come back again. And then to think that you ended up being a member of the Board of Regents for Tulsa University.

DP: Yes, that's quite a stretch to even think that I could achieve that. When I first went to the University of Tulsa I, I still didn't know what I wanted to do. So they asked me what major I'd like to select. They said, "You know, you're really strong in math and science. You ought to consider engineering."

I said, "Fine. I'll do engineering."

They said, "Well, we have a great petroleum engineering school. You want to be a refinery engineer or a production engineer?"

Not knowing what the difference was, I said, "Well, I don't want to work in a refinery. My dad has done that. So I'll be a production engineer." That's how my major was ultimately decided.

JE: So then your major was?

DP: Petroleum production engineering.

JE: Okay. Something memorable then those four years at TU?

DP: Well, I worked the entire time. I started off working at Farmers and Merchants Bank and I posted what they call a savings book. I kept track of the activity of people depositing money into their savings. I would take their deposit slips and use a machine to actually

post those onto a ledger card and keep track of the savings account.

I also handled the mailroom and handled all the packages and mailing from that. When that job ended, I looked for a job and got a reference to a place called Western Supply, which manufactured refinery equipment called "heat exchangers." And I met a gentleman by the name of Jim Hughes. Jim was vice president for Western Supply. And Western was owned by a wealthy man by the name of Wilson Dye.

I went to work in the assembly plant. Western Supply consisted of an engineering department that would design heat exchangers, a welding shop that would do welding and fabrication, a machine shop, and then an assembly shop. The assembly shop would take the parts that had been machined and welded and would put them together into a big boiler-like piece of equipment. We would put it all together and then pressure it up with water, to determine whether or not there were any leaks and if all the welds would hold.

I worked out there on a shift from three in the afternoon until eleven at night. And I had my schedule pretty well arranged that I didn't have any afternoon classes. But my grades suffered. My very first semester, I made a straight B average while I was working at the bank. And then with the evening work, my grades fell to about a C+, I think it was a 2.3.

I worked out there for a period of maybe five or six months. And then I had a layoff. And I went to look for another job. Jim Hughes had not intended for me to get caught in the layoff. He called me up and brought me back and introduced me into the engineering department. And I began working and drafting, running blueprints, and doing very elemental drafting. I had not even had a drafting course, but I soon had one after my first year.

JE: Your parents weren't able to help you, financially?

DP: No, I, I paid for my college all the way through. They said they would take care of me living at home and my food. But whatever books and tuition, I had to take care of myself.

JE: What drove you to have that kind of determination?

DP: Well, I saw what other people did to make a living and I wanted to be better than just digging ditches or being a carpenter, like my father's father had been a carpenter here in town and built homes. And that's how my dad built our houses. He had learned the carpentry trade. And he could have been a carpenter instead of working in the plant. But I think the plant probably paid better wages.

I didn't want to live the kind of life that he had lived and I was determined to do better for myself.

JE: Yeah. Well, you graduated from TU in what year?

DP: In January of '55. The engineering courses were such that you had to take an awfully heavy load in order to graduate in four years. And because I was working part-time the entire time I was in college I wasn't able to take that full load. So I had to take one extra semester.

Fortunately, I did get several scholarships to help along the way. I got a Moorelane Engineering scholarship in my junior year, which paid $500, which was, I think, full tuition at the time. And maybe a little extra money. Then my senior year, I got something called a Socony Vacuum, which is Mobil Oil Company, parent company. And I got a $750 scholarship, which gave me some spending money in addition to books and tuition.

JE: The football era at that time, and I know you didn't play football there, but TU was pretty strong, weren't they, at that time?

DP: Yes, we had some pretty good football teams. We had one fellow who was a tackle, he was an All-American tackle and Howard Wall was a fullback and I remember the strength of the players. Jerry Cammons, who later became a lawyer, was an end that came down here from New York. Angelo Prosser was a guard; he later became coach at Bishop Kelly.

JE: Who was the coach at the time?

DP: I think Henry Franca was the coach early on.

JE: Glen Dobbs came later then?

DP: Glen Dobbs came later. Henry Franca had coached at Will Rogers when I played against him, but he had become the TU coach at that time.

JE: Again, you graduate from TU in the—

DP: January of 1955.

Chapter 08 – 8:08
Military Service

John Erling: Then what is your step?

Don Pray: I received a job offer from Continental Oil Company to go to work for them in the field. And I accepted their offer. My first job was to go to Ponca City. I went to Ponca City and worked out in the field, being a roustabout, as they called it, where you would do everything in connection with the well. You would clean up well sites, you would actually pull rods from the well when they had pumping jacks on them.

I even had one time in the summer before I went with Continental, worked down in the Glenpool, which is south of Jenks, and I pumped on a central power unit, where they used to have one engine that would pump seven, eight, or ten wells at a time. You had to hook the wells on one at a time. They would connect to this big band wheel, which would work these pool rods. I don't think people could even imagine today what that was like. But it was very interesting to get a chance to work on those kind of wells.

JE: So did you say to yourself ever, *I went to college to be a tool-pusher*?

DP: Well, everybody that I worked with down there kept encouraging me. Said, "Boy, you finish school. Don't do like us and have to come out here and work." It was hard, hard work. And it was, you know, 100 degree weather and we working out in the wide open spaces with no shelter at all.

JE: But as an engineer, you needed to go into the field to learn that.

DP: Yeah, you need to go into the field to learn that, and learn the basics. Because, ultimately, you'll be spending time in an office figuring out how to drill and complete wells and how to get better recovery from the wells you have already existing.

JE: You were married in here somewhere?

DP: I was married. I married in my junior year of college. And my wife worked for an oil company here in town. She worked as a secretary to the head of the geophysical department.

JE: Did you have children from that marriage?

DP: I have children from that marriage. We didn't have children, we later adopted them, much later after law school.

JE: Okay. Law school.

DP: Law school.

JE: You being a tool-pusher, and how do you go to law school?

DP: Well, six months into my training program with Continental, I was called up into the service. I had been in ROTC all during college. I received a commission as a second lieutenant in the international guard. I should have received it into the air force but during my senior year, Congress changed the rules, and instead of getting a direct commission into the air force, we got a commission into the international guard. And I was supposed to serve three years.

My first assignment was to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, Arizona. My wife and I drove into Tucson; it was 113 degrees. [laughs] But as they say, "It's a dry heat."

JE: Yeah. [laughing]

DP: I had, I think, something like eighteen dollars in my pocket and didn't have to report for like three or four days. We had to make do on that money until we reported and got our first pay.

Davis-Monthan was a strategic air command base. As such, it had two wings of B-47s and one wing of KC-135s, which were tankers that would do inflight refilling for the wings of B-47s.

When I first went into Davis-Monthan I went through a process where they would decide where to assign you. Being a petroleum engineer I thought I would probably be assigned to some engineering function. That didn't happen; I was assigned to what is called "personnel services." And the subspecialty was called "special services."

I was given the responsibility for running all of the recreation facilities on the base. I had the base gymnasium, I had a library, I had a movie theater, I had an airmen's service club. I had a special services supply, which had hunting gear, fishing equipment. I had a wood hobby shop, which had every type of woodworking machinery possible. You could build furniture or almost anything in the wood hobby shop. I had a model airplane hobby shop, and, ultimately, had riding stables. Even had a golf driving range, all under my responsibility and supervision.

The main thing that I attribute to my time in service is learning how to manage people. For each of these sections had wonderful staff of master sergeants and staff sergeants to run these operations. I learned how to manage people and get the most out of them and, of course, they did all the work, and I simply saw to it that everything ran the way it should and that they had the equipment necessary to accomplish their job.

JE: So as you went on into life and what you have done, which we'll get to, you would often draw on that experience.

DP: I went into the air force not expecting the level of capacity that the officers and the airmen had. I didn't know what to expect but I came out with a huge amount of respect for what they did and how they did it. It was a well-run organization. And, of course, the strategic air command was being run by Curtis LeMay. He was a tough, tough leader and he expected nothing but the best out of his people—and he got it. It was really encouraging to see that our military was in the kind of hands that it is.

JE: Did you ever see him in person, Curtis LeMay?

DP: I never did. We had a base commander by the name of Jim Edmundson, who was a very young good-looking man. He was movie star quality. I really had a huge respect for him. And then in later life, I would run into him in Florida, where he was mayor of this little community that I moved to called Long Boat Key. I was in a rotary club with Jim Edmundson and I never lost the respect that I had for him. He was just a tremendous individual.

One of my experiences that I had in the air force is the base commander was one command under General Edmundson, who commanded the base. The base commander was the 803rd Air Base Group, a fellow named Colonel Wimberley headed the base, and he asked me to organize a drum and bugle corps.

Of course, I had no musical talents whatsoever, so I went to the University of Arizona, in Tucson, and hired a music teacher and put out the word on the base for people to volunteer to join the drum and bugle corps. The attractiveness of it was that they would get to wear a special uniform with white spats and epaulets, and a white helmet, and play in the drum and bugle corps.

So we recruited probably twenty or twenty-five people to play the drums and learn how to play the bugle. This guy taught them and I taught them drill so that we could march in close order drill.

I learned that the reason for the drum and bugle corps is that the base commander, General Edmundson, had been invited for Memorial Day to be the lead of the parade in town. And he wanted us to march in the parade. So we got them up and ready to march. And they learned a couple of drum cadences and one bugle cadence.

I even had a drum major trained, and the day before the parade, he was transferred to another base and I ended up having to be the drum major and lead the drum and bugle corps in this parade.

JE: You were in the air force for how long?

DP: I was in for two years. Congress saw the error of their ways in drafting us into international guard for a three-year term. And they amended the act, so we became part of the air force regular reserves. And the time was shortened from three years to two years.

Chapter 09 – 5:57
Conoco

Don Pray: I left and went back into the Conoco training program and was sent to Houston to spend time in the headquarters in Houston. Then I was sent back into Oklahoma, to Oklahoma City. And then finally, went back to Ponca City to spend some time in the engineering research lab, which was located in Ponca City.

Then my final assignment was to Ardmore, which is a district office in Southern Oklahoma that had the south half of Oklahoma and all of the production therein. And I became a staff engineer, one of three staff engineers in the Ardmore office.

There my responsibilities were to study the reservoirs that had already been drilled, to see if there was possible secondary recovery, additional reserves, or some way to stimulate the reservoirs in order to gain more production from them. And to look for possibilities of extending the fields to new areas and drill wells. My responsibility was to supervise the program for drilling of new wells, and how to complete the wells.

I would actually go out on the well site and as the well was being drilled, run something called a drill stem test, which would enable you to actually open the formation into the drill string and test it to see how it would produce.

John Erling: And then you also realized how much your work in the oilfield, the manual labor, paid off for you. And you could relate to those guys even better, I would imagine.

DP: Absolutely. The time that I spent roughnecking and roustabouting in the field really would pay off. Because we understood the people that worked in the field. And I had been a part of it so I appreciated what they did and how they did it. It was really enjoyable and I liked the work that I was doing.

One of the fields that I was assigned was particularly challenging and interesting. It was called the Butterley Field and it was about ten miles west of the town of Davis, which is on the north side of the Arbuckle Mountains, maybe thirty miles north of Ardmore. The Butterley pool was a huge thick oil sand, approximately 120 feet in depth. It extended over maybe a forty- to sixty-acre area. And it was a prodigious producer. But the problem was that the oil itself was a very thick viscous oil called Ten Degree at Gravity. As you increase the number of degrees, it becomes more fluid. You know, at 40 API oil is the quality of oil that you would put into your car. Ten degree oil is what you would put on your road as asphalt. This particular field produced this asphalty crude and it was so thick they would produce sand from the formation into the tanks. And they had to have the tanks a conical shape so that the sand would go to the bottom and they could clean that out manually from time to time.

Then they would take that thick crude oil and they would truck it out and take it to a site where they would mix it with a much lighter oil to come up with a blend that would flow more easily. Because they even had to have heaters on these tanks to make the crude oil sufficiently thin to flow into the trucks.

JE: Hmm (thoughtful sound). But what while you found this very fascinating, something was working up here.

DP: Well, there was so much oil in place and only about 10 percent had been recovered. And you would expect in a reservoir of that nature to recover as much as 30 percent. And I have tried to figure ways to extract more oil from that reservoir, because 120-foot thick formation is almost unheard of in the oil patch.

So I came up with an idea. They were doing something called institute combustion. Which was setting formations on fire. This particular formation I didn't think would be susceptible to a fire flood, but I thought that elevating the temperature of the formation might make the crude oil flow out more easily. That maybe a hot water flood might work.

And I did some studies to try to see what that would accomplish. And made a presentation at an engineering meeting. Conoco was a very enlightened company and they brought their engineers together annually to meet and talk over new methods of recovery and new ideas that were available to help production.

So I did a presentation on the Butterley and hot water flooding. The people from the research lab were very skeptical about this. They didn't think it would work. So I just went on about my job.

And several weeks later, they called me and said they had had a chance to study the possibility of hot water flooding. And they believed that might work.

Well, in the meantime, Conoco had decided they were going to move me to broaden my training. They wanted me to go to some place called Carmi, Illinois, which is on the Ohio River, just opposite Evansville, Indiana. It was my understanding from people in the patch that it's not a very desirable place to live. And I had loved my time in Ardmore.

I had gotten involved in Toastmasters, and I'd gotten involved with the Junior Chamber of Commerce. And I was president of the Junior Chamber. In Toastmasters, I had become involved in speech competitions and had even won a regional speech contest and participated in a state contest, which I did not win, but I felt like I was improving myself as I went along.

Chapter 10 – 9:20
Law School

Don Pray: So at the time, they decided to move me to Carmi, I began to look at other possibilities. And I considered going back to law school. So I made a trip home to Tulsa to visit with a gentleman that my wife's family knew, by the name of George Bowlin. George Bowlin was general counsel for Sun Oil Company and located here in Tulsa. He was considered to be one of the top oil and gas attorneys in the country. He had actually been hired into the job by J. Howard Pugh in Philadelphia, and was very highly regarded.

When I talked to George about going back to law school, what I remember him saying is, "Don, there's always a place at the top for really good attorneys."

I also then visited a friend of mine from the service by the name of Dale Henson, who had left the service and gone to Texas University into law school. And I went down to visit him to see how he was getting along. And he just loved the study of the law.

So I made the decision to go back to law school and take a leave of absence from Conoco. I—

John Erling: Law school was where?

DP: Law school was at Oklahoma University at Norman. I never considered anything else. At that time, the University of Tulsa was a part-time law school. People went to night school there. And I didn't want to do it that way, I wanted to devote myself to a full course of study.

My wife was offered a job in the legal department at Conoco while I took a leave of absence.

JE: This would have been what year?

DP: This, this was after I'd spent three years in Ardmore. And it was in 1960, I enrolled in the fall of 1960.

JE: All right. Was that a good experience? Were you glad were doing it? Or were there days when you said, *I wish I had never done this*?

DP: Well, I actually wondered because I was making good money with Conoco but I had determined that I was going to devote myself to the job and I was going to do it the way

it needed to be done. So we bought a small home in Norman and moved there. I had bought a really nice brand new home in Ardmore. Hated to leave it but I was going to have to leave it under any circumstance. So that wasn't a factor.

When I started to law school, I talked to anybody I could talk to about how to approach law. And they said, "Read your briefs every day and write out your briefs on paper."

So I did one better; I would read my briefs, underline them, and then type out the nature of the case in a notebook. Then I would take copious notes during class and I would come home and type up my notes every day. And then every three or four weeks I would begin to outline my notes so that I would have a running outline of the course.

The first semester I did okay. I did like a B+. They graded on twelve point system with twelve points being A+, and eleven being A, ten being A-, and I had like an 8.33, so I was a B or B- my first semester. I had difficulty in one course, in contracts, that I made a C in. I think that probably was the only C I made in law school.

At the end of the first semester, I visited that teacher and got some recommendations on what I needed to do. And I went to the library and read books on how to take tests in law school. And I also learned that you could check out tests from previous years, so I would do that. I was bound and determined I was going to give it everything I had.

The second semester I did even better. I think it was like a 9.5. I determined I would go to summer schools and cut off a whole semester, so I could graduate in January of '63.

In that summer school I really found myself and made A+ in both of the courses that I took. And that put me in the top position in the law class. And I maintained that position throughout the rest of my law school time.

JE: Hmm (thoughtful sound). So then you graduate in '63?

DP: Graduated in January of '63.

JE: And then?

DP: Well, during the time I was in law school I was initiated into Order of the Coif, which is the last scholastic fraternity. I was also invited to write on law review. The very first article I wrote was an article on oil and gas. It was called *Subsurface Trespass*. It was a look at the legalistics of fracking, as we call it today.

JE: Hmm (thoughtful sound).

DP: It was about whether or not when you frack a well hydraulically, that fracture will cross the boundary line of the property and invade somebody else's property. If so, what are the consequences of that?

So it's very appropriate for today's controversy about fracking and what is its significance?

JE: You no doubt went back and reviewed that. In this present age, what did you think about your paper then?

DP: Well, I felt even more strongly that it was appropriate that it can cross property lines but unless it damages somebody else's property then it's not an actionable tort.

JE: You graduated top of your class?

DP: I graduated top of my class.

JE: That had to bring on law firms that were interested in you.

DP: Yes. I had an offer from an outstanding law firm in Oklahoma City, one of whom's members was Eugene Kuntz, who was my oil and gas instructor. He and I developed a very strong relationship. He thought I had a bright future 'cause I'd written this article for him. I just determined that I really didn't want to go to Oklahoma City. I was rather determined to come back home to Tulsa. I saw this as a way to get back to Tulsa, where I love the city.

I did get an offer from Amerada. A fellow named Joe Morris, who later became general counsel for Shell Oil Company, and also a United States District Judge. Joe offered me a job with Amerada. But again, I didn't want a corporate job, I wanted to practice law in private practice, and essentially, have an opportunity to be my own boss. So I declined that.

And a fellow I had known from high school, who was a classmate of mine, named Lewis Mossberg, had won all sorts of honors at OU Law School. He graduated number one in his class. He'd gone to Oklahoma City and had created a practice of representing people who sold drilling participation units. Lewis was recognized as the leading attorney in the entire country in doing drilling projects.

He offered me the opportunity to open up a Tulsa office and join George Bowlin, who had retired from Sun Oil Company, come out of his retirement, and the two of us open an office for Lewis's firm in Oklahoma City.

JE: You opened it here in Tulsa? Yeah.

DP: We opened that here in Tulsa.

JE: What a thrill that had to be for you to do this with George Bowlin.

DP: George Bowlin was literally a saint, in my opinion. He was a leader in the Presbyterian church. And during the time that we were together, he was elected moderator of the Presbyterian Church of the USA, which is the highest office any layman can ever hold in the church.

George was also a commissioner on uniform laws. He was one of two. The other commissioner from Oklahoma was Maurice Merrill, who was professor of law at Oklahoma University, and was considered the leading constitutional lawyer, probably in the country.

He and George Bowlin to be commissioners on uniform laws and for me to be in practice with George was just a thrill for me. He taught me how to practice law. And

he taught me to avoid the use of legalisms, using the word "said," "aforesaid," and "heretofore," you know, all the legal jargons that so many lawyers lapse into. George taught me to speak plain English and how to communicate without being lawyer-like.

JE: How about that class of '63? Were there some notable graduates?

DP: There really were. Larry Derryberry became attorney general of the state. He was one of my dearest friends. Andy Coats—Andy and Larry and I were all three on the moot court team, which was quite an honor. We participated against other teams in other universities around the country. Andy Coats became city attorney for Oklahoma City. He became mayor of Oklahoma City, and he ran for United States Senate and, unfortunately, did not win. Don Nickles is the one who prevailed in that race.

Andy was the Democrat. And the Republicans were just beginning to take control of the state at that time, so Andy lost.

We had also a United States District Judge for the Eastern District. Frank Seay was one of our classmates. So we had a dynamite class.

Chapter 11 – 2:30
Law Firm

John Erling: The law firm that you set up in Tulsa, how long did you stay with that?

Don Pray: That lasted for a year and it really wasn't very successful for them. Lewis Mossberg left the firm and joined another firm, and that was composed of a fellow named Carlton Mosteller and John Andrews. It became Mosteller, Andrews, and Mossberg and then here in Tulsa, we were known as Mosteller, Andrews, Mossberg, and Bowlin. That lasted for a year, and at the time, it just didn't seem like there was much practice that moved up and down the turnpike.

George and I were engaged in trying to build a practice here. We'd begun to get some title work from Sun Oil Company, and began to get some title work for Marathon. I found that people didn't quickly change their representation. That once they were comfortable with an attorney that they wouldn't change 'cause they'd rather stay with the devil they knew than move to the devil they didn't know.

But we began to make some headway in that. And at the end of two years, when the Mosteller firm decided they would not continue to support the office, I met with a fellow who officed in the building where I was. That was the Petroleum Club Building, which had been a brand new building when we opened our office in 1963. Jack Kelly had designed and built that building.

And a fellow named Gerald Shuman had what appeared to be a very good practice. He had beautiful offices. I went down and visited with him. He offered me the opportunity to join his firm. And he would take George on "as of counsel," which means that he just would have an office there and would not be a part of the firm.

Gerald offered me a position at less than I had been making with Mosteller but he also offered me a percentage of whatever business I did for him I would get a percentage of the billings. I figured that I could make it work out for me. So I joined Gerald, who already had a young man in the practice by the name of John Deas, D-e-a-s, who later became counsel for Sinclair Oil. And finally became president of City Bank, here in Tulsa.

JE: The firm's name was?

DP: Shuman, Deas, Pray, and Doyle.

JE: Right.

DP: Stan Doyle had joined the firm shortly after I did. And while we were named as partners, we weren't truly partners, we were employees of Gerald Shuman.

Chapter 12 – 7:45
Grace and Franklin Bernsen

John Erling: It was while there then, the Bernsen Foundation came about.

Don Pray: Well, I was introduced to Franklin Bernsen by a client named Steven Pappas, who officed on the same floor as me when we first opened up with the Oklahoma City firm. I met Franklin Bernsen who I later learned more about was one of the people who introduced rotary drilling rigs into Oklahoma, with a company called Lucy Products. Lucy Products was an oil rig manufacturer and Franklin had represented them in the early days of the oil patch here in Oklahoma. And had done quite well for them.

And he had even been a partner with Howard Hughes Sr., who was the father of the Howard Hughes that most people know of, who had huge aircraft.

So Franklin Bernsen had quite a track record in the oil patch.

JE: Describe him personally and his personality and his looks.

DP: Well, Franklin was a very austere-looking person. He was balding. He probably was in his mid-sixties to early-seventies. He was very wealthy. He knew everybody and told wonderful stories. It's hard to describe Franklin except to say he was very quiet and not too widely-known.

The company that he headed was called Lucy Products. They sold oil fields, tubular goods, and drilling rigs. He had a history in the Oklahoma City field, he's the one that

helped get the Oklahoma City field going back in the early days. And was responsible for Barnsdall Oil Company becoming a lease holder over there.

Franklin became quite wealthy as a result of the Oklahoma City field.

JE: Wasn't there a story when they were not allowed to drill for oil in Oklahoma City proper and there were many, many, in fact, the cur Kerr name is involved in this, they were put off by that but he wasn't.

Tell us then, he had a plan for the Katie Railroad where he could drill under the Katy Railroad. Is that true?

DP: That's true. The Katy land wasn't being leased, there was oil all around the Katy Railroads, but they wouldn't lease it. They didn't want their property being drilled up and Franklin figured out a way to get them to lease to him by finding a source of supply for their diesel oil from Barnsdall. He had a relationship with the head of Barnsdall Oil Company. And he got Barnsdall to supply the railroad with crude oil in return for them leasing these properties to him to drill on. As long as they wouldn't interfere with the railroad's right of ways.

That turned out to be a very successful venture, both for the railroads, as they got oil for their locomotives at a much reduced price, and Franklin got the chance to extract oil from under their properties, which lay in the heart of the Oklahoma City play.

JE: And nobody else could do it?

DP: Nobody else could do it.

JE: [laughing] But he was so good-looking, I believe, that back in his early days when he lived in California, he got a job in some of the silent movies.

DP: Yes, he was in movies with Charlie Chaplin back in the day. I never saw any of the movies that he was in but he was, uh, very handsome, very intelligent guy.

JE: I believe the Charlie Chaplin movie was *A Night at the Show*.

DP: Yes, that's correct.

JE: And then he met his wife, Grace.

DP: Grace was there in California. He met her and wooed her for several years before they got married. And he brought her back here to Tulsa.

JE: And he was a driver this Canadian family who was visiting Los Angeles.

DP: Yes.

JE: And Grace was part of that family.

DP: Yes, that's right.

JE: And that's how he met his future bride.

DP: In fact, I think she may have been engaged to somebody else and broke the engagement. Because Franklin was quite a charmer.

JE: Grace, you knew her too.

DP: I knew Grace, yes.

JE: So tell us about her a little bit.

DP: Well, Grace was a very proper, dignified lady. And Franklin was too; Franklin was a very suave, dignified person. He didn't easily make friends, but once having made a friendship, he was extremely loyal. And Grace was a very. very proper lady. And just as lovely as she could be.

JE: They were of what you call high society in this town.

DP: Yes they were.

JE: And very involved in giving to the town, at that point, weren't they?

DP: Well, they were. One of the things that they did is they had no children so they created a Mother's Milk Bank at St. Johns Hospital. That way women could go in and give their breast milk for babies who couldn't stand formula milk. They were the very first ones to do that.

JE: They were involved in the Tulsa Ballet.

DP: They were involved in the ballet, they were involved with Philbrook. Franklin was very much an early pioneer of local society. The Pierrot family that had the beautiful big mansion at 31st and Lewis, they were good friends of Foss Pierrot and his wife. They were really high society here in Tulsa, members of Southern Hills.

JE: They were also members of the First Presbyterian Church.

DP: He was one of the founders of the foundation for the First Presbyterian Church, which today is worth millions and millions of dollars. He was the first head and creator of their foundation.

JE: Now we see the Bernsen Family Life Center was there and now this all makes sense to us to see that Bernsen name. And it started with Franklin and Grace because that was their church.

DP: That was their church.

JE: But they died in the '80s, and so, obviously, they didn't see this happen, but that's what their philanthropy led to.

DP: Well, Franklin had no children. Very early on in my representation I talked to him about what he wanted to do with his estate. He decided that he would like to leave it into a foundation that would benefit the community. He was so supportive of everything in Tulsa. He had no family to leave it to. So he decided to create the Grace and Franklin Bernsen Foundation.

JE: How did he get introduced to you?

DP: Well, a fellow named Steve Pappas had been a friend of his, and Steve Pappas was one of my mentors, he officed on the same floor as my law firm did when we first established with Lewis Mossberg. Steve introduced me to Franklin.

JE: Was that an easy thing to get to know him?

DP: No, because Franklin was a very distinguished person and he didn't make friends easily. But he was quite wealthy. And we just sat and talked. We became friends and we talked about his needs from a legal viewpoint.

I learned from Steve Pappas that Franklin Bernsen didn't pay for legal services. He would pay in other ways. He would make it worth my while to give him assistance in legal matters. So I never, ever rendered a bill to Franklin Bernsen for anything.

JE: Okay, what does that mean, "Make it worth your while"? How did he do that?

DP: Well, simply by introducing me to people and giving me the benefit of his friendship.

JE: Did you feel, when he made it right by you, that it was a fair trade?

DP: Oh, absolutely. Just to be friends with Franklin was an experience because he was such a pillar of the community and so highly thought of.

JE: Well, maybe you also, as a result of your friendship, brought in other business because of that, would that be correct?

DP: Yes, that would be correct.

Chapter 13 – 7:42
Charitable Foundation

John Erling: In the '60s, then, Franklin and Grace would establish a charitable foundation.

Don Pray: Yes. In 1969 they established the Grace and Franklin Bernsen Charitable Foundation. It was to be the recipient of, essentially, 98 or 99 percent of their estate. They had no children and no other family that they wanted to benefit.

JE: What would you estimate their worth was at that time?

DP: Oh, somewhere approaching twenty million dollars.

JE: That was in '69.

DP: Yes.

JE: So I don't know how you figure that into today's dollars, but it was huge.

DP: It was huge.

JE: [laughs] So he wanted you to set up this foundation.

DP: Yes.

JE: And this was your first time to do something like that.

DP: Yes it was.

JE: Was that a big challenge, and how did it go?

DP: Actually setting up a foundation is fairly easily done, you just follow the Internal Revenue Service regs and guidelines. It's something that not many people were doing back then,

but Franklin had no other beneficiaries that he wanted. He was very active in First Presbyterian Church.

I had done his estate planning, and at first, he was going to leave most of his money outright to the church. And then something happened that he became disappointed with some of the leadership of the church for something they had done. And decided that he didn't want to do that. He would rather control the outcome of it through a foundation. So we established the foundation.

JE: What would the mission have been of this foundation?

DP: It was simply to benefit charitable organizations here in Tulsa, including First Presbyterian Church. He was the one who set up the very first foundation that the church itself has today, which is probably worth some fifteen or twenty million dollars. That was Franklin's first project, to establish that.

He had a fondness for Philbrook. He had a fondness for Gilcrease. Tulsa Boys Home, he had always supported that.

JE: And the Little Lighthouse, I believe.

DP: Yes, and the Little Lighthouse. The foundation was not to be funded though until his death. He continued to make his own contributions and changed his mind about things that he wanted done. And he made his wife, Grace, and I the trustees of the foundation from the very beginning.

Grace moved into mental incapacity during the latter years of her life and had to be established out at Oral Roberts University where they cared for her. It appeared for a while that Oral Roberts would receive a substantial benefit from Franklin's estate, but something happened to change his mind along the way. Oral did something that he didn't approve of and so he changed his estate plan and left it to the trustees who survived him to decide how the foundation would be run.

JE: Grace died in 1982.

DP: Yes.

JE: And then Franklin died in January of 1984.

DP: Right.

JE: He was ninety-one years old.

DP: Right.

JE: When he died. Where you with him then around that time?

DP: I would see him daily. He was pretty sharp but he began to decline just at the very end of his career, and had to be driven around. But he was very unhappy with First Presbyterian Church's minister at the time.

JE: Hmm (thoughtful sound).

DP: So he wanted to withhold doing much for them, at the time, and he left everything into the estate.

He had two people on his staff that he felt very high regard for: Howard Mayor and a Paul Peterson. He made them trustees of the foundation, along with me. His banker was a gentleman by the name of John Strong, and he was made a trustee, so that after Franklin passed away all of his estate, essentially, went to the foundation, approximately twenty million dollars' worth. And it was up to Peterson, Mayor, and myself, and John Strong to decide how the foundation would be distributed.

It has become a perpetual foundation and we distribute approximately 5 percent to 7 percent a year of the foundation proceeds to various charitable organizations within the city of Tulsa, or close environs.

JE: When you're considering grants and so forth, and it's been a while since he's been here, but you were with him so much, you think, *How would Franklin look at this? How would Franklin do this?*

DP: Yes we do. We knew, you know, of his fondness for the church, and First Presbyterian Church has been one of the biggest beneficiaries of the foundation. Philbrook has also—because he was a Philbrook board member. And organizations relating to children. He never had children but they always had wished they had, so they were very fond of children's organizations, like the Little Lighthouse.

Chapter 14 – 11:45
Donald W. Reynolds

John Erling: If you didn't do anything else in foundation work and to be around Franklin Bernsen, who we find out was quite a remarkable man, you would have said, "Well, that's good." However, you became involved with Donald W. Reynolds as well.

Don Pray: Yes I did.

JE: Talk about him and how that relationship with you started.

DP: Donald Reynolds's company is a company called Donrey Media Group. And it's headquartered for its administration in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Mr. Reynolds was quite an extraordinary individual. He grew up in Oklahoma City, sold papers on a corner. He earned his way through college. He went to a journalism school, University of Missouri at Columbia. On graduation, he then went into the newspaper business and bought a small paper up in Massachusetts and sold that about a year later. That wasn't a particular success.

And then he moved to Houston and became involved with a gentleman there who got him involved in entrepreneurial activities. The first thing he did was he bought a newspaper in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, and one in Fort Smith, Arkansas. That was the beginning of the Donrey Media Group.

He was a terrific entrepreneur.

JE: Let me just point out, this guy was a worker bee as the others we've talked about. I understand in high school he worked in the summers at a meat packing plant to pay for his studies.

DP: Yes.

JE: You know, young people listen to these stories, they ought to know that these people worked hard at the very beginning.

DP: Well, he rode on a cruise from the United States, taking cattle to Spain. And he saw a castle in Spain that he ultimately modeled his home in Las Vegas after, from his memory of that cattle trip. He was quite an unusual entrepreneur. He was a very bright guy. At the time of his death, he owned perhaps forty-five newspapers. He had an outdoor advertising organization called Donrey Outdoor. They had plants around the country, ten different locations: Tulsa, Oklahoma, Wichita, and various spots around the country. He even had one in Las Vegas, and that's how he really got into outdoor advertising. He saw an outdoor billboard in Las Vegas, and he wanted space to advertise.

He bought the newspaper in Las Vegas back when Las Vegas was a town of about twenty-five thousand people. He thought that outdoor advertising was a good way to advertise the newspaper, and he tried to get space on the billboards and they wouldn't sell it to him, they were sold out. He thought if it was that good a business he ought to get into that business.

JE: [laughing]

DP: So he did. He bought billboards and started the Donrey Outdoor Advertising Agency. So he was one heck of an entrepreneur.

JE: He didn't live in Tulsa.

DP: No he didn't. He lived wherever he wanted to live. Don Reynolds had an apartment in Fort Smith, he had a mansion in Las Vegas that he had built after this castle, it's probably about thirty thousand square feet. He had an apartment in Trump Tower in New York City. He had an apartment in Beverly Hills. He had a home on the lake down in Hot Springs. He had eight or ten homes around the country. None of them were in his name, they were all in the name of the business.

He learned early on how to work with the tax codes and write off as many things as he could. He even had airplanes that belonged to the company and that's how he got around. He had two homes in Hawaii, one in Kona, and one in Hilo, both of those were headquarters for him in Hawaii. He bought the newspapers there.

Something happened along the way. He had been represented by an attorney here in Tulsa by the name of Doug Fox. Doug Fox was with the Gable Gotwals firm, a very fine law firm here.

JE: Well, let me just interrupt you by saying that Mr. Reynolds was using a Tulsa law firm because even though he did not live in Tulsa, he did keep an apartment here and he had

a friend he would visit. And he liked to socialize with Tulsans. Just wanted to explain that—so continue.

DP: Doug decided to get out of the practice of law, and he had represented Reynolds and been on Reynolds's board, but he didn't tell Reynolds that he was doing this. And when he made a move into another company that was going to be an oil company, it upset Reynolds. And yet he left his representation at Doug Fox's law firm for a period of time. But ultimately decided that that wasn't where he wanted to be.

So based on their Deloitte Touche's accounting firm's recommendations, they interviewed four firms, one of which was my firm. I interviewed with his vice president of administration, a fellow named Pat Patterson, who did the first interview with me.

And then the second interview was with Fred Smith, who was the executive head of his companies.

Then finally, I got to meet Reynolds. And we just really hit it off quite well. So they engaged me to represent him.

JE: Describe his personality. What was he like?

DP: Reynolds was a small man, he probably stood five-six or five-seven. He was a little heavy but he was outwardly kind of a jovial dwarf. He would hate that description but it pretty well described him. He was a Buddha-looking sort of guy. He was rather heavy and balding. But he ran the tightest ship on his empire, you can imagine. Nobody in his organization would ever dare call him anything other than Mr. Reynolds.

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative).

DP: He paid everybody well, but he also paid them what they called a going wage, that if they didn't work out, they could go.

JE: [laughing]

DP: And he was happy with it.

JE: Why do you think you two hit it off? Was he very common in the way he was? You're very—

DP: Well, he was, yeah.

JE: . . . easy to talk to yourself. Was there a sense of humor, you think, that clicked, or what?

DP: I suppose so, you know, we just hit it off quite well. At the time, he was kind of estranged from his board of directors. His previous counsel in the firm that Doug Fox had left, had gotten Mr. Reynolds to take off all of the members of his board from his foundation.

He had already established a charitable foundation to receive his estate. He had placed this attorney and a stock broker from New York as the only members of the board of directors of the foundation. And that upset the people that worked for him.

In time, I talked to him and said, "You know, these people have been loyal to you, they've helped you run your business and built it into what it is today. Why wouldn't you trust them to run the foundation when you're gone?"

And he agreed with that. He put these people who had been on the foundation back on the foundation board to run it in the event of his death. And I think he appreciated my practical approach to things.

JE: Were there sometimes you would disagree with him and you'd stand your ground and he'd understand eventually, come around?

DP: Yes, he was very willing to accept advice. He accepted advice from professionals. And I advised him to put these people back on his foundation board. The simplest thing is I said, "You trust them to run your business. You've got them as directors of your business. Why wouldn't you trust them to run your business when you're gone?"

JE: Yeah.

DP: So it was a very practical approach.

JE: It is.

DP: And it's hard to argue with that.

JE: What was his wife's name?

DP: Uh, he'd had several wives. He was not married at the time I met him. He'd been through three fairly unhappy relationships but had spawned three children from two different wives. One of the wives got to him financially pretty heavily so he was not too thrilled about the idea of women.

In fact, shortly after I signed on to be his counsel, I was invited to his sixtieth birthday party in Las Vegas. At his mansion, which we call the castle. Fifteen or twenty of his old girlfriends, as well as most of his managers of his various businesses were invited, and a lot of his social friends were invited to his sixtieth birthday party. He had George Burns engaged to entertain. And the original Ink Spots were also there to entertain at his birthday party.

According to his employees who were loyal to him, the real reason was to have all of these women that he had dated from time to time there to see each other and, uh, see what he had—

JE: He was kind of bragging, wasn't he?

DP: Yeah, see what he had accumulated.

JE: You would know this, *Forbes* magazine noted that Reynolds three children would receive trust income of fifty thousand dollars a year for life, but would be left only one dollar if they unsuccessfully contest his will.

DP: I changed that a little bit. One of the first things that I did for Mr. Reynolds was to look at his estate plan. And he had left a very small percentage to each of his children. I suggested that instead of using a will as the device to transfer his estate, that he ought to create a trust. And that he could create a living trust during his lifetime to manage all of his assets. And then for his assets to pass into the trust estate on his death.

And he liked that idea. So we recreated his estate and left a larger portion to each of the children that would provide a trust income for them during their lifetime. Then what would happen to it on their death. It was still a very small percentage of his estate. Probably less than 2 to 3 percent, because he was worth, at his death, over a billion dollars.

JE: Now did he pay you for your legal services? We talked about Franklin Bernsen would make it worth your while. How about Donald?

DP: Yes he paid. And, of course, he paid it through the company. I was hired by the Donrey Media Group with home offices in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Now Reynolds home in Las Vegas was the titler headquarters for the company. He lived there and had his office and the office of his chief executive, Fred Smith, there in his home. Las Vegas, of course, had no estate taxes in the event of his death. So that all of his estate would not be taxed there.

JE: You had experience with the Bernsen Foundation but didn't you go out and investigate a lot of foundations before you set up the Reynolds Foundation?

DP: It's the Reynolds business foundation, what he left on his death, is when I traveled around. After Reynolds passed away, all of his estate except the small amounts left to his three children went into the foundation. And that's when I went around and investigated other foundations, to see how it should be run.

JE: So that was a foundation you were starting then, that part?

DP: Yeah, the foundation was already in existence when I came onto the scene. And the company funded the foundation during its business years while Reynolds was alive.

Chapter 15 – 8:05
Golden Donors

John Erling: I note that there was a book you read called *Golden Donors*.

Don Pray: Yes.

JE: And there were two major lessons from that. That the further the foundation got from the donor's death the more they strayed from what the donor would have approved.

DP: That's exactly right.

JE: Talk about that from your experience.

DP: Well, probably the best experience is the Pugh family. Pugh left most of his estate, which was huge, to a foundation, which after his death, was run by people not in his family. Foundation people tend to go off in their own little world and start spending money on

what they deem to be desirable outcomes and not what the founder would really have wanted done.

Many of the foundations, the people left behind as trustees did things that the founder would have turned over in his grave if he had known about it.

Reynolds didn't want that to happen and neither did the people that succeeded to run his estate. So we created a limited life of the Reynolds Foundation of originally fifty years. And then later, it was shortened to just twenty-five years. And that is about to run out.

So in the year of 2015, it will cease to exist.

JE: We've got another year here, or about a year and a half.

DP: They, they will stop making charitable grants and then will go into a slumber for three years. And then it will go out of existence, I think in 2019.

JE: Will it all have been granted then?

DP: It will all have been spent.

JE: By that time?

DP: Yes. It's planned to spend out over the next two years.

JE: The second lesson you learned from *Golden Donors* was, "When power is given to the staff, the faster the foundation moves away from the donor's intentions."

DP: That is correct. Mr. Smith, who ran all of the businesses for Mr. Reynolds, was a quick learner after he read *Golden Donors*. He has maintained control totally in the board of directors and doesn't let staff dictate policies for the foundation. That has remained true even through today. The trustees are the ones who dictate the policy of the foundation.

JE: But you became executive director of the Reynolds foundations?

DP: Yes, yes I did.

JE: What was the foundation's primary focus of their grants?

DP: Well, we wanted to stay small. And one of the admonitions Mr. Smith gave me was to keep it simple. So as I started running the foundation, it was my secretary and myself, and I went and visited other large foundations around the country to see what their focus was.

I visited the Kresge Foundation in Michigan, and found that they were one of the few foundations in the country that made only capital grants. They would make grants for a small portion of the building, but you had to have a really good program to raise the rest of the money before you earned a grant from Kresge.

I also visited the Ewing Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City, and I visited [indecipherable] foundation in—

JE: Chicago.

DP: . . . Chicago. They made what they call smart grants. They would give a lot of money to a handful of people around the country who were outstanding in their professions, and let

them do with it what they wanted to do. I saw that that was not something that we had an interest in doing.

Then I visited a foundation in New York that did large capital grants. I liked the idea that they made grants, which would have high impact on an organization. And they would make it for the purposes of building a building or establishing a program that was consistent with good business practices.

JE: The construction of new buildings, that was your main focus.

DP: It was construction. Yes, the program that I established for the Reynolds Foundation in the first year, we would solicit applications to build a building up to fifteen million dollars in value, but which succeeds two million in value. They would have to show how they would use the money. And it was a grant to completely build and equip and furnish the building and set it in business. And all they had to do was to, during the course of the building project, raise 20 percent of the amount of money we gave them, to act as an endowment to keep the building up and functioning the way it should.

JE: Upon his death, what was his net worth?

DP: Reynolds's net worth on his death was somewhere in access of a billion dollars.

JE: Okay. And you talked about Franklin and you said that was twenty-nine million, I think, with that.

DP: Yes. Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: So we're talking a billion dollars upon his death, which actually happened on a yacht on the Mediterranean Sea.

DP: That's correct.

JE: In 1993.

DP: Yes.

JE: And he was eighty-six years old. I have a long list of buildings built, and I'll go through some of them. We have the Donald W. Reynolds Razorback Stadium. The Cancer Support House in Fort Smith, Arkansas. The Donald W. Reynolds Center for Life Sciences at Hendrix College. I would imagine your brain was going, *I was involved in all of that stuff*, right?

DP: Yes.

JE: The Reynolds Center at Harding University. The Performing Arts Center at the University of Oklahoma. The Reynolds Performance Hall at the University of Central Arkansas. Warren, Arkansas YMCA. I'm kind of jumping here, but, of course, we in Tulsa know the Donald W. Reynolds Center at the University of Tulsa.

DP: In addition to that, we have the Boy Scout headquarters here that we built. We have Tulsa Boys Home, which we expanded and established here. We have a food bank here that was totally rebuilt. We have a food bank in Oklahoma City. We have an

Oklahoma City Art Museum. We have a health center in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. We have community centers in Durant, Oklahoma, and Seminole, Oklahoma. There are four community centers that we've built.

JE: Isn't there a children's—

DP: In Oklahoma.

JE: . . . facility in Oklahoma? A children's hospital?

DP: That too, that's in Bethany.

JE: Okay, a children's hospital in Bethany.

DP: The Children's Center in Bethany has been one of the largest and one of the first grants we ever made. And one of the best we've ever made.

JE: But then he also goes to Washington, DC, you do, the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture.

DP: Yeah, they received, I don't know the exact number, thirty to forty million dollars. The first thirty million dollars they received was to keep the portrait of George Washington here in America. It was owned by a British citizen and had been on loan to America. And he decided he needed some money, so he was going to put it up for sale.

Fred Smith read about it in the Wall Street Journal and called the Smithsonian and said, "We'll put up thirty million dollars to keep the exhibit here and also to travel it around the country for exhibition." Which they did, and they build a new exhibit, just to keep this Gilbert Stuart portrait of George Washington, which is probably the best piece of art of George Washington there ever is.

JE: I know you must know, in a simple phone call sometimes a huge deal can be made. "I'll give you thirty million dollars," they could say that on the phone—

DP: No.

JE: What it did to those people on the other end of the line [laughing].

DP: Well, they caught an airplane to Las Vegas.

JE: Immediately.

DP: Yes.

JE: And then, about George Washington, I was there at Mount Vernon estate myself a couple of years ago, and I didn't realize the Donald W. Reynolds Museum Education Center there that I went through, was built by this foundation.

DP: And subsequently, another facility has been built there that we spent thirty million on. It's a Center for the Study and Preservation of George Washington.

JE: Hmm (thoughtful sound).

DP: It's like a library. It collects all of the papers of George Washington and is right there on the Mount Vernon grounds.

Chapter 16 – 6:05
More than Buildings

John Erling: Now can I ask you about the Reynolds Foundation here in Tulsa? You were so closely tied to TU, I remember the Board of Regents as well. You must have had some influence on that donation.

Don Pray: Well, I did and Fred Smith, bless his heart, rescued me. When I made the presentation to the board about the University of Tulsa, it was different than any other grant we had made. Because the Reynolds Foundation made grants that covered 100 percent of the building costs. And we didn't want other participants in the construction and equipping the building.

Well, TU had already kicked off construction of their new basketball center and was asking for us to grant fifteen million, which was half the cost of the building. And we had never done a participation before and haven't done since. That was the only one of its kind.

And the trustees were a little reluctant to do that since it had already kicked off and was being built. But Fred Smith rescued it and said, "I think Reynolds would have liked this." [laughs]

JE: Um-hmm (affirmative). So again, as you're making these grants, you knew that Donald W. Reynolds was very interested in building buildings. And you carried on that mission.

DP: Yes.

JE: And Fred Smith is still—what's his position?

DP: He's still the chairman of the foundation. He was the president of the company when I started representing Mr. Reynolds. Reynolds finally decided that he had run the company long enough.

And I suggested to him that, "Why don't you retire and let Fred run the whole thing?"

So he did. He let Fred take over as chairman of the board. And ultimately, become chairman of the foundation.

JE: It was largely just capital grants for buildings? Is that all the foundation did?

DP: No, in addition to the building program, we developed a cardiovascular clinical research program at four different medical schools, one of them being Johns Hopkins in Washington, DC, Harvard Medical School in Boston, Southwestern Medical Institute in Dallas, and Stanford Medical Institute. Those programs were to look into cardiovascular research and try to establish ways in which the art program could be improved.

Then there was a program for aging and quality of life where we have given grants to over forty medical schools to improve their treatment of the aging. In addition to that, there are the grants that we made to Mount Vernon and to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC.

JE: You know, I've got to say, here you are, really with foundations and grants and contracts. I can't help about the C you got in contracts [both laughing], when you were in school. And that's essentially what you ended up doing.

DP: Yes. Yes.

JE: A lot of work in contracts.

DP: Absolutely did. But I learned from him. He taught a lesson.

JE: Who did?

DP: Elbridge Phelps, my professor in contracts.

JE: It's remarkable the philanthropy of Donald W. Reynolds, and Franklin and Grace Bernsen that we've been talking about. But it has to give you a lot of good feeling that—I know it's not your money, but you are giving advice and you're making suggestions that are good—to know the good that you helped provide.

DP: Well, it's a great feeling. It's a career in itself that I've engaged in since Franklin passed away in 1984. It's been very fulfilling.

Of course, the Reynolds experience was a whole different dimension from the Bernsens, but I still am actively involved in Bernsens. I've now retired from Reynolds, as of this year.

JE: You were involved personally in Tulsa too.

DP: Oh, yes.

JE: In various ways.

DP: Well, that helped me establish the Reynolds Foundation and a direction for it because of my experience that I'd had with Bernsen. I was able to identify a financial investment advisor for the Reynolds Group, which they use to this day. I also identified a way to proceed with distribution of the assets.

It's been most rewarding for me.

JE: You're sitting here with a shirt that says: The First Tee, Tulsa.

DP: Um-hmm (affirmative).

JE: So you have an interest in golf. I suppose it goes back to your father.

DP: Yes.

JE: So are you involved with First Tee?

DP: Well, I support the First Tee. The Bernsen Foundation is one of the strong central supporters of the First Tee Organization. Bernsen Foundation, of course, is restricted to doing things here in Tulsa. We give out a million and a half to two million a year to various organizations.

First Tee is one of the ones that we really like a lot.

JE: Well, I want to thank you for this time that you've given us. A remarkable story. Yours in remarkable and interesting, in and of itself, and then how you're connected to these

people of wealth and how it's made such a major impact in the country and in particular here too, in Tulsa. Thank you for sharing.

And I got to say, you wrote the story of your life, which I used some of this to prompt. But I have never seen anybody write with such detail as you did. And your children have got to be happy. It took you, I think, a year to do this.

DP: Yes it did.

JE: And maybe that can encourage other people to do the same. But you have such a memory for detail. And I must tell people again, I mean, you are eighty-two years old, but you're eighty-two years young.

DP: Well, thank you, I appreciate that. I hope I can continue to stay involved. I love being involved in the community and the opportunity that Reynolds and Bernsen, both, have given me to do this kind of work. It's very rewarding, you can imagine.

JE: Right. Well, thanks for sharing your story here on Voices of Oklahoma. Now many, many people will hear it for generations to come.

DP: Thank you.

JE: You're welcome.

Chapter 17 – 0:33
Conclusion

Announcer: This oral history presentation is made possible through the support of our generous foundation-funders. We encourage you to join them by making your donation, which will allow us to record future stories. Students, teachers, and librarians are using this website for research and the general public is listening every day to these great Oklahomans share their life experience.

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